THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA

Prayer Service for the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

December 6 • Incorporating CWL Advocacy & Resolutions on Dignity, Safety, and Justice

1. OPENING HYMN & SIGN OF THE CROSS

Suggested Hymn: "Be Not Afraid," "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace," or "Hail Mary, Gentle Woman."

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All: Amen.

Leader: Sisters in the League, we gather today on December 6, Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. On this day in 1989, fourteen young women at École Polytechnique in Montréal were murdered simply because they were women. As members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, our call is not only to remember in prayer, but to act for justice—through our resolutions, our advocacy with government, and our service to the vulnerable. Today we mourn the fourteen victims, pray for all women and girls enduring violence, and renew our League commitment to uphold the dignity of every human life.

2. OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray. *(Pause for silent prayer)*
Loving and merciful God, You created every human being in Your own image and likeness, crowning each woman and man with dignity and grace. Today our hearts are heavy as we remember the fourteen women murdered in Montréal and all women whose lives have been scarred or ended by violence. Pour Your healing comfort upon those who grieve, grant courage to those living in fear, and strengthen our resolve as Catholic women to speak with a unified voice against abuse, exploitation, and injustice. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
All: Amen.

3. SCRIPTURE READING — MICAH 6:6–8

> **Reader:** A reading from the Book of the Prophet Micah.
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> "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"
>
> The Word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God.**

Pause for 1–2 minutes of silent reflection.

4. LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE (CANDLE LIGHTING)

The Leader lights the central pillar candle. As each name is read aloud, a member lights one of the 14 votive candles from the central candle.

Leader: Christ is the light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Today we speak the names of the fourteen women who died on December 6, 1989, entrusting their souls to the eternal mercy of God.

Reader 1: Geneviève Bergeron	**Reader 2:** Hélène Colgan
Reader 1: Nathalie Croteau	**Reader 2:** Barbara Daigneault
Reader 1: Anne-Marie Edward	**Reader 2:** Maud Haviernick
Reader 1: Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz	**Reader 2:** Maryse Laganière
Reader 1: Maryse Leclair	**Reader 2:** Anne-Marie Lemay
Reader 1: Sonia Pelletier	**Reader 2:** Michèle Richard
Reader 1: Annie St-Arneault	**Reader 2:** Annie Turcotte

A final member comes forward to light the 15th candle.

Leader: We light this final candle for all Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, for victims of human trafficking and domestic abuse, and for every woman suffering in silence today.
Leader: Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
All: And let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

Observe one full minute of silence in honour of the 11:00 a.m. national observance.

5. PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL (ROOTED IN CWL RESOLUTIONS & ADVOCACY)

Leader: United in faith, service, and social justice, we lift up the needs of women across Canada, echoing the ongoing advocacy and resolutions of The Catholic Women's League of Canada. Our response is: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader (Human Trafficking & Sexual Exploitation): In solidarity with the League's position on human trafficking and our long-standing resolutions to combat sexual exploitation, we pray for all women and youth trapped in modern slavery, coerced debt, and online exploitation, and for the strict enforcement of laws that protect vulnerable persons. We pray to the Lord. **All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader (Safe Housing & Escaping Domestic Violence): Remembering that leaving an unsafe home often leads to housing insecurity—and echoing League resolutions calling for safe, supported housing and a guaranteed basic income framework—we pray for women and children fleeing domestic abuse, that shelters and communities may provide immediate refuge and long-term stability. We pray to the Lord. **All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader (Online Safety & Cybercrime Protection): Reflecting our League's advocacy for stronger online protections—including unified cybercrime reporting and age verification on adult websites—we pray for the protection of women and girls from digital harassment, non-consensual imagery, and online predators. We pray to the Lord. **All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader (Indigenous Women, Girls & Families): Guided by our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and our resolution urging full implementation of *R. v. Gladue* principles, we pray for healing and justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and their families. We pray to the Lord. **All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader (Grieving Families & Culture Change): For the families and friends of the fourteen women of École Polytechnique, and for men and boys across Canada, that guided by St. Joseph, they may reject all forms of misogyny and uphold the dignity of women in every sphere of life. We pray to the Lord. **All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader (CWL Councils in Action): For our parish, diocesan, provincial, and national councils, that our study of resolutions, letters to legislators, and hands-on support for local women's shelters may bear lasting fruit. We pray to the Lord. **All: Lord, hear our prayer.**

6. THE LORD'S PRAYER & PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

Leader: Let us unite our prayers with the prayer Jesus taught us:
All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Leader: Turning to our patroness, who knew both the joys of motherhood and the piercing sorrow of violence at the foot of the Cross, we pray together:

All: Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel, filled with the Spirit of God, you listened to the Word and pondered it in your heart. Walk with all women who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Counsel our elected leaders to enact just laws that protect the vulnerable, inspire our communities to offer safe refuge, and guide us, your daughters in the League, to be courageous voices for peace and human dignity. Amen.

7. CLOSING BLESSING & CALL TO ACTION

Leader: Sisters, as we leave this space, may our remembrance lead to concrete action—whether by supporting a local transition house, studying League resolutions, or writing to our elected representatives to advocate for the safety and dignity of women.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. **All: Amen.**
Leader: Let us go forth in peace to love and serve the Lord, and to uphold the dignity of every woman. **All: Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Hymn: "City of God," "Let There Be Peace on Earth," or "Canticle of the Turning."