



Living the faith of our mothers

Catholic Women's League Australia Inc.

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2, JUNE 2006

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Women Peacemakers Issue

One Woman's tireless quest for peace and forgiveness



Catholic Women's League Australia recognises the contribution made by Jan Ruff-O'Herne to International Human Rights and her valuable contribution to International Peace and Goodwill.

As a 19 year old in World War II Jan Ruff-O'Herne was imprisoned by the Japanese, and for some time forced to be a military sex slave or "Comfort Woman". She was raped and abused repeatedly. After the war she married, raised a family and taught. She lived a normal life and told no one of her ordeal.

It was 50 years before she was able to do this. She was 70 when she took up the challenge to speak out for all those who have been abused. Since then she has worked tirelessly, and travelled to many countries for numerous Human Rights organisations including Amnesty International and the Red Cross telling her story and always carrying the message of peace and forgiveness. She is a strong advocate for the protection of women during times of war and conflict and an ardent contributor to International Peace and Goodwill.

She has received the following honours: "Officer of the Order of Australia", a Knighthood from Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, "The Order van Oranje Nassau", the ANZAC Peace Prize, a Papal Knighthood (which she regards as the greatest of all honours) she is Dame Commander of the Order of Saint Sylvester, the first Australian woman to receive this recognition. In November 2004 she was awarded the "International Peace Prize" by authority of the United Cultural Convention, United States of America.

Her faith in God has never wavered and has been her strength throughout her life.



Living the faith of our mothers
Catholic Women's League Australia Inc.

President's Report



CWLA's Vision for 2006 – 2007 is the pursuit of Peace, a hope we all share and the focus of our 2nd Newsletter, timed to include news of the 2006 General Assembly of World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations with its theme "Women Peacemakers: United in Faith and Action".

A distinguished Woman of Peace, Jan Ruff O'Herne kindly co-operated with us in the preparation of CWLA's Peace Poster which was displayed prominently at the Assembly in Arlington, included in WorkStudy sessions by Australian attendees and now graces the cover of this Newsletter.

Prominent within is the Final Declaration of the General Assembly, which documents the resolve to accept the challenge of commitment to Peace.

WUCWO Priorities for 2006 – 2010 are: Cultivation of a Culture of Peace, Education and Eradication of Poverty.

CWLA's resolution concerning a Day of Prayer for those Sexually Abused was passed and 11 other resolutions submitted concerning issues such as Democracy, the Environment, HIV/AIDS, the Death Penalty, Trafficking, the Family and Solidarity in Globalization were passed as is or as amended.

In the Regional Meetings session, chaired by newly elected Vice President for Asia Pacific Theresa Oh Duck-Choo of South Korea, Australian representatives met with other Asia Pacific members: Fiji Islands, India, Indonesia, Phillipines, South Korea, China-Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand and Tonga. In a Sub-Group with Fiji, New Zealand and Tonga we agreed to work on a common issue 'Child Abuse' and to network more.

Day by day the cumulative work of Catholic Women's League continues; the same Faith all over the world but the Action appropriate to time, place, culture, often quite diverse. President General Maria Eugenia referred to Priorities for Action in Latin America as poverty and education, in Europe re-discovering the presence of God in the world.

Social Issues Convenor Betty Roberts OAM has prepared a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade: Inquiry into Australia's Aid Program in the Pacific and drawn attention to a current Petition in protest against prostitution and trafficking at the time of the World Cup. This has been circulated among membership for further action in addition to the earlier CATW petition signed by CWLA and many.

From my recent Arlington experience, visiting Member Organisations and CWL Websites, reading 'the Vine', 'Take Time' and other Newsletters I am aware of the rich contribution Catholic Woman's League makes to local communities, to the overall life of the Church, our Country, our World.

A reminder too of our warm invitations to the Catholic Women's League of New Zealand Inc. biennial Conference in Wellington, 20 – 23 July 2006 and to the Catholic Women's League Centenary Celebration including Mass of Thanksgiving in Brighton, Sussex, UK, 21 – 23 October 2006.

With my best wishes and the concluding words of the 'Prayer of the General Assembly': " Lord, Give us a spirit of unity, of harmony, dialogue, grace and love".

Mary Schultz
National President CWLA Inc.

Editorial Panel

Editorial Team

Mary Schultz, Pat Madigan, Marie Lally, Maureen Clark, Helen Rodriguez, Pauline Victory, Aileen Solowiej

Contributions for the National Newsletter Issue 3, 2006 close on 28.8.06.

