

Catholic Women's League Australia Inc.

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

National Newsletter
Issue 4
December 2009

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From the National President



8th December
The Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Mary is a wonderful example of how we should all have complete trust in God.

How many times over the past two years have I been challenged in my daily life to put my trust in God? Have I responded – interacted and opened myself to his amazing grace?

"I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said."

Sing a new song to the Lord; he has done wonderful things!

He kept his promise to the people of Israel with loyalty and constant love for them.

Psalms 98: 1,3

Some follow-up from the National Council Meeting and National Conference:

The National Executive says a big 'thank-you' to all the wonderful members who acknowledged the success of the 44th National Biennial Conference, without your presence the Conference would not have been the success it was.

The Constitution: We have received quotes for the printing of the Constitution, and by the time you have received this news hopefully this will be well on the way to being completed.

WUCWO: CWLA was invited as part of the WUCWO family, to participate in the WUCWO Endowment Fund. A motion was passed at National Council that:

- a. A donation from CWLA Inc. to the equivalent of \$1.00 per financial members for 2009 and
- Donations from Members Organisations (if they so wish) and/or individuals. Such monies to be forwarded to the National Treasurer by 30th November

Reminders have been forwarded to all MO's and some monies have been received. I am sure that

a wonderful amount will be forwarded to WUCWO President General Karen Hurley in support of the "100 Years of Faith, Hope and Charity Champaign."

Letters on Motions passed at National Conference have been written and forwarded from National to the appropriate Ministers, and Member Organisations have been reminded of those which require actions by them.

The Australian Women's Coalition's General meeting was held in Sydney on 24 October. Catherine McGrath, CWLA-NSW President and CWLA Alternate Delegate joined me in attending the AWC AGM on Sunday where Senator Claire Moore was the guest speaker. I was asked to thank Senator Moore and presented her with a gift and a copy of the CWLA National Newsletter. Everyone in attendance was also given a copy of our National Newsletter.

AWC projects (in the form of submissions and grants) for the year were:

- a. National Women's Health Policy, Equa Opportunity for Women in the Workplace
- b. Advocacy training Workshops
- c. AWC Website, www.acwaus.org.au
- d. Preparing for Ageing
- e. Inter-Cultural Bridge building
- f. Collaborated with WomenSpeak, Security for Women and National Rural Women's Coalition on the hidden impact of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) on women
- g. CSW 2009 Report
- h. National Human Rights Consultation
- i. UN Commission on Sustainable Development
- j. Australia Guides Program Review
- k. Suicide Bereavement Support Groups
- I. Gender matters in Local Government
- m. International Women's Day Reach Out
- n. Durri Aboriginal Women's Health Project
- o. Young Female Offenders, full report can be downloaded from www.awcaus.org.au.

I have forwarded copies of the AWC 2009 Annual Report to Member Organisations and I encourage you all to read them.

While writing, I am watching the TV news report of the flooding that has befallen Coffs Harbour for the second time this year. We send out love and prayers to members in this area who have been affected by the flooding.

As my term as National President of CWLA comes to an end, and I reflect on my journey of "Walking with God" I am filled with a great sense of gratitude

for the opportunities and graces that I have been blessed with over the past two years. Highlights of these two years have been working with five awesome women - Maria, Noelle, Anne, Barbara and Margaret and our Chaplain Father Laurence Murphy, who have made up the National Executive; the coming together of the Western Australian members to decide how to select the members to form the National Executive: the Installation Mass at the Redemptorist Monastery; honouring the motion passed that CWLA should invest its time and finances to support our youth at World Youth Day Sydney; presenting CWLA's report on actions taken by MO's on Motions passed at the General Assembly in Arlington to WUCWO members gathered for the ASPAC Regional Conference in Seoul; taking the opportunity to remind Stephen Smith, Minister for Foreign Affairs that "CWLA implores that the current AusAid guidelines *not* be changed" - unfortunately we were not successful in our plea and they were changed.

Much of our journey was spent on the Constitution, and at the National Council meeting it was moved by Special Resolution "that the revised Constitution and By-Laws of Catholic Women's league Inc. be adopted". The 44th National Biennial Conference was a highlight and fitting end to a wonderful two years.

The many kilometres I have travelled (there have been many thousands) to attend your Conferences and AGMs have been an unbelievable part of the journey - guided by the Holy Spirit and filled with love, respect, joy for our organization, new friendships, commitment to the women and families of our Church and the wider community. Thank you. You are wonderful women of the Church and I am a better person for being given this amazing opportunity to serve as National President of Catholic Women's League Australia. As I write this I ponder the words of our 2008-2009 Mission and Vision Statement and pray that we have emulated the faith, courage, determination and love of our founder Margaret Fletcher and we have worked to support the building of the Kingdom of God.

