



Living the faith of our mothers

Catholic Women's League Australia Inc.

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 4, DECEMBER 2007

IN THIS ISSUE

President's
Report—2

CWLA Executives
Reflect—3

National
Chaplain—4

Convenors
Reports—5

Around the
States—9

What a Feast! &
CWLA Christmas
Message

FEATURES

Conference
Pictures—6,7



Reflections



CWLA National Executive members held their October Meeting in Tumby Bay, in the Port Pirie Diocese, South Australia, with many thanks to Kevin and Marie Lally AM, Vice President.

We were privileged to join SA West Coast parishioners to walk with the World Youth Day Cross and Icon to the top of Pillaworta Hill, highest peak in the Koppio Range, overlooking the sea, for Mass concelebrated by Fr Chris Ryan, Co-ordinator of the Travelling Team.

As the Mass ended, we turned to the setting sun in the West and at dusk prayed in a Candle-light Vigil.



President's Report



"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace, goodwill among people."
Luke 2:14

My prayer for all for Christmas and New Year.

I'll remember:

WUCWO's Assembly: "Women Peace makers: United in Faith and Action: a World gathering of women and meeting so many of them; Mass in the beautiful Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington DC; Brenda Finlayson's election as Vice President General; liaising with Jan Ruff O'Herne AO who agreed to be Australia's 'Woman of Peace' and who has since advocated courageously in the US Congress for reconciliation and justice from Japan for WWII 'Comfort Women'; the adoption of Australia's resolution: 'Day of Prayer for sexually abused'; Australia's Assembly Prayers, prepared by Fr Maurice, with Sibelius' haunting music to "Song of Peace", which we sang again, processing out of St Francis Xavier Cathedral at the Closing Mass of CWLA's National Conference.

Sharing our experiences of the 2006 NATSICC Assembly, "Dreaming from the Heart", commemorating the 1986 visit of Pope John Paul II to Alice Springs, at the Tandanya Conference session. Guest Speaker - Peter Smith, former Chairperson of NATSICC, and since 2002 the World Council of Churches Australian representative at the United Nations Permanent Forum in Indigenous Issues in New York. A DVD including the Pope's memorable address to the Aboriginal Peoples and a message from Pope Benedict XVI. Lunch with Aboriginal cuisine from Tauondi College lecturer Alex Rankin and apprentice chefs. The Art Gallery and Gift Shop.

Inspiring visits with warm welcomes to MO Conferences and AGM's. Enjoying connections with CWL England and Wales, Canada, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Olya Kolomyjec, founding President of the Ukrainian CWLA.

National Project "Mothers and Daughters in Action 2007" touching hearts and leaving a legacy of awareness of MaterCare International and of financial assistance (> \$80,000) likely to "go towards the maternity unit MCI has been asked to equip and support by the Archbishop of Freetown, Sierra Leone." Let us remember in prayer 'our' MaterCare mothers and those not in reach of care.

CWLA Harmony Day celebrations, involving Sudanese women, from which evolved: a Women's Leadership Course for women of diverse cultural and language (CALD) backgrounds, provided by TAFE SA Adelaide, funded by the Govt Secretariat, Australian Women's Coalition, managed by NCWA. Among the 16 women in the Course are Nybol and Nyiel, from the Sudanese group, the 'Bar El Gazal Women's Association' and 8 from Congo, Nigeria and Eritrea.

Life issues remaining of grave concern and profound regret that Amnesty International has abandoned its neutral stance on abortion. CWLA advocacy, some positive research discoveries, and praying with Pope Benedict: "That those dedicated to medical research and all those engaged in legislative activity may always have deep respect for human life, from its beginning to its natural end".

With hope Archbishop Oscar Romero's: "Nothing we do is complete ----- the Kingdom always lies beyond us ----- a step along the way. An opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest".

It has been a joy working together throughout Australia and beyond in His name. My best wishes to President Karyn and in-coming Executive. My thanks to National Council and all with specific CWLA responsibilities, National Chaplain Fr Maurice, Executives Pat, Marie, Maureen, Helen, Pauline and members everywhere.

May God bless you and yours always,

Mary Schultz,
National President CWLA Inc.

Editorial Panel

Editorial Team

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

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A Prayer for the Journey of the WYD Cross and Icon of Our Lady

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

We pray for the Journey of the Cross and Icon Throughout the Great South Land of the Holy Spirit.

May this pilgrimage bless the lives of all who encounter Christ in the Cross

and behold the image of Mary our Mother.

We ask that this Journey may truly prepare young hearts and our nation for World Youth Day 2008.

Amen

CWLA National Executives 2006 –2007

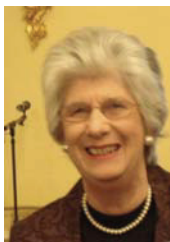
Helen Rodriquez— National Treasurer

In taking on the role of National Treasurer this last two years I had no idea what was ahead of me! It has been a big learning curve and it has been great.