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Portfolio Reports

Social Issues

HIV/AIDS – A MAJOR HEALTH ISSUE WITH NO KNOWN CURE

The 1st December is recognised internationally as World Aids Day, the aim of which is to raise awareness in the community about HIV/AIDS issues, including the need for support and understanding for people living with HIV/AIDS, and for the development of education and prevention initiatives.

People diagnosed with HIV infection in the year to 30 September 2005 had an average age of 37 years and 1.5% was in the age 13-19 years 88.5% were male and 11.5% were female.

Of 748 cases of HIV infection, newly diagnosed among men in the year, 645 (86.2%) were attributed to male homosexual/bisexual contact, with or without a history of injecting drug use, according to the Australian HIV Surveillance Report produced by the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research on a quarterly basis.

The rising number of gay men turning to the internet to look for sexual partners is presenting new challenges for HIV educators, reports Dean Murphy in the HIV Australia Journal.

Australia's AIDS epidemic is not easing, with the number of annual HIV diagnoses reverting to the alarming levels of the early 1990's according to United Nations Report. At the end of May 2006 the United Nations estimated 16,000 adults and children were living with HIV in Australia. They claim that "unprotected homosexual sex was largely responsible for the rise in new infections". National trends appeared similar among indigenous and non-indigenous people though indigenous women were found to be 18 times more likely to be HIV infected than non-indigenous women.

There is a growing interest within the UN system in the Church's involvement in caring for people with HIV and AIDS. UNAIDS estimates that 25% of the care institutions for people living with the virus are run by Catholic Church structures, many of which are Caritas projects.

In January 2006 Representatives from Catholic organizations worldwide gathered in Geneva at a meeting convened by Caritas Internationalis, the Vatican based Confederation of

Catholic Charities, to scale up resources and improve co-operation in the global fight against HIV/AIDS.

For four days they shared experiences and strategies for promoting collaboration and examine what the UN system can offer the church in terms of training, technical skills and expertise. According to Duncan MacLaren, Secretary-General of Caritas, the conference yielded fruitful exchanges. In particular, he said, it raised awareness of the church's key role in promoting a compassionate, education focused response to the pandemic. At the same time it helped to lessen stereotypes about the Catholic Church regarding prevention of infection.

"The faith element was stressed as a positive in combating stigma and discrimination and in aiding the person living with the virus to cope better," said MacLaren. "The UN now realizes that the Catholic Church is the heart and nervous system of our communities" one person at the meeting stated.

The AIDS Funding Network Group agreed that an office for Catholic organizations dealing with HIV/AIDS be established in Geneva to enable such groups to expand their connections with the United Nations and to pursue advocacy work.

Vatican Response

"Vatican set to OK condoms for disease prevention" was one headline among a spate of recent publicity – when the Holy See was preparing a 'study for internal dialogue', NOT a "document" on condoms and Aids.

The question the study addresses is that of couples united in sacrament of marriage, where one of the spouses suffers from AIDS. Pope Benedict XVI said it was "appropriate to talk and to examine the matter scientifically and morally".

Despite the study concerning only married couples where one partner has the Aids virus, the press had a field day claiming that "The Catholic Church's blanket ban on contraception could soon change" and that "it would finally take the stigma off the condom".

See more on this topic on the CWLA National website: www.cwla.org.au

Betty Roberts, OAM
National Social Issues Convenor

Women Peacemakers Issue

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY – “Women Peacemakers: United in Faith and Action.”
Arlington, Va, USA, May 31 – June 7, 2006**



FINAL DECLARATION

'Peace is the fruit of justice' ... peace is likewise the fruit of love, which goes beyond what justice can provide.' (*Gaudium et Spes*, N. 78)

We, the women of the World Union of Catholic Women Organisations, gathered together from all continents and some island nations, understanding that *'peace is never attained once and for all, but must be built up ceaselessly'* (Ibid) resolve to go from this Assembly accepting the challenge of commitment to:

- acknowledge in each person his/her dignity as a child of God, always seeking dialogue with respect, charity and truth, focusing on the positive qualities of each person;
- seek unconditional reconciliation with people from whom we are estranged, especially family members;
- undertake positive stances and actions, with believers and non-believers, for justice, truth and freedom, locally and globally;
- use all means available to us, including the media, to take positive action to influence our local, national and international leaders in Christian values, leading to just laws and the preservation of the environment;
- show respect for and tolerance of other faiths, trying always to discover our common values through ecumenical and religious dialogue;
- denounce policies, strategies and behaviour that are counter-productive to the fostering of justice and peace in every aspect of society, especially the violation of all human rights; in particular, violence and the abuse of the rights of the vulnerable, especially of women and children.

