



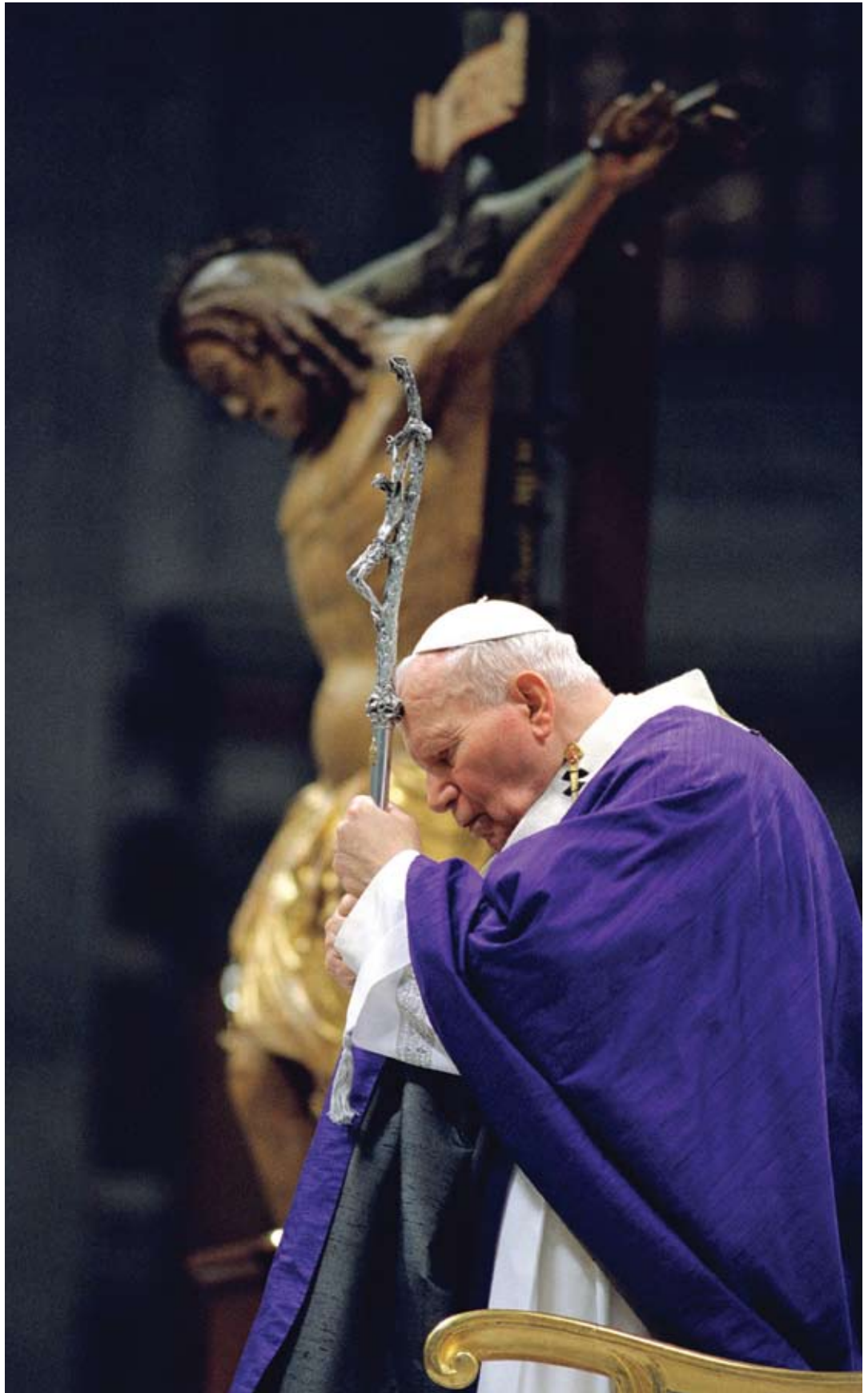
Catholic Women's League Australia Inc.

"IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO TOUCH THE HEART OF ANOTHER, NOR IS IT EVER IN VAIN" *Pope Benedict XVI*
"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" *John 10:10*

National Newsletter

Issue 1

March 2011



From the National President



The images of the devastating floods and fires battering our cities and country towns, of the tragic earthquake in Christchurch and most recently, the destructive earthquake and tsunami in Japan, have left many of us deeply shocked. On behalf of CWLA, I have sent messages of support to the League organisations in both New Zealand and Japan. Let us pray not only for the victims but also for the people who are helping those affected by these disasters.