I have had the privilege of meeting some wonderful women and I feel very humble.

I will always remember that during my trip to England at the end of 2006 I was able to include the CWL Centenary celebrations and was delighted to represent you all on that occasion. The fact that there was an Australian member present was so very much appreciated by the English ladies.

I have enjoyed learning about our history and look forward to learning more. I can recommend CWL to anyone. Especially those who are about to retire. It is a very rewarding interest.



The success of the National Conference in September was very rewarding to the National Executive after 18 months preparation time.

I was proud to host the Executive in my home at Tumby Bay for the October meeting. It coincided with the WYD Cross and Icon visit which was an added bonus and a spiritually uplifting event on Pillaworta Hill.



Pauline Victory— National Publicity Officer

Two outstanding highlights from 2006 & 2007 from a Publicity Officer's point of view were the National Conference held in September, 2007, and the correspondence received in response to the MaterCare Project activities.

Outstanding numbers registered for the Conference, with most communication and correspondence via the Website and emails. This confirms that many of our members have grasped and run with the latest technology, taking it in their stride and using it to good effect.

The financial result for the MaterCare Project was an amazing one. And considering that groups organised just one function of their choosing, makes it even more amazing. The other great thing for me was receiving the reports – both great and small – and hearing of the enthusiasm and delight that many experienced from having a function. Some groups sent small donations due to lack of numbers in their group, or because of sickness and age of members. But in doing whatever was done, as part of a bigger organisation, each member and each group worked together, in different locations, for the good of the organisation and the good of those who need our help just to have access to some of the basics of life, which we take for granted.

2006 & 2007 were very big and busy years, but what a time we had!

Maureen Clark—National Secretary

'I have thoroughly enjoyed my term as National Secretary of Catholic Women's League Australia Inc.. I thank God for keeping me healthy in mind and body and I thank you, CWLA members, for granting me the privilege to serve you and Him. May God bless you and your work.

Luv, Maureen Clark



Pat Madigan— National Vice-President

As I reflect at the end of our two year term as National Executive, I feel 'yes' we did well and have no regrets.

There certainly were highlights starting with the handover Mass with so many friends and visitors from interstate to support us as we started our term and, of course, we ended on a high note with the Conference in the Adelaide Town Hall and the Masses in the Cathedral. Who can forget 'Panis Angelicus' sung by Bryan Gilbertson?

What a marvellous contribution you have all made to MaterCare International and we hope many women are helped because of you.

We look forward to Western Australia's term of office and wish them God's blessings.

Marie Lally AM— National Vice-President

My term on the National Executive was a great learning curve of Catholic Women's League's broader work, me being a remote member from the Port Pirie Diocese of SA. It was my privilege to take the Executive to the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Catholic Council Assembly in Alice Springs, being a two day journey each way. It was a great experience to meet the Indigenous Catholic leaders from all parts of Australia and to see the progress that had been made since the Pope's visit in 1986 encouraging reconciliation.



Reflections—National Chaplain



As I come to the end of my term as National Chaplain, I have a confession to make. There is no branch of the Catholic Women's League in my parish! (although one parishioner did attend the National Conference). In one of my previous appointments – at St Luke's, Noarlunga Downs – there was a very active branch.

Being national chaplain was a most enjoyable experience. It was great to work with such a dedicated team as the National Executive here in Adelaide. I was constantly amazed at their capacity, as a group of volunteers, to draw the threads together for such a large and successful National Conference, and to do so with a wonderful harmonious spirit. Congratulations to them all. For me it was also a joy to bring to the Conference my love for, and experience of the Church's liturgy.

There are two things I would like to offer reflections on, one relating to the conference itself, and the other to the future of the League.

Conference Resolutions

It was interesting to read the resolutions which came from the various member organisations to the National Conference. They reflected the concerns of Catholic women across the nation, especially in relation to family and life issues. And one could legitimately expect that. But I wondered about those other issues which also impact upon the lives of people, especially women – poverty, in Australia and beyond; refugees and their welcome to Australia; Indigenous Australians and national reconciliation; Church leadership and the role of women; language in the Church as it impacts upon women; dialogue with, and understanding of women of other faiths. I felt that the focus of concern was far too narrow for a national organisation in modern Australia

The other thing that struck me was that almost all of the resolutions were about directing member organisations to write to politicians about the issues raised. This, I thought, made them pretty useless resolutions. It was all out there, seeing our society in a negative way, directing others to do something about it. The resolutions did not call for any personal reflection, examination of heart, corporate or individual action through which members would continue to move ahead creating change for the common good.