Motivated by Christ's teaching as explained in the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, that: *"Peace is a value and a universal duty founded on a rational and moral order of society that has its roots in God himself, the first source of being, the essential truth and supreme good"*, **the Catholic women of WUCWO recognise that one of the major**

challenges of these times is the establishment of a "culture of peace" at every level of human endeavour.

We, therefore, also resolve *"as lay faithful, to work together with all those who truly seek peace, in specific organisations, to promote an extensive work of education to defeat the ruling culture of egoism, hate, revenge and hostility, and thereby develop solidarity at every level. Such solidarity, in fact, is the way to peace and at the same time to development."*

[Christifideles Laici]

They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. [Isaiah 2:4.]

WUCWO Resolutions

**Adopted at the General Assembly, 5-7
June 2006, Arlington, Va (USA)**

1. DAY OF PRAYER FOR SEXUALLY ABUSED

Submitted by the Catholic Women's League of Australia, seconded by KALASZ of Hungary

Motivation

The protection of the innocence of children has always been a Christian priority. Recent reports show a disturbing increase in sexually abused young children who, in turn, are becoming abusers of other young children. Aged 11, St. Maria Goretti confronted a threat to her childhood innocence. Her action in repelling this evil led to her suffering and death – yet she was instrumental in obtaining the conversion of her attacker. We believe that prayer to St. Maria Goretti can and will change the lives of abusers of children and bring them to repentance. St. Maria Goretti's attacker lived to see his victim canonized in 1950, as a martyr for chastity and Christian life.

Resolution

WUCWO will make a formal approach to the Holy See to have St. Maria Goretti proclaimed Patroness of the Innocence of Children. WUCWO will request the Holy See to set aside

St. Maria Goretti's Feast Day on 6th July as a day of prayer throughout the Universal Church for all those who are currently being sexually abused, and a day on which to pray for the healing of all those who have suffered sexual abuse in their childhood.

Source: www.wucwo.org

'As a recorder for the Study Days I reported to the assembly on our group deliberations. The speakers were positive and gave so much food for thought and stimulating discussion. I am in awe of the spirituality, knowledge and dedication of all the members, their sincerity and commitment to the aims of WUCWO, and their church.

A significant feature of the Assembly was the large representation and active participation of members from the developing world e.g. Africa and the South Pacific.'

Margaret Toomey, Workshop Secretary

In truth, Peace

The theme chosen for reflection – in truth, peace – expresses the conviction that wherever and whenever men and women are enlightened by the splendour of truth, they naturally set out on the path of peace. The Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, promulgated 4 years ago at the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, states that mankind will not succeed in 'building a truly more human world for everyone, everywhere on earth, unless all people are renewed in spirit and converted to the truth of peace'. But what do those words, 'the truth of peace', really mean? Peace cannot be reduced to the simple absence of armed conflict. It has an intrinsic and invincible truth of its own, and corresponds to an irrepressible yearning and hope dwelling within us.

Seen in this way, peace appears as a heavenly gift and a divine grace which demands at every level the exercise of the highest responsibility: that of conforming human history – in truth, justice, freedom and love – to the divine order. Whenever there is a loss of fidelity to the transcendent order, and a loss of respect for the 'grammar' of dialogue which is the universal moral law written on human hearts, whenever the integral development of the person and the protection of his fundamental rights are hindered or denied, whenever countless people are forced to endure intoler-

able injustices and inequalities, how can we hope that the good of peace will be realised? The essential elements which make up the truth of that good are missing.

Any authentic search for peace must begin with the realization that the problem of truth and untruth is the concern of every man and woman; it is decisive for the peaceful future of our planet.

Peace is not the mere absence of war, but a harmonious coexistence of individual citizens within a society governed by justice, one in which the good is also achieved, to the extent possible, for each of them. The truth of peace calls upon everyone to cultivate productive and sincere relationships; it encourages them to seek out and to follow the paths of forgiveness and reconciliation, to be transparent in their dealings with others, and to be faithful to their word.