If, as Herod, we fill our lives with things, and again with things, if we consider ourselves so unimportant that we must fill every moment of our lives with action, when will we have the time to make the long, slow journey across the desert as did the Magi! Or sit and watch the stars as did the shepherds! Or brood over the coming of the child as did Mary! For each one of us, there is a desert to travel. A star to discover.And a being within ourselves to bring to life. (Author Unknown)

My wish for you all this Christmas is that you have the time to allow yourself to become the authentic women that we were created by God to become. Our lives are gifts from God – and what we do with them is our gift in return. May your Christmas Day be filled with moments of quiet reflection, peace and love with your family and friends.

Happy Christmas. God bless. In Charity, Work and Loyalty

Karyn Kammann National President - CWLA Inc 2008-2009

From the National Chaplain

'Another year has ended, the books are stored away, the fares paid, the tickets bought and we are on our way, but 'ere we part for distant scenes, let's stop here and pause to contemplate the Mystery that gives our joy its cause!'

Yes, time flies and Christmas is upon us and this gives me an opportunity to say to the National Executive – a very big thank you especially for the very successful National Conference held recently in Perth.

It was great on that occasion meeting so many representatives from all the states. I hope that your commitment, dedication and enthusiasm will continue in the next two years and that the CWL in your areas will continue to grow and prosper. May the Mystery of our faith in the incarnation of Jesus Christ continue to be the foundation and the inspiration of your continuing great work.

A happy Christmas to one and all. Yours in Christ

Fr Laurence Murphy SDS PP



CWLA National Executive 2008 - 2009

Maria Parkinson - National Secretary

"Walking with God" was the theme chosen for our term as National Executive and since I have, from the moment I joined CWL, always considered this to be a walk with God, I saw the two years 2008/2009 as a continuation of the journey. And, what a walk it has been!! There have been highlights and lowlights, challenges and experiences, but best of all it has been two years which have taken me, as a person, to heights I could never have envisaged. My relationships with so many women, from the six of "us" in the National Executive, to the members in branches all round Australia, have been enhanced beyond belief.

I am most grateful for this opportunity to serve Catholic Women's League and of course must mention the joy which overcame me when the National Constitution was adopted at the National Council meeting in Perth. This was indeed, THE most arduous part of the journey (perhaps the Kokoda Trail leg), but to see it all come to fruition is what this is all about – we now look forward to having the Constitution in print in the very near future.

My thanks to Karyn, Noelle, Barbara, Anne and Margaret for being my companions on the journey and to all members in branches far and wide for your wholehearted support of CWLA. This very unique organization has much to be proud of and while we continue to challenge the difficult issues in our communities, locally, nationally and internationally, may it prosper and flourish. May the Christ child be with you all over the coming Christmas-tide.

Noelle Guidera - National Treasurer

It has been a special privilege to be part of the National Executive for these past two years. Karyn, Maria, Barbara, Anne and Margaret are talented, hard working, caring and amazing women who have gladly stepped out and taken up the challenge of working unstintingly for CWLA. For my part, I have been humbled by the confidence members have had in me to fulfil my role as National Treasurer, the "bean counter", and a recycled one at that!

I am totally in awe of our Convenors, the National International Secretary, Thora Regan AM, Bioethics, Margo Nancarrow, Social Issues, Betty Roberts OAM and WUCWO Board Member Australia, Brenda Finlayson. How privileged we are to have women of this calibre making a difference in so many people's lives.

My sincere thanks to all those who have not only walked the journey with us but have loved, cared and supported us along the way. I encourage all members to step out of their comfort zone and take up the challenge, using the gifts God has given to be an active part of our great organisation. You can be assured that when you do you will receive all the support and love you need.

Barbara Paterniti - Vice President

On writing this contribution to the final newsletter for the term of office of Western Australia, I am very grateful to the National President Karyn for having confidence in me to take on the role of one of the Vice Presidents of Catholic Women's League Australia.

It has been a very enjoyable two years, sometimes daunting but always rewarding and always done with the interest of our wonderful League at heart, and endeavouring to bring to the fore the work done by all members of CWLA from the very 'top of the tree' to the grass roots members who really are the backbone of our CWLA. As being the only member of the Executive residing in the capital city - Perth, it has proven again that from wherever the national office works with this electronic age it can be done either in the country or in the city.

I wish the incoming National President Madge and her executive my best wishes and I am sure we have left CWLA in good hands. I also wish to extend to Mary-Ann the National Communications Officer my thanks in keeping me informed on all matters of interest and concern. May God bless each and every member of CWLA and may this coming Christmas be a happy and safe one with family and friends.