I was left wondering about the value of so much time being spent on the resolutions. Generally resolutions are not the agents for change and development. I suspect that many of the speakers were more powerful in helping enrich the faith of participants, strengthening their resolve to be agents for a better society, increasing their understanding of the issues at hand, shaping a spirit open to other possibilities and hopes, affirming appreciation of the goodwill found in others. In other words, fostering a more positive appreciation of God, Church and society. Perhaps having resolutions and dedicating so much time to them is now an outdated way of spending time together.

Future of the League

One of the really good things was to hear of the growth of the Catholic Women's League within the Catholic Ukrainian Eparchy (Diocese), and to welcome such a large group from Papua New Guinea. My parish, in the western suburbs of Adelaide, is a very working class area. After World War II, it grew rapidly and became the home for many European refugees and migrants. Later it saw a large influx of Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees, and more recently refugees from various African nations. In addition, migrants from the Philippines and India are settling in the area. I would say that, looking at my Sunday congregations, for eighty percent, English is their second language.

The Catholic Church in Australia, now and into the future, is very multicultural. If the Catholic Women's League is going to continue to be relevant and to grow, then it needs to explore how to embrace the diversity of women in our pews, whose experiences of life, insights and priorities may be very different from the founding and present membership.

To engage the CWL with our multicultural Church in any significant way, is to take a step into the unknown. It means moving out of comfort zones in order to offer the hand of friendship, to stop and talk with parishioners from other lands, listening patiently to their different accents. It will mean reshaping the way meetings are conducted in order to show value for different ways of doing things. But it will be worth while. There is enormous energy in refugee and migrant people. They are here to make a new beginning. They are full of hope. They show us courage and perseverance.

In one of my Churches, where the congregation is predominantly Vietnamese families, with older Italian, Polish and Maltese parishioners, some families from Burundi have arrived. Now the Vietnamese guitars rock to African drums, the singing is in English, Vietnamese and Swahili, and all the children head for the school playground together after Mass.

I would love to see the Catholic Women's League take on that kind of vibrancy, friendship and hope. It has started, let the good times keep rolling.

Thank you for allowing me to be your National Chaplain for the past two years. It was a privilege and a joy.

Fr Maurice Shinnick, OAM

Margo Nancarrow reflects...

Advent is a season of waiting! It is a season when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. I guess Mary was like any other pregnant woman waiting, anticipating being a mother and perhaps just a little apprehensive about the birth of her child and probably wishing the birth could be sooner rather than later.

We need to remember that with bioethical issues affecting the dignity and sacredness of life - the safety, wellbeing and sanctity of the unborn child holds a special significance at this time of the Church's year.



Portfolio Reports

In late October this year the presidents of the Bishops' Conferences of England and Wales and Scotland said that the scale of abortion in their countries is a source of anguish for everyone, regardless of creed or political convictions. "Developmental biology makes increasingly clear the beautiful and intricate processes of continuous development and growth of the single unique organism that is formed at conception."

"The Catholic Church has taught from its earliest days, and continues to teach that the direct and voluntary killing of the unborn, at any stage and by what ever means, is gravely wrong. Science has now put beyond doubt that life begins at fertilization, thus reinforcing our duty to protect and respect human life from the moment of conception". (Brigid McKenna, 2007)

Issues that have attracted our attention and concern during this year are the production of embryos for destruction so that their stem cells can be used for research; the increased access to the abortion drug, RU486; the chorus of disapproval against the Catholic Church supported pregnancy support and counselling services; the mooted changes to the law regarding abortions (as in Victoria); the suggestion of the abortion of babies with proven or even suspected disabilities or disorders; the increasing use of prenatal diagnosis for sex selection and abortions; the abortion of babies called 'mid trimester' or 'late term'. Quote is from a doctor in The Age newspaper, 25 April 1998, - *"I'm personally happy to do terminations at 26, 28 and 30 weeks but I know that the public and the politicians won't accept that."* Dr David Grundmann".

The research by Fleming and Ewing in 2005 showed that 64% to 73% of Australians think the abortion rate is too high, and 87% believe it would be a good thing if the number were reduced while at the same time protecting existing legal rights to freely choose abortion. They also found that there was *"Near unanimous support for serious consideration of all the alternatives before choosing abortion"*. In other words, they believe abortion should be a last resort.

It is because we recognise of the value of life from its very beginning that these issues cause us sorrow. CWLA members can support the organisations in our areas that work with women facing an 'unwanted' or difficult pregnancies, e.g. Centacare, Real Choices Australia, Pregnancy Support Australia, Stand up Girl, Karinya House.

We can welcome women who have been through an abortion experience in our own communities.

We can support post abortion organisations such as Project Rachel and Open Doors.

We can remain up to date with the Bills etc that unholy politicians are planning to present to Parliament that relate to EST research or cloning; abortion and abortion legislation.

We can make our objections about immoral bioethical issues known to our elected MPs and Senators at both Federal and State levels and make submissions as necessary and...