The season of Lent is timely as it provides us with the opportunity to reflect on what is important in life and to place our concerns before Jesus. Being Easter people, we are much blessed. We are people of 'Hope'.

The beatification of the late Pope John Paul II is another reason for much joy this Easter. I have been enjoying reading about his legacy and life of heroic virtue in George Weigel's latest book: *"The End and the Beginning: Pope John Paul II – The Victory of Freedom, the Last Years, the Legacy"*. The book revisits John Paul II's 40-year struggle against communism, taking into account documents that had previously been considered classified and top secret. It also recounts the last years of his life, which Weigel describes as being "full of drama." Weigel writes about the Great Jubilee, the Pope's pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the terrorist attacks on the 11th September 2001 and the Pope's health struggles, which included at least one "dark night" of the soul, as well as the final months of his life. Weigel describes this period as John Paul II's "last, and perhaps most impressive encyclical."

As the late Pope's body progressively failed, he vividly demonstrated to the world the redeeming face of suffering. "For the Holy Father, in imitation of Christ, to freely choose did not mean opting out of difficulties – but rather it meant opting for the most difficult. That is true freedom, for it is the freedom of true love. That is why he said so many times, to those who insidiously invited him to abandon his

pontificate, *'If Christ did not come down from his cross, neither will I.'*"

Members of the League may be interested in visiting a new page on Youtube dedicated to John Paul II. It has been launched by the Vatican in the lead up to the late Pope's beatification. It is available at <http://www.youtube.com/johnpaul2> and includes video clips from his pontificate.

Heartfelt congratulations to Patricia (Pat) Okon from Lithgow who was recognised in the Australia Day Awards with an OAM for her work in the community, for women and the Church.

The theme chosen for the CWLA Biennial Conference in September is *'Go forth in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.'* Some information about the Conference is on Page 9 of our newsletter. I hope and pray that many members from throughout Australia will be able to attend.

With every best wish for a prayerful and peaceful Easter,

Madge Fahy

Happiness Comes from Saying "Yes" to God

Only Jesus knows what is in your hearts and your deepest desires. Only He, who has loved you to the end (cf. Jn 13,1), can fulfil your aspirations. His are words of eternal life, words that give meaning to life. No one apart from Christ can give you true happiness. By following the example of Mary, you should know how to give Him your unconditional "yes". There is no place in your lives for selfishness or laziness. Now more than ever it is crucial that you be "watchers of the dawn", the lookouts who announce the light of dawn and the new springtime of the Gospel of which the buds can already be seen. Humanity is in urgent need of the witness of free and courageous...people who dare to go against the tide and proclaim with vigour and enthusiasm their personal faith in God, Lord and Saviour.

You are also aware, my dear friends, that this mission is not easy. It becomes absolutely impossible if one counts only on oneself. But "what is impossible with men is possible for God" (Lk 18,27; 1,37).

True disciples of Christ are conscious of their own weakness. For this reason they put all their trust in the grace of God and they accept it with undivided hearts, convinced that without Him they can do nothing (cf. Jn 15,5).

*Message of the Holy Father John Paul II for the
18th World Youth Day (April 13, 2003)*

From the National Chaplain



The beatification of Pope John Paul II by his immediate successor is an extraordinary event. There is no precedent in the history of the Church where this has happened. This making of history certainly attests to the extraordinary life of the soon-to-be-Blessed.

At the time of his death in 2005, much was written and said about the life of Pope John Paul II. For many years to come, theologians and ordinary people will read and ponder the writings of this great Pope. His writings about the human person, the Church's teachings on love, his revolutionary 'Theology of the Body', his homilies will all provide much food for prayer and reflection.

I would like to point to another aspect of this extraordinary papacy. The example of Christian life that John Paul II portrayed speaks as much to us as his writings. We saw him as a young athletic pope; we saw him travel the world; we saw him meet Christians and all people of good will; we saw his decline in health and his very public suffering and death. It is his life example that I would like to point to for us as members of the CWL pondering our theme for this year: *'It is never too late to touch the life of another nor is it ever in vain'* (Pope Benedict XVI) and *'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full'* (John 10:10).