Anne Power - Vice President

Being elected to the National Executive was such an honour for me. At the time I realised that there would be challenges and responsibilities ahead, but that we had a strong team who would work well together.

The job and its challenges lived up to all my expectations. It was a challenging period, with me being based in Kukerin, separated by great distances from the rest of the team. Luckily the

technology of the internet was available and we utilised emails and phone calls to coordinate the Conference and other initiatives. Because of the travel, we 'had to endure' many social dinners/ evenings on our 'enforced' overnight stays - it was a tough role, but someone had to do it!

Overall, I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Now, at the end of my tenure, I feel proud of our achievements and particularly pleased with the success of the National Conference. God Bless

Margaret Sullivan - Publicity Officer

My journey with the Catholic Women's League has not been long time-wise; just a few years, but it has definitely been jam-packed. A spiritually blessed time, full of friendship and energy which was certainly all out in force at the CWLA National Conference in Perth earlier this year - my first National Conference. Each report presented at the Conference came to me full of blessings and hope; truly wonderful women doing truly wonderful work; great role models. I wonder why the work of CWLA is such a secret. We need to be more vocal, use publicity wisely and tell the world of the great work and values of belonging.

My role as National Publicity Officer has been a privilege and an honour and I have endeavoured to meet the challenge. There have been some exciting challenges; mainly those involved with meeting deadlines when putting the conference together, but each new situation was full of love, fun and much laughter once decisions were reached.

Meeting new friends and working towards the one aim whilst sharing similar thoughts, has, I feel, enriched me as a person. It has been a joy working with the National Executive of CWLA. What better way to live our lives than "Walking with God".

QUEENSLAND

As 2009 comes to a close I reflect back on the year and what a year it has been. Devastating fires in Victoria, floods in North Queensland, 44th National Biennial Conference in Western Australia. The theme of the conference was "Walking with God - We walk by faith, not by sight" and we, the members, did walk with Karyn and her Executive during the two years.

I am writing this article whilst visiting Townsville Diocese for their Annual General Meeting which is the final AGM in Queensland for the year.

The reports from all the dioceses in Queensland outline the generosity of the members of Catholic Women's League financially and also caring for each other in times of need. The distribution of funds at the end of the year to the various charities is also overwhelming.

It is a pleasure to visit all the dioceses throughout the year and even a greater pleasure being able to visit many of the branches at different times when time permits. In some areas social issues is a very important part of the agenda. It is a difficult area but the ladies take on the task in a very positive way and keep up to date on all issues, having petitions signed, letters sent to government and in many other ways.

The conference in Perth was a most enjoyable experience. This is a time when we gather together and discuss many issues, debate motions, come to conclusions and above all renew old friendships and make new ones. What a great conference it was. The guest speakers were all wonderful including the inspirational Kylie Forth. How much could we all learn from Kylie. I felt very humble as I listened to her and cannot imagine what she has been through in her short life.

As we placed the scrolls listing the names of our deceased members over the past year one cannot help but think of these wonderful women who have gone before us. We appreciate all the work they have done and know that they would be welcomed in heaven with open arms. May they rest in peace.

Following the conference I took the opportunity to stay a couple of extra days and see the city. With a friend I visited the Swan Valley, Margaret River, New Norcia and the Pinnacles and saw some beautiful wildflowers. You certainly have a beautiful city and State. On one of the trips we had a meal just on sunset at beautiful Busselton.

To Karyn and her team, as you come to the end of your term I say thank you all for your friendship during the past two years, for your patience with me and all the advice which you have given to me during your term, it has certainly made my job a little easier to know that I have been able to contact you and receive your help. May God bless you all and give you the strength for whatever lies ahead of you.

To the State presidents and members of Catholic Women's League throughout Australia may Christ's blessing be upon you during this Christmas Season and every blessing for the coming year 2010.

Joan Armstrong
President - Queensland

CANBERRA & GOULBURN ARCHDIOCESE

With the National Conferences of CWLA and Australian Church Women now safely behind us, it is time to report on activities both in the recent past and future.

It was a great privilege to represent the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn at the CWLA Conference in Perth; and in turn to represent CWLA at the recent National Conference of Australian Church Women held in Canberra. Business matters were capably dealt with and resolved. Spiritual input was of great value and the various excellent guest speakers (among those was General Eva Burrows of the Salvation Army), completed a very full and interesting program.