We can pray! We can pray that our babies are safe in the womb and make it to the cradle and we can offer practical and spiritual support where possible.

Thank you to all for the help and support that you have given me throughout the year and may God's blessings be heaped upon you this Christmas season and into the New Year.

Margo Nancarrow
National Bioethics Convenor

The Prophetic Role of Women Religious in the fight against Trafficking in Persons Congress was held in Rome from Oct 15-20 2007.

Catholic sisters from 26 countries launched The International Network of Religious Against Trafficking in Persons (INRATIP) dedicated to strengthening the global fight against sexual labour and organ trafficking,

'Trafficking in human beings means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons using threat, force, coercion, fraud, deception or abuse of power by payments to achieve consent or control over a person for the purpose of exploitation. Trafficking in children requires only the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall mean, among other things, sexual exploitation, domestic service, forced labour or removal of organs.'

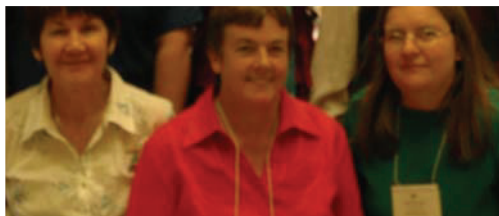
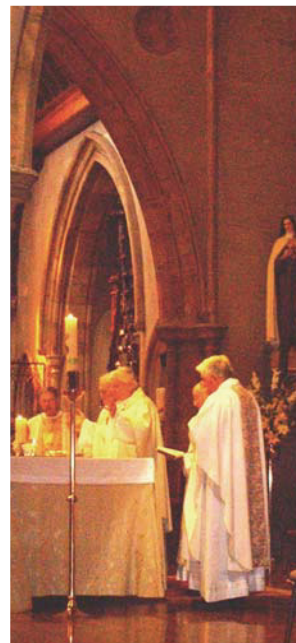
'Trafficking in human beings is now one of the most lucrative and fastest growing transnational crimes generating approximately up to \$10 billion per year: readers are reminded that 50% of trafficking victims worldwide are children.' This statement comes from COMBAT CHILD TRAFFICKING *Handbook for parliamentarians No.9 2005* - an 84 page document which was a collaborative effort between UNICEF and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

In Australia, quietly and largely unnoticed, the incidence of sex slave trafficking is increasing.

The recently released and highly acclaimed Australian film 'The Jammed', a triumph for a film maker Dee McLachlan, depicts Ashley, a young Melbourne woman unexpectedly drawn from her mundane insurance job into the underworld as she reluctantly agrees to help a Chinese mother search for her missing daughter in Melbourne. As the story unfolds, the sinister workings of human trafficking, forced prostitution and government deportation are exposed.

Actual events and Australian court transcripts inspire the film that informs us of the plight of trafficked women in the hope that Australians will find ways to rescue and rehabilitate them. Talented actors dedicated to telling the story display very real emotion. This 'must see' film was made in just 19 days on an extremely tight budget. The story is very moving and the more people who see it the greater possibility there is of stemming this sexual abuse, prosecuting traffickers and eradicating this dreadful trade. Please make every effort to promote and see this film.

Betty Roberts, OAM
Social Issues Convenor





Down Memory Lane



It has been a privilege and honour for me to serve at the national level over the past 8 years—two (2) as the inaugural Social Issues Convenor and then six (6) as the National International Secretary (NIS).

Recognising a dire need for the Social Issues portfolio to grow if it was to become more effective on a national basis, I encouraged

Maree Triffett, a lovely and talented young woman, to nominate for the position. Maree was subsequently elected and has succeeded in expanding the scope of our social justice work. The current Social Issues Convenor, Betty Roberts, continues in this vein and Social Issues has become another vital part of the work of CWLA Inc.

The late Olive Reichman nominated me for the position of NIS. I agreed simply because I thought that it was a fairly safe bet that I would not be elected. I was wrong!

Taking on the NIS role forced me to step out of my 'comfortable Catholic zone' and face the reality that I could no longer pick and choose the issues that suited me, but rather, I had to look at the 'whole picture'. It has been a steep learning curve, often frustrating and at other times very rewarding. This process has also served to deepen my faith and, understanding and love for the Church.

While there have been many highlights over the past six years, the ones that stand out for me are:

- ✓ WUCWO being granted the status of a Public Association under the Code of Canon Law;
- ✓ the Maria Goretti Resolution to the WUCWO General Assembly; and
- ✓ the Doha trip during the International Year of the Family+10.

My experiences as NIS have re-affirmed my belief in the substance and works of the CWL. Issues that our members have been dealing with for decades such as poverty, violence against women and children, human rights and the many dangers threatening the family are increasingly being tackled by other groups, who may benefit from our experience. CWL has both an amazing history and presence. Our members have significant expertise. We need to spread the word!