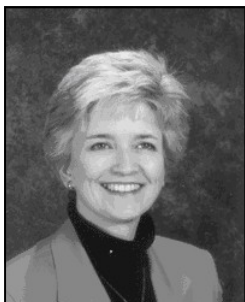
At the conclusion of the Message, I would like to address a particular word to all believers in Christ, inviting them once again to be attentive and generous disciples of the Lord. When we hear the Gospel, dear brothers and sisters, we learn to build peace on the truth of a daily life inspired by the commandment of love. Every community should undertake an extensive process of education and witness aimed at making everyone more aware of the need for a fuller appreciation of the truth of peace. At the same time I ask for an increase of prayers, since peace is above all a gift of God, a gift to be implored incessantly. By God's help, our proclamation and witness to the truth of peace will be all the more convincing and illuminating. With confidence and filial abandonment let us lift up our eyes to Mary, Mother of the Prince of Peace.

Let us ask her to help all God's People, wherever they may be, to work for peace and to be guided by the light of the truth that sets man free. Through Mary's intercession, may all mankind grow in esteem for this fundamental good and strive to make it ever more present in our world, and, in this way, to offer a safer and more serene future to generations yet to come.

This is an extract from the Pope Benedict XVI Message for the World Day of Peace, 1 January, 2006

Tess Donnellan

Pictorial Feature—WUCWO General Assembly



Karen M Hurley
WUCWO
President General



Brenda Finlayson
WUCWO
Vice-President General



Above: L—R Jean, Brenda, Margaret, Pat, Eris, Mary, Madge



Above: Morning Prayer



Above: Dancing Ladies



Above: Ladies at dinner



Above: Arlington Cemetery



Above: On the steps of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington



Portfolio Reports

Bioethics

About Bioethics!

There continues to an explosion of data relating to the many bioethical issues that cause us disquiet. Every day, news comes in from around the world as well as Australia. Unfortunately, there seems to be more issues of concern than celebration. I am accumulating a 'mountain' of information so please contact me if you would like to know more about individual topics.

I have recently made a Submission to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee regarding the ***Transparent Advertising and Notification of Pregnancy Counselling Services Bill 2005***. The Senate Community Affairs Committee stated that *The reason for referral of the Bill provided in the Selection of Bills proposal is to examine the adequacy of the legislation in improving regulation of pregnancy counselling, and ensure the counselling provided by Government-funded pregnancy counselling services is objective, non-directive, and includes information on all three pregnancy options.*

In the introduction I stated, "The members of CWLA Inc care about, care for and support pregnant women and mothers. This support is available through members' own efforts as well as through various church and other social agencies." The submission continued, "CWLA Inc supports in principle transparent advertising and notification of pregnancy counselling services, indeed, truth in advertising in relation to all types counselling services, including pregnancy counselling, accessed by the people of Australia who have need of such services. Members believe that all women in Australian ought to be safeguarded from misleading and confusing advertising and information."

I also said, "Legislation to achieve truth in advertising would generally be supported by CWLA Inc members, however because of the issues discussed below, CWLA Inc recommends to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee that this proposed Bill be rejected."

Some positive news!

Many of you have been following the progress of the application to the Therapeutic Goods Administration by Roche Products Pty Limited to extend the use of the breast cancer drug

Herceptin to include the treatment of women with early breast cancer who are HER-2 positive and have undergone surgery and completed chemotherapy. Herceptin as you may be aware was only registered for use in advanced breast cancer. However, a recent Media release from the TGA stated - I have quoted from the web site: -

22 June 2006

The TGA recently approved an extension of the use of Herceptin (trastuzumab) for use in localised breast cancer, in women with either a primary tumour greater than 20mm in size or with lymph node involvement. This restriction was applied because the data supplied to the TGA only give confidence that the risks of treatment are outweighed by the potential benefits in terms of reduction in recurrence in women meeting this description. Data on women with primary tumours less than 20 mm in size and no lymph node involvement were not provided to the TGA. In reaching this decision, the TGA consulted with the experts of the Australian Drug Evaluation Committee (ADEC), who recommended that the data supported use in those who meet the criteria of a primary tumour greater than 20mm or lymph node involvement. The sponsor company [Roche] has accepted this decision.

The media release of 21 April 2006 also noted, "Roche has also applied for HERCEPTIN to be listed on the PBS. It is expected that the application for PBS listing will be considered at the July meeting of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC)."

Research published in the New England Journal of Medicine last October showed that Herceptin reduced the risk of disease coming back in women with early-stage HER2 positive cancer by 46 per cent. "In the UK the availability of Herceptin will give hope to around 10,000 patients who are HER2 positive."