While in Perth we attended the civic reception held for CWLA by the Deputy Lord Mayor Mrs Janet Davidson. In Canberra the ACW Delegates and their partners were entertained to morning tea by Her Excellency Quentin Bryce at Government House.

On Wednesday 28 November friends gathered at St Joseph's Church O'Connor for an investiture of veteran CWL member Judith Anne Rosewarne as Dame of the Order of Sylvester at a Mass concelebrated by Archbishop Mark Coleridge and CWL's Spiritual Advisor Rev Fr William Kennedy OAM. All enjoyed the morning tea that followed and the cutting of the celebratory cake. Our sincere congratulations to Judith Anne and her family for this truly well deserved award.



Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Jacqueline Hipwell and Judith Anne Rosewarne

CWL has fostered the ecumenical spirit by attending Kingston Baptist Church afternoon tea and fashion parade; St. Andrew's afternoon tea hosted by the Presbyterian Women's Association. World Community Day service and luncheon was hosted by St. Joseph's CWL Branch. Canberra CWL Branch (St. Christopher's Cathedral) hosted

a spring luncheon at the Southern Cross Club Yarralumla. Central Region CWL hosted a Spiritual Day of Reflection at St. Joseph's and Country Region hosted a Spiritual Retreat at Cootramundra. Plans are well in hand for a celebration of the annual Mass organised by CWL and the Knights of the Southern Cross in honour of deceased members of both organisations, to be held at St. Benedict's Church Narrabundah. Members have been invited to attend various Christmas functions throughout the Archdiocese.

I now take the opportunity to extend to all readers best wishes for a happy and holy Christmas, with good health and happiness for 2010. In closing, I wish to thank those who communicated 'get well wishes' during my recent battle with viral pneumonia. Hoping to make contact with many of you at the forth coming inaugural Mass to be held at St. Patrick's Cathedral Melbourne in January.

Jacqueline Hipwell
President – Canberra & Goulburn

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Catholic Women's League South Australia had its Annual General Meeting on 19 October at Clearview/ Kilburn Parish. The day commenced with Mass at the Church of the Good Shepherd concelebrated by the parish priest, Fr Leon Czechowicz, and Fr Eddie Welling, Adelaide Diocesan Chaplain of CWL.

Election of office-bearers for 2010 took place at the meeting. Pauline Victory was re-elected as State President, Kath Kelly as State Secretary and Joan Young as State Treasurer; Vice-Presidents are Josie Frost and Maureen Bevan; Committee Members: Margaret Mariner, Lyn von der Borch, Chris Redden, Denice Fetherstonhaugh, Geraldine Davis and Anne-Marie Honorary Life Membership of CWL was awarded to Mrs Maureen Clark for her many years of service to the League, and Certificates for 25 years' service were presented to Mrs Kath Smith, Mrs Noreen O'Connell and Mrs Gloria Burns.

Sr Liz Morris RSJ was guest speaker at the Meeting. She spoke of her current work – Rural Ministry Formation of lay people. This involves inviting parishioners in country parishes to become involved in helping to run all activities in parishes – liturgical, administrative, pastoral and educative, in line with Canon Law – when there is no resident Priest.

Sr Liz has been mainly working in the south-east, but is also supporting the Mallee and Border parishes. One of the major concerns for the people responding to the invitation to train in parish work is the cost of courses. The issue was raised at a

CWL Regional Meeting held at Naracoorte in April this year. The women at that meeting were very concerned that people were willing to take on studies, but that the cost was prohibitive, given the economic circumstances of families on farms and in farming communities.

The CWL in South Australia decided at the AGM to promote the Rural Ministry Formation Programme over the next year and to raise funds to support those lay people taking up the challenge of studying for Parish leadership.

Pauline Victory
President - South Australia

VICTORIA & WAGGA WAGGA

CWL of Victoria and Wagga Wagga was well represented at the National Conference in Perth. The theme for the conference was "Walking with God" and guest presenters shared their own personal walks with the participants. Everyone who attended said the conference was a very uplifting experience.

On 10 October the first anniversary of the passing of the Abortion Amendment Bill a number of CWL members took part in the 'March for Babies' to Parliament House. People who marched, including children carried blue and pink balloons.

League members have also been busy gathering signatures for a petition to 'retain the definition of marriage between man and woman'. In response to a need for toothpaste and toothbrushes to teach the children of Timor Leste about the importance of oral hygiene League members collected a staggering 5000 of each. Brother Michael Lynch organised the delivery of these and sent a letter of appreciation to the CWL.

A new branch of CWL has formed at Narre Warren. This is great to see when many branches are struggling for numbers. Our Horizon magazine continues to be a great read and subscription cards are available as a great gift idea.