While I won't miss the UN or New York in the winter months with its freezing cold and bleak weather, I will miss those pro-family and pro-life people whom I have come into contact with over these past six years. Most especially, I will miss Arlene Champoux who has been a source of great inspiration for me. We shared many frustrating hours listening to people who think that the only way to solve the world's many problems is to make abortion a woman's human right.

My thanks also to the CWLA Inc National Council members for giving me the opportunity to represent the League at an international level. Sincere thanks also to the National Executive members and the Member Or-

ganisations International Secretaries for their support. Many a time, the International Secretaries were called upon to reply to WUCWO Questionnaires that arrived late in December and required a response by the end of January. Never once did they let me down. Well done ladies!

I have been most fortunate and blessed in being able to share a great working relationship with Brenda Finlayson, WUCWO Vice President General and WUCWO Board Member Australia, and Gillian Badcock, WUCWO Secretary General.

Thora Regan AM, the incoming NIS, will bring her own fresh perspective to this position and I have no doubt that she will represent the League at the international level with grace and witness. I ask for your continued prayers on behalf of those who fight for life and justice.

**God Bless,
Madge Fahy**

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (CWLD) NSW

The CWLD Project launched this year is well under way. The project, aimed at linking women with the resources they need to develop their leadership skills is available through workshops, scholarships and mentoring. Two successful workshops have been held this year.

Two further workshops will be held in 2008. The first entitled "Leading Your Family to Health and Wellbeing" in the Parramatta Diocese on Saturday 8th March, 9.30am-12.30pm at The Sisters of Mercy Centre, 6 Victoria Road, Parramatta. With two presenters for this workshop – Gabrielle Donlevy and Sally Harrison.

The second workshop of 2008 "Women Leading International Development" will be in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese on Saturday 31st May, 9.30am – 12.30pm in The Toohey Room at the Maitland-Newcastle Diocesan Offices, Newcastle. The presenter will be Liz Stone from Caritas, Australia.

A maximum of four scholarships, each to the value of \$1,500, is being made available by CWLA-NSW open to women up to the age of 55 years. Applicants can apply for a course or program they believe will assist their leadership development. The criteria for course selection is available with the Application Form with the one necessity that they attend a Workshop.

Each successful scholarship applicant will be offered the services of a leadership mentor who will be available to support and encourage them through their course or program.

**For further information; Catholic Women's League Australia – New South Wales Inc. PO Box 2443, Bowral, NSW 2576. Phone: (02) 4861 7048
Email: jpcvmcgrath@bigpond.com
Web: www.cwlsnw.wordpress.com**

Around the States

Western Australia

Catholic Women's League WA entered into another exciting phase at its recent Annual General Meeting and Conference held at the Redemptorist Retreat House in North Perth. Around 60 women gathered at this, our 70th year of being, and participated fully into the day.

The day commenced with Mass celebrated by Father Joe Parkinson, director of the LJ Goody Bio-ethics centre and to the surprise of the recipients, THREE Life Memberships were presented at the conclusion of Mass. The tone of the day was set by the reading of the work and involvement in CWL of these three wonderful ladies – Anne Martin from Mount Barker, Anne Power from Kukerin and Irene McCullagh from Dianella. Their stories told of the earlier days of CWL

From L-R – Anne Martin, Irene McCullagh and Anne Power



in Western Australia where they have been involved since "forever" in setting up branches, working in their parishes and dioceses and in the wider communities around them. All present could not help but be inspired by these amazing women. And, to their added joy and surprise they were joined by many family members as they "cut the Anniversary cake" and shared morning tea with the members of CWL Western Australia.

It is an exciting time for CWLWA as it is a time of change and challenge. Three of the State Executive, President, Karyn Kammann, Secretary, Maria Parkinson and Treasurer, Noelle Guidera all accepted positions on the Executive of National for 2008-2009 leaving the State positions vacant. Voting took place for the position of State President for the coming year and Georgie Bruce-Smith was duly elected, Bev Macri was elected State Secretary, unopposed, and Dorothy Beyer was elected State Treasurer unopposed.

With CWLA National Council now at our doorstep there is much to be done – the task made all the easier with the assurance of support from State Council. Our Downey House committee has worked tirelessly searching ways to deal with the multitude of issues concerning our "home" and hopefully will be able to bring to fruition some action to be taken in the not too distant future. We are very grateful to Margaret and Dorothy for all they done on behalf of the membership.

Guest Speakers at our State AGM and Conference were Diana Altieri from the Catholic Education Office and Anita Parker from the Perth Archdiocesan World Youth Day committee. Diana spoke very eloquently on the WA Catholic Religious Education Programme and in particular explained how our young people are being taught in the light of the "Theology of the Body". This has been in the curriculum of Catholic Schools in WA since 1983 and Diana was able

(within the restricted time frame of her talk and presentation) to explain the "how, what and why". We were left with no doubt that our young people in Catholic Schools are in very good hands.

