



# Catholic Women's League Australia Inc.

WALKING WITH GOD 'WE WALK BY FAITH NOT BY SIGHT' CORINTHIANS 2-5:7

National Newsletter

Issue 2  
June 2009

In this issue

2

President's Report

3

State News

9

Convenor's Reports



## ST MARIA GORETTI



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

(Hannah, aged 11)

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

*Distributed by Catholic Women's League Australia Inc.*

FEAST DAY 6 JULY





## NEW SOUTH WALES

"The Vine" the Newsletter of CWLA-NSW Inc celebrates 25 years of publication this year. The editors during this time, though many, have ensured that "The Vine" has always been interesting and informative. The current editor, Noeline Kelly, and her team continue to do just this. The Newsletter is posted to every member in New South Wales thereby making sure our members receive at least three issues in their mail box each year. It is an excellent means of keeping our members up to date with news from all Dioceses.

As Alternate Delegate for CWLA Inc. to the Australian Women's Coalition (AWC) I attended the National meeting of this organisation which was held over the weekend of 16-17 May 2009 in Sydney. Eighteen women's organisations were represented as well as the Consultant/Co-coordinator Dr Frances Panopoulos Ph.D. The main items for discussion were: Website regeneration; continued employment of consultant/coordinator to AWC; Consultation on the new National Women's Health Policy with consultants Dr Alison Rutherford and Dr Jane Hirst. It is important for CWLA to attend these meetings to gauge the views of other women's groups.

**Bathurst** Annual Diocesan Conference was held on 22 March with the theme "Hope for the World". Mass was celebrated by Rev Fr Pat O'Regan who at the time was Diocesan Administrator. CWL ladies from Lithgow and Oberon Branches were Readers, Prayers of Intercession and as Extra-Ordinary Minister of the Eucharist. Members from Sydney Archdiocese, Broken Bay and Wollongong CWL joined with their sister Diocese to make a very successful day.

**Lismore** Diocesan Annual Conference was to be held 24-25 May at Bellingen, but unfortunately the rain has brought floods once again to the region and as a result the Conference was cancelled, hopefully to be rescheduled later in the year. Bellingen and surrounding towns in the Lismore Diocese have been in flood about three times this year. Please remember the members and the general population of northern New South Wales as well as those in south-east Queensland in your prayers as they attempt to recover from the floods.

**West Wollongong** Branch held a social afternoon to aid the Catholic Leprosy Service in Korea which is the special project of the Diocese for this year. Guest speaker was Wendy Richardson, the local playwright who presented a series of tales of five women with connections to Mt Kembla and the mining disaster. A delicious afternoon tea was

enjoyed by all and an amount of \$572 was raised.

A social event was conducted for the ladies of CWL **Wollongong** Diocese on St Patrick's Day, where 27 ladies all wearing green enjoyed a perfect autumn day cruising on the Port Hacking River. The cruise gave breathtaking views of the foreshores with elegant homes and large boats moored on one side and the simple beauty of the Royal National Park on the other. The ladies enjoyed morning tea and typical CWL good friendship.



**St Patrick's Day, CWL Wollongong**

In March this year over 60 members of **Parramatta** Diocese attended a Discernment Retreat Day conducted by the Diocesan Chaplain, Fr. David Hume at St. Joseph's Conference Centre, Baulkham Hills. Parramatta Diocese is experiencing the same dilemma as almost all other Dioceses – the dilemma of falling numbers, and the focus of this Discernment Day was to look inwards at what we have in Catholic Women's League in 2009, and build on our strengths.

Fr Dave introduced us to *Lectio Divina*, – a way of reading the Scriptures whereby we gradually let go of our own agenda and open ourselves to what God wants to say to us.

During the day there was time for sharing thoughts, journaling and quiet times as well as a guided meditation. Our day concluded with Mass, when, as a group, we were privileged to minister to each other in this special sharing of the Eucharist.

As an extension of the message of this day, all members were asked to re-visit the origins of CWL, and to discuss/answer a series of questions relating to the place of CWL in our past, present and future, particularly noting:

What is the purpose of the CWL?