The National Committee of CWLA for the years 2010/2011 has been finalised and the office bearers are as follows: President:Madge Fahy, Vice Presidents:Gertie Mangan and Pat Coloe, Secretary:Ann Robinson, Treasurer: Louisa Ashton, PublicityOfficer:RobynFahy.Congratulationstothese ladies for their generosity in taking on these positions.

All branches are looking forward to a relaxing time over the holidays. A happy, holy and safe Christmas to all CWL members.

Patricia Joyce

Minute Secretary - Victoria & Wagga Wagga

TASMANIA

Members from throughout the State travelled to Hobart recently for our AGM. All current office bearers were returned for the second year of their two-year term.

Guest speaker at the meeting was Ms Virginia Oakham from the Teen Mothers' Clinic at the Royal Hobart Hospital. She gave an inspirational presentation on what she does with the young mothers to prepare them for the big task of raising a baby, often by themselves. She has devised a twelve-week program and gives on-going support and care. She was thanked with flowers and a bag of "goodies" for the babies.

Following the meeting we showed a video "Voices from the Dark", the story of the "bonnets" by Christian Henri and her commemoration of the convict women and their babies, who contributed to the early days of Australian history. It is a beautiful video, with some haunting music. Many of our members had made bonnets for the scheme and the video was most appropriate.

A Reflection Day was held recently following the celebration of Mass by Rev Father Gerald Quinn cp. Enid and Bill Conley led us in a reflection on "Finding ways to pray", concluding with the thought "For everything there is a season; God give us strength; strength to hold on and strength to let go."



Enid and Bill Conley

Since 1980 the Catholic Women's League has operated a Rest Room in the Hobart central business district. This was the brainchild of Mrs. Nell Pascoe, strongly supported by the late Archbishop Sir Guilford Young, whose dream was that CWL in Tasmania would eventually own its own premises. Light meals are served in the dining room and a craft corner sells craft and produce on behalf of members, retaining commission. The dining room operates 3 days a week – Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. Each Tuesday is kept for League functions, such as Annual Meetings and/or fundraisers. On Wednesdays it is hired out to other organizations. We also have an office containing our computer and

photocopying facilities and room to store archives in a transitional capacity, until they can be passed on to the Diocesan Archives. In later years the rooms became known as State Headquarters, the address being nominated as our official mailing address. More recently members regarded it as the "Centre".

Sadly, this will change at the end of the year. Patronage in the dining room has fallen off, mainly due to the number of other eating places popping up in the vicinity. Another problem is the ageing and health of our volunteers, who have served the League with incredible generosity over the years – none more so than the present Chairperson, Mrs Lola Phillips.

The building is owned by the Hobart City Council, with whom we have had a very cordial relationship over the years. They have approached us requesting that we share the rooms with the Hobart Flower Room. This will necessitate major structural changes. However, we hope to retain the craft corner and an office. It is envisaged that the changes will not take place until early next year.

We wish fellow members of Catholic Women's League throughout Australia an abundance of God's blessings and quality time with friends and family during the Christmas season.

Lillian Deane President - Tasmania

PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Dear Lord,

We pray that the Blessed Mother wrap her mantle around your priests and through her intercession strengthen them for their ministry.

We pray that Mary will guide your priests to follow her own words:

"Do whatever He tells you".

May your priests have the heart of St Joseph, Mary's most chaste spouse.

May the Blessed Mother's own pierced heart inspire them to embrace all who suffer at the foot of the cross.

May your priests be holy, filled with the fire of your love, seeking nothing, but your greater glory and the salvation of souls. Amen

Saint John Vianney, pray for us

NEW SOUTH WALES

Sydney Archdiocese Annual General Meeting On Tuesday 10 November CWLA Sydney Archdiocesan President Loretta Chester welcomed all to the Annual General Meeting. In attendance was State President Catherine McGrath, Chaplain Fr. Ray Farrell and members of the State Executive as well as CWL Sydney Councillors, branch members and N.S.W diocesan representatives. The conference theme was 'Bridges to new friendships' and Sydney secretary, Helen Cook had created beautiful bookmarks which were distributed to members.



Loretta Chester, Tony Smith & Catherine McGrath

After formal proceedings led by Loretta Chester, Tony Smith of the LaSallian Foundation gave an interesting presentation on their work assisting with children's education in Sri Lanka. Loretta announced the amount raised for their Project of the Year 2009 Youth of the Streets which was \$20,000 – Well done to all members. At the conclusion of the day prayers were said to commemorate Remembrance Day.

Breaking News!! Mrs Mary Harrold has been awarded by the Holy Father the honour of Dame Commander of the Order of St. Gregory for distinguished services to the Church in the Archdiocese of Sydney. Congratulations Mary.