Anita Parker from WYP Perth is a "survivor of three World Youth Days" and a truly inspirational young ambassador. Whilst many of us had heard of World Youth Day (how could we not?), Anita's talk and presentation enlivened our thoughts on this day and how it can and will impact on the lives of so many of our young people.

We end this year sending a very big thank you to National President, Mary and her wonderful team. We can only hope to "fill your very large shoes".

Maria Parkinson
Secretary, CWL WA

Installation Mass CWLA National 2008-09

All members are cordially invited to attend the first official function of CWLA National 2008-09

The Installation Mass will take place at the
Redemptorist Monastery Church
Vincent Street, North Perth
On 10 February 2008 at 2.00pm

Some accommodation available at the Monastery Retreat House (next door)

For details contact **Maria Parkinson**
Ph: (08) 97511936
E: maria.parkinson@westnet.com.au

Tasmania

Congratulations to all members who wrote letters and prayed hard that the Cloning Bill would be defeated in our Parliament. Unfortunately most politicians didn't listen to our opinions or those of well-qualified people who spoke to them. The good news is that the Lord will reward you for your efforts. And further good news now that, because of the work done by Shinya Yamanaka, with reprogramming mouse skin cells to grow into any kind of tissue, other scientists are already planning to move away from embryonic stem cells and opting for adult stem cells. Praise God.

Congratulations to Brenda Finlayson, our World Union Vice-President General and Board Member Australia, on being chosen to present a paper on "Guardians of spousal and maternal love" for the International Conference in Rome in February next.

I wish all members of CWLA a very Holy and Happy Christmas, and a well-earned break over the Christmas holidays, with very many blessings in the year ahead.

Bernice McKenna
President, CWL Tasmania

Around the States

Queensland

Profile on Gert Drain - Ayr President

Gert Drain is one of those people whom God has given the gifts of kindness, honesty and simplicity. Her worldly possessions are a moderate home, a motor scooter and her family and friends. She has six children (all of whom are married), 25 grandchildren and 22 great grandchildren. And she can tell you lots about each of them and knows all their birthdays - a real achievement for a 79 year old. She has been a widow for 9 years and quietly tends her home, garden and pets, while being active in the community.

Two years ago Gert became President of Sacred Heart Branch, Ayr. Something Gert says she never thought she could do. After much prayer to the Holy Spirit and discernment at Branch meetings, no one would accept the position. Gert said "I woke up one morning and the thought came to me - could I do the job?" So she phoned another member and put the question to her and was encouraged with a positive answer. There is no doubt in the minds of some members that the Holy Spirit does work in the lives of those who trust Him.



Gert (pictured left) has a unique identity in the town - *the elderly lady who rides a Motor Scooter*. She has been riding her Scooter for 35 years. In the early days when she was rearing a young family, she accepted the job of collecting for the Blind to help with the family budget; (most of you will remember when someone came to your door each year for a donation - not like the phone calls of today). Gert would ride her Scooter to collect and her territory included the outlying areas of Clare and Giru which is a half hour drive by car today and both towns are in different directions.

Gert will tell you that the friends she has made through her community work especially CWL has added something special to her life. And her friends will tell you that she is doing her job as President well and is loved by all and is appreciative of the support and encouragement she receives from them all.

Gert Drain is an example to us all, that *age is no barrier to the work of God's Holy Spirit*.

**Joan Armstrong,
President CWL Queensland**

Canberra/Goulburn

Dear League Members every where, as 2007 hastens to a conclusion I would like to report on various activities in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

Many of our members attended the 21st National Conference of Australian Church Women held in Geelong.

The Conference was of special significance for members of the ACT Unit, as they accepted the challenge of hosting the Australian Church Women's National Executive for the ensuing two years. Four of the Executive are members of CWL. With the Theme of "Faith in the Future", the 2009 Australian Church Women's National Conference will take place in Canberra September 21st - 25th.

A Solemn Memorial Mass was held at St Christopher's Cathedral for Archbishop Ambrose De Paoli Apostolic Nuncio in Australia on the 17th October. I was honoured to represent CWLA on this occasion.