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The life of Pope John Paul II was Christ-centered. From his inaugural homily in 1978 and his first Encyclical '*Redemptor Hominis*', he knew Christ as the centre of his life and proposed this for every human person. He lived the quote of St John—he came to bring life through Christ to the world and he reflected this in the way that he lived. His life touched millions of people, even without speaking to them. His athleticism, his travels, his personal concern, and his courageous suffering touched so many. As members of the League, we can take example and strength from this. We can live by example to those we meet and those who see us. We can try to bring the fullness of life to those we come into contact with. Without even saying a word, we can make a difference to people by our example as Pope John Paul II did.



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There are so many stories about the late Pontiff's life. A favourite that I often quote is from one of his visits to Africa. En route to a major town through a small village in the Popemobile, the Pope looked out at the people waving to him, obviously poor and needy. He asked the driver to stop, and got out to meet them. After speaking with them, he took off his ring and gave it to them. A simple yet very profound gesture. A gesture to say that the Pope loves you and cares for you. This gesture did more than all the words that he could have said.

As members of the League, we could profit from the life example of Pope John Paul II, and in turn we pray that many other people can profit from our example because it is never too late to touch the life of another and it is never in vain.

Father David Cartwright
National Chaplain

BIOETHICS



Protecting Life and the Gift of Donation: Organ Donation Inquiry

The current Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the “*Options and Mechanisms to Increase Organ Donation in Victoria*” has been seeking submissions to inform its investigation of ethical, community and legal measures which will assist in increasing the rates and efficiency of organ donation in the State.

It is worth noting that there seem to be deep emotional and ethical concerns which prevent Australians, many of whom approve of organ donation in theory, from agreeing to donation for themselves or their deceased family members.

The Catholic moral teaching and theology, particularly since Pope John Paul II articulated his great “theology of the body” teachings, has a special concern for the representation, treatment and protection of the human body. It is in the light of this reverence for the body, that Servant of God John Paul II also said that ethically conducted organ donation could be a uniquely noble act since it: “*is not just a matter of giving away something that belongs to us but of giving something of ourselves...*” (Address to the Congress on Organ Transplantation, 2000).

In Catholic teaching, the human body is a “sacred site.” It has a sacramental quality in the living person and serves as a “memorial” of the person after death. That is why Catholic liturgy and prayer has such a long tradition of consecrating tombs and burial grounds, of prayers around coffins, of honouring the relics of saints and of blessing the deceased body.

That is also why the Church further insists that all citizens (whether medical professionals or members of the public) should be vigilant that two crucial ethical aspects of organ retrieval and donation be protected, developed and promoted legislatively, organisationally and culturally.

The cornerstone is the inherent dignity and integrity of each and every human life—whether that of the organ donor or the would-be recipient. Resting on this is the second and fragile good which is that organ donation is and must remain a voluntary, generous and personal gift of “the body” from the donor to the recipient.

The first moral issue is that vital organs can only be removed for transplantation once the death of the patient has been reliably and “irreversibly” diagnosed. It is also important that the family of the deceased be able to “see” and sense that this is not simply an abstract or nominal benchmark. There is a danger that medical teams and laws will give into the strong pressure to increase organ supplies, lowering the bar on the determination of death.

The Church supports the current legal definition of death which rests upon the final loss of heart beat and subsequent circulation or upon criteria which determines the loss of TOTAL brain activity (and therefore indicates the irreversible loss of integration in the life and body of the person).

In contrast to this, some doctors and philosophers are arguing that a permanent loss of consciousness or severe upper brain damage should qualify as a bench mark for “personal” or “social” death of the patient, even though the patient is alive in every other physical sense of the word. This is alarming.

Catholic reverence for the body in relation to organ donation is similar to the Catholic emphasis on the importance of reverence, commitment and “informed consent” in relation to sexual giving of the body.

Pope Benedict XVI suggested this link in his address to the International Congress of Organ Transplantation (7th November, 2008) saying: “*informed consent is a precondition of freedom so that the transplant can be characterized as being a gift and not interpreted as a coercive or abusive act.*”

A Catholic ethical position would oppose any system or culture which assumed that organs could be “taken”, punitively removed (as occurs in some cases with Chinese political prisoners) or which obtains organs by offering undue commercial or social incentives. Organs should not be treated as commodities. Pope Benedict XVI was very clear at the 2008 Congress: “*The possibility of organ sales, as well as the adoption of discriminatory and utilitarian criteria, would greatly clash with the underlying meaning of the gift that would place it out of consideration, qualifying it as a morally illicit act.*” It is interesting to note that the country with the

highest rate of organ donation for both living and dead donors is Spain. In that country, the discussion of organ donation takes place at a time remote from the immediate grief and shock (such as occurs when considering donation with a traffic accident victim). Therefore people have time to become educated and informed about the way organ donation takes place. Sensitivity and respect are seen as crucial in the nation-wide co-ordination of the program. Spanish clinicians are careful not only to protect the traditional definition of death, but also to offer radiographic images which confirm visually the total loss of brain function to the families of the deceased.