We are now waiting from news from the July meeting of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) about the possible cost of this drug.

I hope we can all remain aware and prayerful regarding all issues relating to our health and the dignity of all life.

Margo Nancarrow, Bioethics Convenor

Around the States

South Australia

Catholic Women's League State Conference held at Clearview Parish Centre on 8/9 May, included a forum of the following people:

Betty Back - a CWL member for 40 years, caring grandmother, Penny Cahalin - 4 children, full-time mother, (2 children have disabilities) Sarah Drummond - Year 11 student at OLSH College, Joe Hicks - Youth Project Officer for 4 ½ years - married, Pauline Victory - married to Bernard, 3 daughters.

Questions asked were:

What the Church means to us?
 How has my Parish or my branch of CWL made a positive impact on my life journey so far?
 In what ways, do I think that the Catholic Church is shaping me as a person?
 What is a dream that you have for the future of the Church?
 When you hear the phrase "practising our faith" what does that mean to you?
 If there was one thing about the Church that you would like young people to value, what would it be?

Julie Trinidad was the presenter on the day, and spoke of the sharing; such a diversity and wisdom in the group, and how important it is that we find ways to integrate young people into the Church. One of her goals is to try and link young people to inter-generational stories.

Victoria/Wagga Wagga

Journeying from the Southern area of the Western District of Victoria to Swan Hill on the Murray River for the combined Northern Rivers Region and Diocesan Conference has been an eye opener. The green pastures and contented animals grazing in the Southern area is in strong contrast to the empty dams and dry landscapes to those further North. The patience, acceptance and dedication of the Northern farmers as they prepare the soil for crops, trusting the countryside will be blessed with the life giving rains so desperately needed. Recently a vast percentage of the state of New South Wales was declared drought areas.

Let us all remember in our prayers, our Catholic Women's League members who are constantly under the stress and pressure of farming in drought stricken areas.

Guest speakers at the conference, Mrs A Walsh told of the history of the many churches she had visited during her recent trip to England. She spoke of the life of Margaret Clitherow, born 1556, who was martyred by being crushed to death for sheltering a priest. She was canonised in 1970.

Mrs Margaret Mason spoke of a recent trip to China, of the extreme wealth and the extreme poverty. 75% of all babies born are boys. In Shanghai 1200 people are killed annually in road accidents.

The Sale Diocese, Western Region has presented a radio programme called Network on the second Friday of each month for the past 5 years. Commencing at midday, the programme is repeated the following Sunday. A 10 minute presentation was given by a Catholic lady from the area. The cost for the privilege of using the station is \$55.00 annually, paid by the Branches through the Social Justice Council.

Western Australia

Greetings from Western Australia

It's an all new start to 2006 in Western Australia. At the helm of the State Executive is Karyn Kammann, State President, Maria Parkinson, State Secretary and Noelle Guidera, State Treasurer. Completing the team are Archdiocesan President, Margaret Ker and Bunbury Diocesan President, Gemma Greaves as our vice Presidents and of course, our "almost new" State Chaplain, Father Greg Donovan, whose "words of wisdom" are always very welcome.

All Branch Presidents and invited guests were welcomed to the Annual President's Morning Tea on 3 April. State President and State Council members hosted all Branch Presidents giving thanks for their involvement and hard work. Senior Constable, Mike Wear, from the Police Service was guest speaker "enlightening" us on some of the issues faced during "Schoolies Week" each year especially

at the prime sites of Rottnest Island and Dunsborough.

Busselton Branch hosted the Bunbury Diocesan AGM and Conference on Saturday 27 May. Members from branches throughout the Bunbury Diocese were joined by visiting members from the Archdiocese of Perth. Guest speakers on the day included a lady who had spent some years living in Siberia – her insight into “how the other half lives” was both informative and entertaining. Yes, we do live in a lucky country! President, Gemma introduced a friend who shared some “tai chi” exercises with us. State Council met in Busselton the following day - the once a year when State Council meets in the country area.

The Perth Archdiocesan CWL branches are still in the capable, unflappable hands of Archdiocesan President, Margaret Ker. Their AGM and conference will be held in Perth on Wednesday 23 August.

They are delighted with the success of their campaign in the last few years to encourage ladies to join as diocesan members if there is no branch in their parish. This has brought in several new members as well as enabled ladies who belonged to now closed branches to continue their involvement. Planning is now well under way for the celebration of the World Centenary of CWL with a Mass and lunch on Sunday 29 October. Former members and their relatives will be invited to join in this special day.