Attended by members of CWL Canberra/Goulburn were the following:-

- World Community Day Service at the Salvation Army Temple at Braddon, ACT where the "Least Coins" collected by Women's Church Groups were handed over.
- The Blessing and planting of the Good Samaritan Rose in the National Rose Garden near the Old Parliament House by Fr. Ben Roberts and Sir William and Lady Deane; in honour of the 150th Anniversary of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan.
- Knights of the Southern Cross (Australia) National Secretariat's Fund Raising Christmas Dinner to raise funds to train Priests and Lay people to serve with the Armed Forces. Held at the Southern Cross Club Phillip ACT.
- League members were delegates for the two days of the Pulse Youth Summit at Marist College Pearce, ACT.
- Also attended was the Fund Raiser organized by the Wives of the Diplomatic Corp held at the Embassy of Italy Residence in aid of Canberra Friends Alola, and there work in East Timor.
- The forum and launch of a Photographic exhibition on Women and War, organised by the International and Australian Red Cross at the Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre Canberra, ACT
- Members attended the Canberra/Goulburn Archdiocese Commission for Women Open Meeting at the Rheinberger Centre Yarralumla, ACT.
- The National Launch of White Ribbon Day to support International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Now organised by men and held at The Boat House by the Lake Barton ACT, and attended by members of the League.

**Jacqueline Hipwell
Archdiocesan President,
CWL Canberra and Goulburn**

Victoria/Wagga Wagga

The World Youth Day Cross and Icon has journeyed through some of the Dioceses, on the way to Sydney for World Youth Day in July 2008. We do need to keep the youth in our prayers, and give them any support we can.

During 2007 many Branches celebrated Birthdays. Every Birthday is a 'milestone' however we seem to place more emphasis on big 'O' birthdays!

November was the month chosen 90 years ago to form the Catholic Women's Social Guild, in the Ballarat Diocese.

Ninety years later, before a very nice lunch, and social afternoon, over 200 people gathered to celebrate the Eucharist in St Alipius' beautiful Church in Ballarat, to recognise the occasion. Chief celebrant was Bishop Peter Connors, with concelebrants, Bishop Ronald Mulkearns, (Former Bishop of Ballarat Diocese), Fr Adrian McInerney PP of St Alipius, Fr P Bohan Diocesan Chaplin, Fr D Arundell, and Fr M Colansante.

During the homily Bishop Connors spoke of the invitation issued in 1917, by the late Bishop Foley to Fr Lockington to attend a meeting in Ballarat, with the possibility of introducing the Catholic Women's Social Guild (now known as the Catholic Women's League) into the Diocese. Four hundred enthusiastic ladies attended that meeting, the atmosphere was positive, resulting in the start of many Branches throughout the Diocese.

During the following years 89 Branches were formed, 24 Branches remain today.

Bishop Connors referred to the prayer and spirituality of the League and likened the support Mary and Elizabeth had offered each other, to that of the Catholic Women's League, and the work they do. He also mentioned the Priests in the Diocese being grateful for the support the CWL Branches offer in their parishes.

Nieces of Dr Mary Glowrey (accompanied by their husbands), and a grand niece, were present. Sr Mary Glowrey, Society of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, (niece of Dr Mary Glowrey) spoke briefly, offered congratulations saying, Women have always taken an active role down through the ages, promoting and doing the work of the Church.

Representatives from the Melbourne Archdiocese, Sandhurst, and Wagga Wagga Dioceses, General President Mrs Madge Fahy, and General Secretary Noreen Elliott from Melbourne, as well as representatives of the 'Special Works' Committees were present. Many members of the Ballarat Diocese had also made the journey renewing long standing friendships. A beautifully decorated birthday cake was cut.

Presenting Fr Bohan with a Certificate of Appreciation for services given, both as General and Diocesan Chaplin, General President Mrs Madge Fahy, thanked Fr Bohan for his prolific writings on the Scripture Messages, as well as for his support given so readily to the Catholic Women's League.

Responding, Fr Bohan said he had received more than he had ever given to the Catholic Women's League.

Pat Stanhope
Liaison Officer, Vic/WW

South Australia

Pictured right:

Clarice Jackson 90 years
Pauline Walker 70 years
Lyn von der Borch 70 years
President of Kingswood branch
Edna Peek 96 years
Celebrating "Age, Wisdom"
326 years



80 CWL women from 28 branches attended the State Meeting at Burra on 22nd October 2007. Burra President, Maureen Bevan welcomed all the members including 4 National Executives to the Sports Complex. Numerous reports revealed a variety of community activities, concerns, interests and fundraising. Branches were asked for suggestions to help families suffering difficulties. One initiative has been to take advantage of a CWA Grant to take children to the Christmas Pageant accompanied by their families with an overnight suburban stay. Fundraising for MaterCare International has also been successful which included the efforts of all SA branches.

State President Kath Smith reported that the shared city office, the website, communications via email newsletters have been successful. Adelaide Diocese spoke of the 18 baskets of Christmas goodies assembled by executive members for distribution to retired priests. An amount of \$5,000 has already been forwarded to the WYD committee in SA to be used for youth gatherings.

Port Pirie Diocese CWL Chaplain, Fr Leon Quinn of Port Lincoln conducted the State Election. Congratulated retiring: Anne Bowen, Anne Reichstein and Pat Farrer. A prayerful induction for new President Kath Smith, Vice Presidents Anne-Marie Clark and Margaret Mariner, Secretary Carmel Burns and Treasurer Joan Young.