Maitland Newcastle Diocesan Thanksgiving Mass: The Maitland Newcastle Diocesan President Margo Nancarrow celebrated the conclusion of the year with her members at a Mass of Thanksgiving at Tanilba Bay on Friday November 6th. Bishop Michael Malone celebrated the Eucharist and blessed the life membership badge that was presented to Evelyn Bowen by State President Catherine McGrath.

Wollongong Diocese News: A retreat day was held recently in Bowral, led by Father Sean Cullen. On this day Wollongong President Sue Meehan thanked all members for their support during the year and announced their project of the year, the Catholic Leprosy service in Korea will be assisted with the amount of \$5,500.

Emily Potts, Communications Officer - NSW

SOCIAL ISSUES



A Culture of Death in the Lucky Country

Under Nazism people needed to be racially and physically perfect in order to survive. Millions of people deemed imperfect were put to death. In order to endure the populace hardened their hearts.

I didn't believe that this evil could take hold in Australia yet with the dominance of the catchcry 'CHOICE' i.e. of picked quality, exquisite, carefully chosen, appropriate (according to the Oxford Dictionary), the unborn and the infirm are very much at risk.

We know that somewhere near 100,000 precious unborn Australian babies are killed in utero each year because of a so called 'woman's right to choose' not to give them birth. Clearly these infants were not carefully chosen. I am unsure whether the little ones who are discovered through amnio centesis, or ultra sound, to be less than picked quality, are included in the above total but I think not. Australia has now entered into a \$3 million partnership with Planned Parenthood to provide abortion to our neighbours under the guise of AusAID.

My heart bleeds for girls who are persuaded to abort an unplanned pregnancy and who then suffer grief for the rest of their lives. Those who conspire with the doctor to shorten the life of a loved one also suffer extreme grief - it is important that we do not harden our hearts.

Having spoken at a Forum against Green's Leader Nick McKim and his Dying with Dignity Bill, arranged and distributed a petition for those opposed to euthanasia to sign, authored and lodged a submission - and contacted all members of the House of Assembly asking them to vote against the Bill – we were present in Parliament for the four hour debate where Deputy Premier and Health Minister Lara Giddings said "I am happy to stand here and support Mr McKim's Bill because I believe in voluntary euthanasia and people's right to choose". We rejoiced when the Bill was voted down 15 to 7. Subsequently, Green's leader Nick McKim vowed never to give up fighting to legalize euthanasia.

Euthanasia is currently illegal in Australia. In 1995 legislation was passed in the Northern Territory to allow voluntary euthanasia/assisted suicide to the terminally ill. In 1997 the Federal government revoked the Territory's self-governing rights concerning euthanasia. Now there is a Bill before the Australian Parliament that, if passed, will restore the Northern Territory's self-governance in this area. South Australia I know is keen to legalise euthanasia and I believe Western Australia is now working on a Bill in spite of the fact that advances in palliative care mean nobody need die in agony. Offering a person death when they crave tender loving care is insulting. There is a frightening preoccupation with 'the culture of death' in the 'Lucky Country'.

The Tasmanian Bill defines illness as 'injury or degeneration of mental or physical faculties' - sounding a warning that euthanasia could become the ultimate in elder abuse.

There are many cases each year of physical, emotional and/or financial abuse of the elderly. Some elderly are left homeless by ruthless relatives who can't wait for them to die in order to seize their assets and there is a huge problem with the misuse of power of attorney. If this is how the elderly are faring it is easy to imagine the pressure on them to die should euthanasia become legal. Women particularly will sacrifice themselves so as not to be a burden on others.

When euthanasia is suggested as a serious answer to the question of suffering the nation has lost sight of the unique value of each and every individual. The mark of a civilized society is the level of care conferred upon the frail and vulnerable.

'There is a very real risk of subtle coercion and undue influence in the end of life circumstances and vulnerable groups in our society, including the poor, the elderly and the disabled will be at risk from abuse, neglect and mistakes should euthanasia become legal (U.S. Supreme Court, June 26, 1997).

The House of Lords' Report on Medical Ethics (UK) 1994 makes a most telling case against Euthanasia, both voluntary and non-voluntary:

"The prohibition of intentional killing is the cornerstone of law and social relationships. It protects each of us impartially, embodying the belief that all are equal. To create an exception to the general prohibition of intentional killing would inevitably open the way to its further erosion whether by design or by the human tendency to test the limits of any regulation"

Betty Roberts OAM National Social Issues Convenor

ABOUT BIOETHICS



Recently many Catholic Women's League members have been involved in ecumenical evangelisation activities related to the "Jesus All About Life" campaign. This campaign, presented the words of Jesus to the community. Jesus **is** all about life – all aspects of life - and of course as Catholics we have stated

continuously and passionately that all life is sacred, valued and valuable from conception to natural death. That is why we get distressed about attacks on that special gift of life.