Archdiocesan members are also privileged to be able to continue our involvement as delegates to other organisations. Marie Majoor is Treasurer of both the State Unit of Australian Church Women and of the National Council of Women of WA, Margaret Ker is First Vice President of ACW, and Kathy Coulson has succeeded Margaret Doyle as Secretary of the State World Day of Prayer Committee.

Manjimup branch celebrated 20 years of CWL with a Mass and luncheon. They were joined by Georgie Bruce-Smith who was Diocesan President at the time of formation and visitors who had been members of the branch over time. 20 year (State) certificates were presented to Joy Cully (inaugural branch President), Karyn Kammann (inaugural branch Secretary) and Mary Nicol, all three of whom were at the first meeting and are still very active today.

State President, Karyn keen to get to know members in all the branches has requested invitations to attend branch meetings/gatherings and has received a keen response so far. After a failed attempt to commence her “tour of duty” due to catching a rampant virus, Karyn hopes, soon, to begin visiting! WA branches stretch the many kilometres from Esperance in the South to Geraldton in the North, and it may take some time to get to everyone, but it certainly won't be for the lack of trying – time and energy permitting!

New South Wales

STATE CONFERENCE

Important news from NSW is the State Conference to be held in Sydney from 15th August to 17th August, 2006. Registration forms can be downloaded and must be returned by 14th July so hurry along and complete them as it will be a great event you just can't miss! The Conference is being held at The Avillion Hotel 389 Pitt Street, Sydney - a wonderful venue and just the place for all the interesting items listed on our itinerary.

YOU JUST HAVE TO BE THERE!!

Archdiocese of Sydney. The Sydney Archdiocese has been very busy working on the State Conference but life goes on and so does the work in all the branches.

CWLA at St. Mark's Parish Drummoyne is a relatively new branch of just six years which has 15 members who work hard and support not only their branch but also their parish. They have donated funds to the local school for a CWLA award for the most improved student in religion and also help other charities e.g. Claffey House, Pregnancy Help, Melanie's Program and many others. They are well supported by their Parish Priest Mons. Vince Redden and Pastoral Associate Mary Cook.

CWLA at St. Patrick's Bondi was established in 1977 and are very involved in many aspects of their Parish. Two members, Mary Levey and Merle Smith have received Australia Day Awards from their local Council, Waverley.

Armidale Diocese. April and May are busy months in their calendar with Regional Conferences being held. The Northern Regional Conference was held at the beautiful Booloominbah Collection situated in the grounds of the University of New England. The guest speaker, Dr. Denise Chapman, gave a most interesting talk on the different forms

of Power of Attorney and the need to consider giving authority to another person to manage affairs in the case of accident or illness.

A most successful day!

The Department of Ageing has informed CWLA Armidale that they will again renew the funding for the coming financial year for their Armidale Visitors' Scheme. Well done Armidale to be again acknowledged for the hard work you do for this Scheme!

Broken Bay Diocese. Member of Broken Bay Diocese, Carmel Keys was recently installed as State Unit President of Australian Church Women NSW. The Service of Dedication was held in Carmel's Parish Church, Mary Immaculate & St. Athanasius Manly in the presence of Bishop David Walker. Also in attendance were Father John Hannon P.P. of Manly and Father Terry O'Brien Diocesan Chaplain and local dignitaries. Approx. 260 people attended from many women's organizations and with CWLA well represented including 21 members from the Central Coast who travelled down by their Community Bus. After the Service, lunch courtesy of Manly Parish, was served by parishioners and CWLA members.

Parramatta Diocese. CWLA members of Parramatta diocese celebrated WUCWO day commencing with a beautiful liturgy presented by Lyn Craddy of Wentworthville Branch and which had been prepared by the women of South Korea, the theme being "Women as Peacemakers". Lynn also gave a very dynamic talk on Korea and was followed by two guest speakers from Caritas Australia. Lulu Mitzhabu, who had been with Caritas for five and a half years, came from the Republic of Congo and had had to flee with her children to Zambia as a refugee because of her work in aiding women and fighting for justice. Her husband had been arrested and later escaped from gaol. Zambia rejected their status but they were finally accepted for Australia. The second speaker Melville Fernandez, from India, had worked with Caritas for 8 years and was the South Asia Program Co-ordinator. Both speakers stressed the gender disparity that is prevalent throughout the African nations and some Asian countries. They were both excellent speakers and of great interest to CWLA who is a regular supporter of Caritas and its work.