Have we achieved what we set out to do?

Who do we serve in our Diocese, and what are their needs?

What needs to be done so that CWL remains active, relevant and faithful to our founding members, and to the people we serve in our ministry?



## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The CWL-SA State Meeting was held on Monday, 27 April in the Plympton Parish. The CWL branches of Plympton/Edwardstown, Glenelg and Brighton worked together to provide the hospitality for the day, and shared the Ministries at Mass, which was concelebrated by the Parish Priest, Fr George Nader, and our Archdiocesan Chaplain, Fr Eddie Welling.

Our guest speaker for the morning was one of our younger CWL members Rebecca Smailes, from our newest branch. She spoke on the topic **“Keeping, and handing on the Faith in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”**.

Rebecca and her husband Allan moved from Canberra to Adelaide in 2008 and settled in the Parish of Aberfoyle Park. They have 3 children – Hannah, aged 4; Cascia, aged 2, Erin, aged 1; and a baby due on September 8. Rebecca is working full-time at home caring for their daughters, and she also has a small home-based part time job with Pregnancy Support Australia, doing their finances.



**Rebecca & Allan Smailes with their children**

Rebecca was brought up in a Catholic family, educated in Catholic schools, and lived at a Catholic residential college while attending University. After walking away from the Church believing that it wasn't relevant, she came across a lay Catholic Community in Canberra where her faith was really formed and nurtured. She and Allan found another form of Catholic Community when they moved to Melbourne for a year to study Marriage and Family Studies at the John Paul II Institute. After graduating with Diplomas of Marriage and Family Studies, Rebecca and Allan helped prepare young couples for marriage in Canberra.

Their biggest ministry at the moment is helping to form their own children. Again this is where they see a strong Catholic Community is vital. They try to evangelise their children in everyday ways, with grace at meals, celebrating feast days with a treat, remembering Lent with some kind of simplicity, and bedtime prayers with a litany of the saints. They are

trying to teach their girls that they are precious and have dignity, knowing that the world in which they live will really challenge their sense of self worth.

Raising children in today's culture is challenging in so many ways. Santa Claus bringing lots of presents, and the Easter Bunny bringing lots of chocolates – seemingly little things, but ingrained in our culture – which almost completely overshadow the true meaning of these special Christian events.

At the moment Allan and Rebecca are trying to decide which school to send their children to. Will it be a Catholic school? What values will they learn there? Will it be different to the Government school? Do the teachers live faith-filled lives? Will they learn the teachings of the Catholic Church there? Could the thousands of dollars in school fees be better spent allowing children in third world countries get a basic education?

*“Children are so precious – and so impressionable and so fragile and so important. We as parents have such a great responsibility. And we can't do it on our own – and I don't think we are meant to. Our birth might be into just one family, but our Baptism is into the community of God's people. That's where each of you ladies has a part to play. You are living lives of active faith. You are the community that surrounds our young families at Mass today. I invite each of you to be an active part of keeping and handing on the Catholic faith to our young people in the 21st Century. People often say that the young are the future of the Church. Which is true. But it's just as true to say that each of you gathered here today is the future of our Church.”*

**Pauline Victory**  
President - South Australia

### CWLA 2009 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA

#### OPENING MASS

SUNDAY AFTERNOON 30 AUGUST

#### CONFERENCE

FROM MONDAY 31 AUGUST

'TIL WEDNESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER

#### CONFERENCE DINNER

WEDNESDAY NIGHT 2 SEPTEMBER

#### REGISTRATION FORMS

AVAILABLE FROM

YOUR BRANCH, DIOCESE, STATE

OR THE NATIONAL SECRETARY

## TASMANIA

History was made in Tasmania recently when Life Member and matriarch, Mrs. Hazel (Peg) Lambert became the first member to reach one hundred years. She received congratulatory messages from Pope Benedict, Queen Elizabeth, the Governor-General and the Prime Minister. She enjoyed a special day, surrounded by her extended family.