The discussion about when life begins continues at many levels within the scientific world. Catholics believe that life begins at conception, so that from the very beginning life is precious and sacrosanct. That is why we cannot condone human embryonic stem cell research. The Catholic Church opposes research and therapy which involves embryonic stem cells. The Catholic Church is not opposed to stem cell research. "On the contrary, we are strong supporters of research based on adult stem cells, as well as those which are derived from umbilical cord blood. Our Church supports ethical stem cell research through its research institutes, healthcare services, teaching hospitals and health professionals".... "We do not argue against destructive experimentation on embryos simply because we are Catholic, but because of basic human values" "All of us wish to find cures and treatments for disease or genetic conditions. Many Australians are afflicted by terrible suffering and we share with them the hope for a cure or effective treatment. But allowing scientists open slather on human embryos for research is not the way forward (2006, ACBC).

Stem cells can be sourced from adults and even children – various organs, bone marrow; even skin and fat; placental cord blood and very recently - human amniocytic fluid (2009, Douay, Lapillonne & Turhan) without causing them any harm, but when stem cells are taken from a human embryo, the embryo dies.

Even if...research or therapies using embryonic stem cells could be used to save lives, we should never deliberately kill a human person in order to help someone else. Although there is much enthusiasm re Embryonic Stem(ES) cell research throughout the world, many people would probably be surprised to learn that ES cells have still not demonstrated any therapeutic benefit to anyone, that there are no current clinical treatments using such cells and that there have been few if any successes in animal models. Lives, however, have already been saved using adult stem cells. ES cells taken from human embryos or tissues grown from them will probably suffer immune-rejection. Embryonic stem cells may in fact be too unstable for research and treatment, and they are more likely to form tumours.

In fact, adult stem cells are currently the only type of stem cells used in transplants to treat diseases, such as cancers like leukaemia. Furthermore, researchers are far closer to commercializing drugs based on adult stem cells than any product based on embryonic stem cells (2009Kattan, Cable News Network). (Money seems to be just as important as saving lives).

".... One wonders how long the large sums of money and hype can go on chasing such a distant goal before the bubble bursts ... Patients have for some years been putting ever increasing faith in the curative properties of embryonic stem cells far beyond anything justified by any current knowledge or treatments. The attraction of human embryonic stem cells lies less in their therapeutic than in their imagined commercial potential—but is this justified by the science?" Raisman, House of Lords Debate, March 3, 2009.

In April this year The Age (Melbourne) reported that Australia's first dedicated stem cell bank is set to open in Melbourne in July and could be providing stem cells for medical and research purposes by the end of the year. The stem cell bank will create, source and store billions of adult stem cells for research and clinical use throughout Australia and overseas. The bank will not deal with embryonic stem cells—or the ethical minefield often associated with it. Instead, the bank will deal only with adult tissue-derived stem cells, which it will also use to generate a relatively new kind of cell called iPS, which can give rise to any fatal or adult cell type (Bridie Smith)

The US Family Research Council is currently launching a new adult stem cell research educational campaign (LifeNews.com). "Adult Stem Cells are now saving lives and offering hope to patients with Brain Cancer, Breast Cancer, Leukemias, Lymphomas, Heart Damage, Juvenile Diabetes,

Spinal Cord Injury, Sickle Cell Anaemia, Multiple Sclerosis, and dozens of other diseases". Their new educational website, www.stemcellresearchfacts. org has documented success stories of Adult Stem Cell research and is worth accessing.

I believe that there will be a lot of information, both positive and negative, about stem cell research in general becoming available and we should all remain aware and on guard about any threats to new life – and take necessary action to make our concerns known or to commend positive adult stem cell research outcomes.

Thank you all for your support and interest in this role throughout my tenure as the 'Bioethics person'. Your feedback has been very astute and welcomed. I know you will be well informed and sustained by Dr Anna Krohn during her term of office, and I wish her and all members well for the future.

A blessed and safe Christmas to all!

A Christmas Prayer

"We thank you for this place in which we dwell,
for the love that unites us,
for the peace accorded us this day,
for the hope with which we expect the morrow,
for the work, the health, the food
and bright skies which make our lives
delightful for our friends in all parts of the
earth." Robert Louis Stevenson

Margo Nancarrow Bioethics Convenor

Vale Doreen Ford

Doreen Ford passed away 19 November 2009 at the age of 80 years. She began her working life as a nurse and then as a secretary.