Wollongong Diocese. The Wollongong Dio-

cese held a Vocations Congress in which CWLA Wollongong participated through their involvement in the "Festival of Faith" Day which was held recently. A CWLA stall was available for members to answer visitor's questions about their organization. Visitors to the stall were able to view a powerpoint presentation which gave a brief "snapshot" of the work of CWLA. "Sample bags" were available for visitors to take and these contained such items as the State brochure, the Maria Goretti Prayer Card, list of Wollongong branches and membership information, information about WUCWO, outline of activities of CWLA etc. Also on display were some wraps made for "Wrap with Love". In the "Good News" room at the Festival our own Mrs. Peg McEntee OAM gave a brief but inspirational "testimony" about her formative years and her involvement with CWLA after moving with her family to The Oaks parish.

Doreen Ford

Communications Officer CWLA-NSW Inc.

Canberra/Goulburn

Archdiocese AGM Report

As the 20th of May 2006 rapidly approached, the planning by the members of Catholic Women's League Bateman's Bay for the 56th Archdiocesan Annual General Meeting and Conference came to fruition.

Saturday dawned sunny and bright and the CWL ladies welcomed all with morning tea. The Deputy Mayor declared the proceedings open. Following the opening Liturgy a busy day of reports, motions, elections and business ensued. Saturday evening's Mass was a high point of the weekend, enhanced by the singing of Fiona Jones and the choir.

The Conference dinner was a very relaxed evening and a CWL Centenary cake was cut by National President Mary Schultz, outgoing Archdiocesan President Judith-Ann Sjostedt and incoming Archdiocesan President Jacqueline Hipwell.

National President Mary Shultz's keynote address on Sunday was well received, as were the talks by the two Sisters of The Missionaries of God's Love. Members showed their appreciation with a donation towards their work. A closing Liturgy followed.

New Archdiocesan Executive

President: Jacqueline Hipwell

Secretary: Joyce Cremer

Treasurer: Lorraine Birch

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Queensland

This is a great time to be in Catholic Women's League, we have so much to offer, but not everyone knows that. I have just returned from my journeys through the southern Diocese of Queensland and have found such wealth of friendship and sheer giftedness in the ladies that I had the pleasure to enjoy during the passage. As I read and listened to the reports of activities and generosity of us as women and as members my heart swelled with pride and thanksgiving.

I looked around me where ever I was and, coming from the tropics, easily noticed the winter browns in the geography around me, almost every news program mentioned water conservation hints and orders. The faces of the ladies showed no depression about the whole thing but just a determination to see what can be done and then to get involved with the answer. Doesn't that sound natural to us, because that has been our purpose right along! It doesn't matter if it is an overseas tragedy or the plight of the family up the street, wherever, someone is getting on with the answer.

I have to say that is one of the reasons that I love this organisation so much - the answer is there. I know that some are committed to keep the home fires stoked and functional, at whatever cost and others are reaching out to the wider world, together we make it whole and that is how it should be.

The ladies in St George are assisting a group of mothers and friends who are meeting every second week with aims 'to uphold, through mutual help and encouragement, the sanctity of marriage, the dignity of motherhood and the integrity of family.' What impressive aims imagine what this could lead to! It brings warmth to the cockles of the heart. Congratulations to the ladies and all their supporters.

It is a pity that so many don't know about us. If we make it interesting, normal and inviting, how many will begin to ask questions? As I put these questions to you I hear them myself and I am challenged. How about you? In the near future we will be one hundred years alive as an organisation, what a great birthday present it will be to have raised a new interest in what we know and do so well. I think the ball is in our court don't you? Blessings to all of you and I hope the winter treats you well wherever you are and the warmth of our Ladies Mantle reminds you of His love.

Joy Gray for Queensland

Peace continued...

Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

On Sat 27th May I attended a session of the WILPF Conference being held in SA at the Monastery. The organisation is a world-wide women's organisation that supports the promotion of PEACE in all aspects of life: Equality of all people. Work towards a change in world governments spending priorities to meet human needs and an end to all forms of violence from domestic to world disarmament and the resolution of international conflict through the United Nations.

One current resolution is to network with other women's organisations on the impact of war on women and girls.

The speaker was Professor Rhonda Sharp, a South Australian based at the Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Societies at the University of SA. She spoke on "Women's Wellbeing and the Relevance to the National Budget" emphasizing the need of a human rights framework for national budgets; saying that "Budgets reveal a country's economic and social choices". It was refreshing to look at world peace from a different angle.