Peg joined the League in 1944 and was a great ambassador. She promoted it at every opportunity and was famous for recruiting new members. She held many positions, locally, state-wide and nationally and participated in ecumenical groups aligned with the League, e.g. Australian Church Women and World Day of Prayer. She was the first Catholic woman to be President of A.C.W. Tasmanian Unit. She was also a delegate to Meals on Wheels and had a long association with St. Vincent's Hospital Auxiliary. Sadly, Peg is no longer an active member. She now resides at Mount Esk Nursing Home in Launceston.

Each year the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the Hobart City Council invite volunteers to a Reception at the Town Hall. This year our State International Secretary, Mrs. Mary Walsh, and a member of her branch, Barbara Jeffries, represented CWL Tasmania.



**Mrs Barbara Jeffries, Lord Mayor, Alderman Rob Valentine, and Mrs Mary Walsh**

Recently we had a more serious occasion to meet with the aldermen. An application was made to the Hobart City Council for permission to convert a vacant building, formerly the Avalon Theatre and later an electrical store, (next to the Wesley Church) into a "strip joint" under the guise of The Diamond Club. The applicant recently ran a similar business (next to St. David's Anglican Cathedral), which created a great deal of angst in the community because of the anti-social behaviour of its members.

A large number of objections to the proposal were received by the Council Planning and Development Committee (including ours), and the Aldermen voted against it. It was then referred to the full Council and was unanimously defeated there, also. We are hoping this is the end of the matter.

Sadly, within six weeks we saw three of our Life Members go to their eternal reward - Peg Finlay, Mona McDermott and Shirley Horlock. They have each made a tremendous contribution to the League in Tasmania and we can ill afford to lose their expertise. May they rest in peace.

**Lillian Deane**  
**President - Tasmania**

## QUEENSLAND

Members of the Townsville Diocese celebrated the Feast Day of Mary Help of Christians on Friday 29 May. As well as being our patroness Mary Help of Christians is also the Patroness of the Townsville Diocese.

Bishop Putney celebrated Mass and he was assisted by Father Lancini, CWL Townsville Diocesan Chaplain and Father Lyons who is the Parish Priest of Cranbrook.

Following the Mass Ranger Dave from the Billabong Wild Life Reserve in Townsville gave us a most interesting and entertaining address. This was followed by a delicious luncheon held in the School hall at Cranbrook and I was fortunate enough to be able to attend this celebration. Following lunch a Cent Sale was held with many beautiful prizes being given away to the lucky winners.

Two branches in the Brisbane Archdiocese celebrated milestones in May: The Corinda/Graceville branch celebrated 50 years and Aspley Branch 25 years.

At present plans are underway for the Queensland State Conference in 2010 which is being held in St George.

May God bless all members of Catholic Women's League throughout Australia and we look forward to meeting in Perth in September.

**Joan Armstrong**  
**President - Queensland**

## VICTORIA & WAGGA WAGGA

### Launching *More Than Tea and Cake*

The inspiring story of the League in Victoria and Wagga Wagga has been beautifully told in a short documentary, titled *More Than Tea and Cake*, by award-winning young filmmaker Russell Brown. Using interviews and rare archival images, *More Than Tea and Cake* takes you on a journey that starts with a gathering of more than three thousand women at Cathedral Hall in Fitzroy in 1916, leads to Dr Mary Glowrey's life of witness and hope, explores the role played by the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) in one of the greatest international declarations and ultimately, celebrates the 'mighty power' of Catholic women united in the service of authentic human values.

In launching the League's documentary, Archbishop Hart said: "It is with great joy that I recognise this initiative, that I thank all who have made it possible, as we go forward into the new millennium with the articulate special gifts of women making a unique contribution to society and going forward to show the dignity of each person in a way that only they can do.

Present at this momentous occasion were representatives of the Diocesan Committee, each Special Works Committee, the Governing Body and the Anima Women's Network. More than twenty members of Dr Mary Glowrey's family, including her niece Sr Mary Glowrey who had travelled all the way from Adelaide, were also present. Sr Michele Toussaint, Congregational Leader of the Family Care Sisters, also attended in honour of the contribution made by their founder, Maude O'Connell, in the early years of the League. The filmmakers and many of the volunteers who had contributed their time and gifts to this wonderful film project also attended this historic event.