Doreen was a loving wife, mother and grandmother. She was a woman with many skills, she was articulate and she liked words. Doreen had a tremendous sense of humour. She liked to have fun and loved to travel.

Doreen became a member of Catholic Women's League in 1991 and took an active role in the Manly Branch as well as Broken Bay Diocesan Executive. Doreen became National Publicity Officer when CWLA Inc was last held by NSW. She then became State Communications Officer in 2005 and remained in that position until December 2008. Doreen will be sadly missed by her family and by her many friends in Catholic Women's League.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

A National Conference is inevitably a 'hard act to follow'. For members here in the West our memories of those wonderful four days will of course last for a very long time.

It was such a privilege and blessing for us to meet with so many CWL members from all over Australia and beyond. From the time we met with you all in prayer and worship in the Monastery Church on the Sunday afternoon and crossed my own home street to afternoon tea through to the singing and the unforgettable conga on the Wednesday evening: so much love and laughter and fellowship.

And somewhere among all of it the work (as well as the charity and loyalty) was all happening, and as our new Constitution proclaims so powerfully, the Kingdom was coming on earth. Having served as a member of the Constitution Review Committee I have a very vivid memory of our face to face meeting in October/November 2006 where we made that 'small' addition "on earth" and a certain lady from Queensland said thoughtfully-Well where else **can** it come...?

And I guess we all think our own little bit of earth is special, but to all of you who crossed the barren desert to join us in WA-thank you. We hope that you took back many happy memories.

For our part it was everything we had hoped and prayed for and more, and we once again extend our gratitude and love to our wonderful National Executive for all their hard work. And we "can't wait" to sight that new Constitution. God willing we will be able to file it on the shelves in our new office some time early next year.

We wish all our sisters in CWL across Australia every blessing for Christmas and for 2010.

Margaret Ker Vice President - Western Australia

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Women's Voice

Subscriptions for WUCWO Women's Voice remain at \$27.00 for 2010

NATIONAL INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY REPORT



As 2009 draws to a close, I have been reflecting on matters relating to my responsibility as of my term of my office. The position continues to evolve with the necessity to be across what National International Secretary of Catholic Women's League Australia since the commencement often seems a staggering number of issues, deal with the ever increasing daily communications received from International Organisations, in particular those who have identified CWLA from our United Nations involvement and further, organisation of the UN workshops which CWLA has sponsored.

I have prepared reports on representations at the UN CSW 52 NY, 2008 where the theme was 'Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women', at CSW 53 NY 2009 when the theme was 'The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS' and the WUCWO Asia Pacific Regional Conference held in Seoul, South Korea 26-31 October 2008, indeed an occasion worthy of its importance as one of the five Regional Conferences leading into the WUCWO General Assembly. The mingling of women from the diverse cultures within the Asia Pacific Region enabled unique experiences within the Conference Programme. Consensus was reached in the issuing of a final 'Seoul Declaration' document. Detailed reports of these Events have been available on the CWLA Website.

As previously advised, the WUCWO Centenary General Assembly is planned for 5-11 October 2010

at the Pontifical Institute Notre Dame of Jerusalem Centre in the Holy Land. This will undoubtedly be a highlight in a year when many significant events will occur. I look forward to being able to share with CWL members throughout Australia details of this momentous occasion following the meeting of the WUCWO Board, to be held in Rome in late November.

The WUCWO Day of Prayer has been observed by all CWLA Member Organizations. Reports of this day have been sent to the WUCWO Secretariat and donations to WUCWO Treasurer. The collated WUCWO "Women's Voice" subscribers list has been sent to the WUCWO Secretariat and graciously acknowledged. Subscriptions have been forwarded to the WUCWO Treasurer.

It is with pleasure I advise that Liliane Stevenson has been appointed to the position of WUCWO Secretary-General; our thoughts and prayers were conveyed to Liliane.

I encourage our membership, through the International Secretaries, to continue to promote the Feast Day of St. Maria Goretti and to pray for the women and children subjected to violence and sexual abuse, especially through trafficking.

At the CWLA National Conference held in Perth WA it was formally announced that I had been elected to serve a further term in office for 2010-2011. This being the case, I have commenced the necessary preparation for the 2010 Global Forum for Women: Beijing + 15. This Forum will take place on 27 and 28 February and immediately precedes the 54th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York, which will undertake a 15 year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

I take this opportunity to wish all members a happy and Holy Christmas. May this be a time of special blessings for you and your loved ones.

Thora Regan AM National International Secretary

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