Helen Rodriquez
National Treasurer CWLA Inc.

Thoughts from WUCWO Assembly

Our official Reception was held at the impressive John Paul II Centre used for evangelization for the Catholic and Christian Faith. Then we assembled at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception for the Opening Mass. Most of the ceremonial music and singing was Gregorian chant. The homily was from the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Pietro Sambi.

The theme: 'Women Peacemakers United in Faith and Action' was developed with many outstanding speakers including Dr Maryann Cusimo Love, Sherry Kennedy Brownrigg of the media and Father Gian Maria Polidoro appointed by the Vatican as Ecclesiastical Assistant speaking of resolution of conflicts.

Five workshops led to wide discussions with over 600 registrants from 44 countries from five continents and many islander peoples. The statement: 'Final Declaration' came out of these discussions.

Pat Madigan
National Vice-President CWLA Inc.

Against Violence and Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children

Pope Benedict XVI will be asked to set aside a Day of Prayer each year for the needs of children who have been sexually abused. The day suggested is the Feast of St Maria Goretti, July 6th.

Catholic Women's League Australia took their motion to the 2006 General Assembly of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations in Arlington, USA where it was warmly supported.

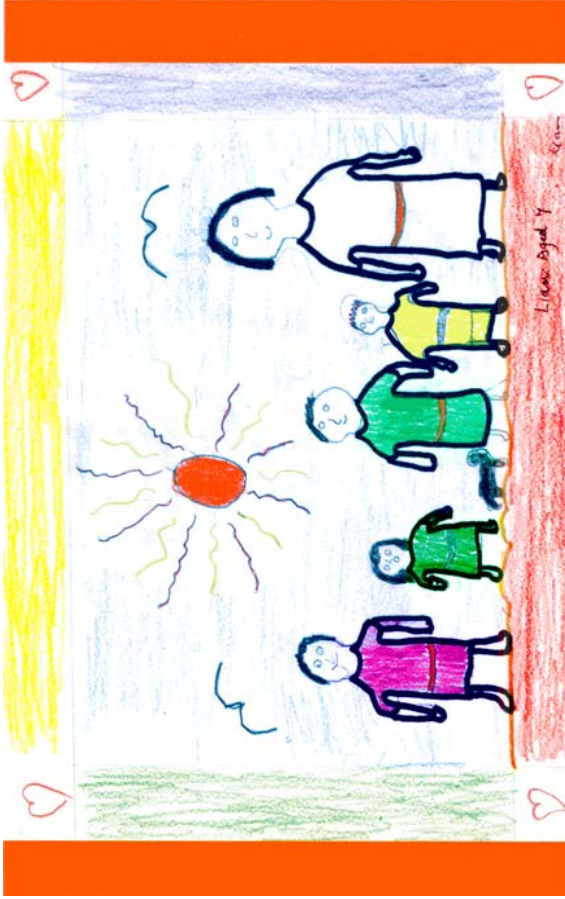
St Maria Goretti was a twelve year old teenager who was threatened with rape by a neighbour's son in 1902. She resisted and was stabbed many times, dying several days later, having forgiven the young man.

She was declared a Saint in 1950 in the presence of her mother and her attacker who had eventually accepted the horror of his action.

The motion also asked that St Maria Goretti be declared Patron Saint of the Innocence of Children.

The violation of children is a scourge of our times, and the call for a Day of Prayer will help the Church reflect on the truth that every child has the right to their innocence and the joy of their early years. It will also show the Church's concern and support for those who have been robbed of their childhood through the evil actions of adults.

Catholic Women's League Australia will continue to work with other organisations and the wider Church and community in order to confront this issue as current media reports in Australia show a disturbing increase in violence and sexual exploitation of women and children – both girls and boys. There is also the need to pray that the abusers of children will face the enormity of their actions and repent of the terrible harm they have caused.



Dear Lord,

I know I pray to you each day
for things that are selfish and greedy
but today I want to ask you
to watch over the children most needy.
I know some people use them
in ways not meant to be
please, dear Lord, protect them,
from their pain, set them free.
I want to pray for the kids out there,
who are ragged and homeless and poor,
that their shelter and clothing and food is good,
and that they suffer no more.

Amen

(By Hannah, aged 11)

St Maria Goretti pray for us and for suffering children everywhere.