During the launch, Archbishop Hart acknowledged the League's history of tremendous leadership. He said: "In this world of individualism, there is a great temptation for people to be exploited simply to produce profit or to be reduced simply to cogs in a wheel without any respect for their human dignity. Further exploitation of that dignity in medical experimentation, in the greatly increased incidence of abortion and embryonic stem cell research, all diminish the God-given reality of each individual. Although the membership of the League has changed, its sense of purpose of working for the dignity of humanity and allowing women to make

a just and unique contribution to society accords totally with the Gospel values in which we live."

With Mary Glowrey seemingly watching over all those present, Archbishop Hart remarked that he remained in strong admiration of all that Mary Glowrey has done and of her remarkable example. He said: "I wish to join my prayers to those of so many others who would pray that her cause will be introduced by the Church and her capacity to lead people into service of life and the protection of the weakest keeps a freshness which goes beyond the prejudices and cultural stereotypes which are so characteristic in the world of today."



**At the launch of 'More Than Tea and Cake'**

Since the publication of an article about Dr Mary Glowrey in the April edition of *The Far East*, requests for the prayer card for the cause of Dr Mary Glowrey and also orders for the League's mini-documentary have been flowing in from all over Australia. We have been particularly encouraged by the way in which young people have taken Mary Glowrey into their hearts and been inspired by her. Members of the Catholic Women's League can purchase a copy of the mini-documentary on DVD at the discounted price of \$5.00 (plus \$3.50 postage and handling per DVD). All funds from the sale of the DVD will help to promote the cause of Dr Mary Glowrey and the dignity of the human person.

Requests for the prayer card for the cause of Dr Mary Glowrey or orders for the DVD, *More Than Tea and Cakes*, should be sent to the General Secretary, Catholic Women's League of Victoria and Wagga Wagga, 132-134 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy, VIC, 3065.

**Robyn Fahy, Public Relations Advisory Group  
CWL Victoria and Wagga Wagga**

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Western Australia at this time is in a state of excitement as the National Conference draws near. Members have been working tirelessly for the craft stall which promises to be absolutely magnificent and we have also been debating on Motions which will be presented at the National Conference.

We are looking forward to greeting members from other States in this wonderful world of ours, Australia! We have been experiencing beautiful weather here in the West and hopefully we will get through the winter times so that when you all come across the Nullarbor there will again be magnificent weather for you all to enjoy.

Just last week I returned home from attending the Annual Bunbury Diocesan Conference which was magnificent and my thanks go to the wonderful women in the South-West of our State for the fruitful conference and the wonderful happy time we shared together. That is what Catholic Women's League is all about - enjoying and sharing some friendship while we also debate the different issues which affect our families in the country in which we live.

Congratulations to the newly elected President

of the Bunbury Diocese - Jeanine Dowse who conducted a great meeting where we heard the Most Reverend Bishop of Bunbury, Gerard Holohan, relate to us the latest news on the rebuilding of the Cathedral in Bunbury. Robert Juniper, an Australian artist of renown, has been elected to do the stained glass windows which promise to be magnificent. We also heard from Fr Ian Johnson who has just recently returned home from serving six months in Afghanistan as Chaplain to our soldiers who are serving over there at this time. He gave us insights of what it is like for our soldiers who are fighting to give the Afghan people a better life.

We also congratulate Chris Lewis who is the Bunbury Diocesan Secretary and a member of the Kojonup Branch in the South-West of Western Australia where she received the honour of being the "Lions Club Citizen of the Year for 2009". Chris is a generous person who gives so much of her time for community works. Together with her husband John she travelled to Sri Lanka as part of the Rotary International project to assist with the reconstruction of housing following on from the Tsunami disaster.