After lunch the council meeting congratulated Snowtown CWL for 75 years and Cummins Branch for a community award, and to many individuals who have received civic awards.

The SA CWL Childcare Centre continues to operate extremely well with CWL philosophy always promoted.

Guest speaker Lauren Hill—24 year old nurse of Port Augusta, grew up with the obsession "To change the world" and after going to the 2005 WYD in Cologne, she felt revitalised and enthusiastic about her faith. As part of the WYD 2008 planning committee, Lauren went Rome to accompany the Cross and Icon to Australia for which Fr Chris Ryan is custodian. The Cross is a reminder of Christ's sacrifice and suffering. The Icon is a reminder of women in our lives—helping each other and close family relationships, strong faith and challenges. At Port Augusta a large group of Aboriginal people met the WYD Cross, 60 young people attended with 30 signing to attend WYD 2008.

Kath Smith
State President, SA



What a Feast!

What a feast it was! From the Opening Mass at St Francis Xavier Cathedral on Wednesday morning through to the Closing Mass on Friday, the 300+ delegates at the Catholic Women's League Australia National Conference were treated to a smorgasbord of 'snacks', 'substantial meals' and 'desserts' to satisfy even the fussiest of consumers.

Bishop Greg O'Kelly SJ AM DD VG was the Main Celebrant for the Memorial of the Holy Name of Mary, assisted by Emeritus Archbishop Leonard Faulkner, our National Chaplain and Liturgist Fr Maurice Shinnick OAM, Fr Peter Milburn and Mons Vin Tigge-man. And it was with great joy that we then ventured to the Adelaide Town Hall, on a perfect Adelaide morning for a cuppa, the Official Opening of the Conference by the Lord Mayor, Mr Michael Harbison, and a beautiful address picking up our theme *'Living the Faith of our Mothers into the Future'*, by Bishop O'Kelly.

The strength of CWLA was on show with reports from Brenda Finlayson, the Vice-President of WUCWO (The World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations) – of which CWLA is a member – and Madge Fahy, the National International Secretary. Brenda and Madge are our links to the wider world and operate at the Vatican and U.N. levels. We are truly blessed with their contributions.

Mrs Robyn Gaspari, President Australian Women's Coalition, Govt Secretariat, chaired the Business Session of the Conference where each Member Organisation presented their concerns and desired actions to be taken on board by the League. These showed the variety of involvement and interest by members Australia wide. Motions and Recommendations were presented for ratification in the areas of IVF services, the exploitation and sexualisation of children in the marketing of fashions, the use of embryonic stem cells for testing drugs, religious freedom, and much more. It was a gruelling session, and was managed with great sensitivity and professionalism by Robyn.

Reports were presented by each Member Organisation – 7 in all – and by the National Convenors of *Social Issues*, and of *Bioethics*. Substantial 'morsels' were delivered by Bernard Siebert of Frank J Siebert Funeral Directors (and our Conference Major Sponsor), and Libby Kosmala OAM.

Another 'tasty morsel' was the visit to the Tandanya Aboriginal Cultural Institute in Grenfell St. where Peter Smith, a member of NATSIEC spoke and reflected on Pope John Paul's visit to Central Australia 21 years ago. Lunch was also provided by the students of the Tauondi College.

The Conference Dinner was **almost** the 'icing on the cake' of the Conference. Not a quiet affair with 360 Dinner guests enjoying great food, congenial company, and South Australian talent and internationally-acclaimed comedienne Fiona O'Loughlin. All in all a superb night.

The final day, provided more wonderful 'food for thought', with Sr Cheryle Thomson MSS, Sr Anne Sheridan LCM, Ms Jill Hutt and Ms Kimberley Davis sharing their *'Changing Directions'*; and Sr Patricia Pak Poy RSM OAM, Ms Michelle Rawady and Ms Josephine Baxter exploring *'Modern Issues'*.

The **real** 'icing on the cake' came for many when our cheque for \$75,280 was presented to MaterCare International President, Dr Adrian Thomas. This fantastic amount was the result of each CWL group around Australia organising one fundraising activity each, in April 2007, for MaterCare's work in developing countries, particularly in the area of Obstetric Fistulae Hospitals.

And so we came to the Closing Mass, at St Francis Xavier Cathedral, where we'd begun just 2 days earlier. In fine voice, in high spirits, and united in the liturgy of the Church, we gathered for our final celebration with Bishop Hurley DD, and we completed our 'feast'. And what a feast it was!

Pauline Victory
National Publicity Officer

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE AUSTRALIA INC.

*'Do not be afraid; for see –
I am bringing you
good news of great joy
for all the people:
to you is born this day
in the city of David
a Saviour, who is
the Christ, the Lord'*

Luke 2:10-11.

MERRY CHRISTMAS