Shalom  
**Georgie Bruce-Smith**  
**President - Western Australia**

*If you were asked to describe in one A4 page what it is that CWLA is involved with, how would you go? National President Karyn asked Margo Nancarrow to do just that for an AWC Report to the Office for Women to showcase AWC organisations*

Following are some excerpts .....**activities aimed at supporting and encouraging women and families.** ...Pink Ribbon Day, White Ribbon Day, Wrap with Love, hostels for the elderly, child care centres, assistance to families of prisoners... ....participated in the activities of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council that promotes and celebrates the cultural identity of indigenous peoples across the nation especially women.

**Building Bridges of Friendship and Understanding....** participate in activities designed to encourage dialogue and support among women from other cultures and faiths.

**Families...** members participated in the 5th World Meeting of Families in Spain and the 6th World Meeting of Families held in Mexico.....An innovative forum entitled Women – The Heart of the Family in Crisis took place in Sydney recently, jointly organised by CWLA Sydney, St. Andrew's Ukrainian Catholic Women's Organization and Catholic Communications Sydney.

**Submissions and letters** there have been many – see details on our website.

**International Activities.....**a motion to the 2006 General

Assembly of the WUCWO in Arlington, USA, themed "Against Violence and Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children" regarding the needs of children who have been sexually abused.....in a Sub-Group meeting at the Asia Pacific Conference of World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO), Australian Representatives met with representatives from Fiji, New Zealand and Tonga and agreed to work on a common issue 'Child Abuse' and to network more.

**Women's Health** ..... have supported and /or lobbied for issues such as:

- The wider availability and subsidised cost of the drug, Herceptin (trastuzumab) for use in localised breast cancer
- The Rights of the Terminally Ill and better Palliative care options
- Single sex wards in hospitals
- Dr Catherine Hamlin and her work at the Hamlin Fistula Hospitals throughout Ethiopia
- A National Project to assist mothers and unborn children in the Developing World through financial support of the work of MaterCare International.

## ABOUT BIOETHICS



Whilst there are many bioethical issues and concerns that are straight forward and obvious, such as abortion and euthanasia, there are other issues that may seem marginal or even secondary to the major topics. These could include the use of genetic modification of food crops; living wills and advance directives; and the right of health practitioners at many levels, to object to participation in certain medical procedures.

Not just in Australia, but worldwide, there is concern that the freedom that health care workers have had in the past, to choose not to perform or assist in procedures that are against their religious or moral beliefs, will be eroded. Dr. Robert Walley, MaterCare International, said that rescinding the right to conscientious objection from health care professionals will hamper the progressive initiative of the obstetrics field and the choice of women.

**In the USA:** In December 2008 the then President Bush announced its "conscience protection" rule for the healthcare industry. Then, in February 2009, the Obama administration moved to undo Bush's rule granting broad protections to health workers. Whilst in **Canada** The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (Canada) recently tried to force doctors to refer for abortion - only to be resisted.

**The United Kingdom:** In the March 29 edition of the BMJ, Dyer noted that, "The recent ethical guideline of the General Medical Council puts doctors in an impossible position. The giving of information or aiding someone to obtain a service the doctor considers immoral contravenes the essence of conscientious objection. The doctor's right to have his moral code respected.... is a basic human right.

**Australia:** Professor Craven, at the 2009 Annual Bioethics Colloquium, said in Australia there is no legislative protection for religious freedom and in Victoria the religious exemptions are under review

and there was some danger that the existing provisions might be amended, removing some of the protections for Catholic health, welfare and educational institution, to operate according to the teachings of the Church. Bishop Anthony Fisher asked, "Is conscientious objection in health care an instance of a right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion?" He continued, "To follow a well-formed conscience was not merely a right but a duty".

Angela Shanahan, *The Australian*, 1 November, 2008 said that, "Conscientious objection is supposed to be a democratic right. It is enshrined in international covenants and is at the core of what makes us a democracy. So it is pretty disturbing when that right is eroded, as it has been in Victoria."

Nurses and pharmacists are particularly at risk of not being able to follow their conscience. The Australian Nursing Federation has a *Code of Ethics for Nurses in Australia* (reviewed 2006) that recognises, "in non-emergency situations, nurses are morally entitled to refuse on conscientious grounds to participate in certain processes... "

**'Defending Conscience and Protecting Life'** is the wonderful document developed by the Respect Life Office, Melbourne for **Respect Life Sunday. (Check the website). Following are some quotes from this document:**

**Attack on Conscience** - *In a controversial move, the [Victorian] Bill denies healthcare professionals the right to conscientious objection and aims to compel them to be involved in abortion.*

**Why Attack Conscience Now?** *The Victorian legislation comes at a time when there is growing evidence of the development of a new culture of life around the world.*

**Freedom of Conscience is Fundamental to Democracy** - *Attacks on conscientious objection are attacks on freedom of thought and religion. Ultimately, they attack democracy itself.*

The Respect Life Office has suggested some activities for us: Pray; Educate Ourselves; Become Politically Active; Challenge 'Newspeak'; Support Healthcare Providers; Join With People Of Other Faiths.

Please keep our health care workers in your prayers.

**Margo Nancarrow**  
**Bioethics Convenor**



## National International Secretary Report



***The theme of the 53rd Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 53 NY) was "Equal Sharing of Responsibilities between Women and Men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS".***

This year's Priority Theme highlighted the necessity of ensuring women's equality; that the challenge to the Commission was to recognise that advocacy and raising public awareness was crucial for change and to narrow the gap between policies and their practical outcomes. Eliminating violence against women in all its forms was central to the discussions and outcomes of this UN Event. CWLA sponsored two Workshops held at the Church Centre Conference Rooms, situated close to the UN Headquarters. For the second year, the Billings Ovulation Method representative requested assistance and as the result a workshop entitled "Women's Empowerment: True shared Fertility Management" was arranged.

The second request was from the Endeavour Forum whose workshop was entitled "The Health of Mothers". Both were well attended. CWLA Inc. is nominated in the CSW Schedule as the organising Non-Government Organisation (NGO), which did put our name out in that public arena. Australia was able to boast four 'firsts' at this Session including having Indigenous Australian women presenting at a CSW. Australian delegates, including Government and NGO's, could proudly acclaim their efforts during this Session. I have been pleased to present a detailed report on CSW 53 to CWLA National President, Member Organisation International Secretaries, as well as the WUCWO Board Member Australia and National Convenors. The 2009 WUCWO Day of Prayer, prepared by

the Catholic Women of Canada, provided a unique occasion where women continue to rejoice and be affirmed in their faith. Individual, Region and Branch celebrations of this occasion have continued through the month of May; the collated report will be forward onto the WUCWO Secretariat.

I note that the "Women's Voice" No. 18 has arrived. WUCWO Regional Conferences, including the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference Seoul South Korea, are a feature. Participants, including 14 CWLA ladies, were blessed by spiritual and cultural experiences.

On 6 July 2002, the centenary of the death of 12 year old St. Maria Goretti during an attempted rape, a Day of Prayer was inaugurated by the Catholic Women's League Australia to pray for those women and children subjected to violence and sexual abuse, especially through being trafficked. Start planning now for a special celebration on the Feast Day of St. Maria Goretti, 6 July.

The WUCWO Centenary General Assembly will be held at the Pontifical Institute Notre Dame of Jerusalem Centre, 5-11 October 2010. A small group led by WUCWO President Karen Hurley, recently made a fact finding visit/pilgrimage of the Holy Land in preparation for this historic occasion. Further information in regard to this Assembly will be shared with members as soon as it becomes available.

I record appreciation to Gillian Badcock, recently retired Secretary General of WUCWO. Gillian has held this office for thirteen years and is undoubtedly one of the most dedicated, and delightful women it has been my pleasure to have met and shared time with. I have sent Gillian appropriate appreciation from CWLA.

I do remind readers that your Member Organisation International Secretary receives regular N.I.S. Circulars and Notices; please give her the opportunity to share this with you. I encourage you to continue your interest in our unique organisation and the work that CWLA does as a member of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations.

**Thora Regan AM**  
**National International Secretary**