On the other hand, watering down the ethical standards of truly free and well informed consent, of the determination of death or the "gift" nature inherent in such a life-saving donation will not only be destructive of the "culture of life" upon which medicine must be built, it will also create fear and distrust the very people who might be considering donation.

Is this Prevention Better than Cure?

A long-standing principal of public health and medicine is that "prevention is better than cure".

Commonsense and the virtues of prudence and justice support such worthwhile projects which target suicide prevention, heart-disease prevention and among elderly people such schemes for "fall-prevention."

One American charity called *Project Prevention*, capitalizes on the widespread appeal of such a concept. On the surface, its mission to curb the damage done to unborn babies by their drug abusing and addicted mothers seems eminently noble. Indeed a number of Australian Christian affiliated charities have recently included this organisation on their web-page "links" section.

However a concept is only as ethical as the means it uses to achieve its goal.

The degree to which "prevention" can be misguided, misconceived and misleading became obvious when *Project Prevention* launched its campaign in England in late 2010.

The "charity" paid for 26 British female drug addicts to have long-term contraceptive devices or implants fitted. Based on its long-standing strategy in the United States, it also offered installments of £200 to addicted would-be parents to be permanently sterilized.

Project Prevention's founding director, Ms Barbara Harris announced on the BBC that for such women "... *drugs are more important (to them), but at the very least we can stop them from giving birth to children whose lives may end up the same as theirs.*"

A glance at Project Prevention's website reveals that its idea of prevention is mono-focussed following the "harm minimization" approach to larger social problems: "*Project Prevention does not have the resources to combat the national problems of poverty, housing, nutrition, education and rehabilitation services. Those resources we do have are spent to PREVENT a problem for \$300 rather than paying millions after it happens in cost to care for a potentially damaged child.*"

This is paid "birth prevention" at its most raw. It does not seem to include anything like education, medical support or any other social assistance to the drug addicted women. Nor is there any mention of the high rate of sexually transmitted disease or malnutrition associated with substance abuse. To receive payments, the recipients are required only to show medical documentation of their infertile or sterilized state.

The Project claims to have funded "birth prevention" in the United States for over 3,000 drug addicts since its foundation in 1997. The vast majority of the recipients were women (only 35 were men) many of whom belonged to the most marginalized populations in America.

Barbara Harris and her Project claim that contraception and sterilization open the door for drug addicts to choose the "first responsible thing" they have done during their addiction.

But it was interesting that in England last year, a number of drug charities and social workers questioned how free or informed such cash recipients really were.

The charity *DrugScope* said that the offer of payment for sterilization was just a "silver bullet" which is "*exploitative, ethically dubious and morally questionable.*"

The British Medical Association refused to take a public position on Project Prevention, but a spokesman did suggest that "the overall interests" and "informed consent" of drug addicted patients should guide clinical practice.

Anna Krohn
Bioethics Convenor

NATIONAL INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY REPORT



I still find myself reflecting about the WUCWO Centenary Assembly in Jerusalem last year. The experiences that we shared with so many like-minded women will long remain with us. To have witnessed the acceptance and appreciation of the many cultures that we interacted with, was exciting and enlightening, and I believe has greatly enriched the lives of those who were fortunate to be there. Much has already been written about this unique gathering but I invite you once again to read my official report on the CWLA site and become familiar with the Resolutions adopted at the Assembly.

WUCWO Theme 2010-2014: By unanimous acclamation at the Assembly, the WUCWO theme for the next four years is *'Love in Action'*.

During our preparation for the Centenary Assembly, we received monthly messages of prayer and reflection on our 'Journey to Jerusalem'. This proved to be a wonderful means of uniting women throughout the world in prayer and reflection. WUCWO's new President General, Maria Giovanna Ruggieri, proposed continuing this effort throughout this year. In January, the President General drew our attention to the Holy Father's message for the World Day of Peace 2011. Pope Benedict XVI encouraged us to reflect about religious freedom as a path to peace: "When religious freedom is acknowledged, the dignity of the human person is respected at its root, and the ethos and institutions of peoples are strengthened."

This year, I believe the WUCWO Day of Prayer on the 13th May will hold special memories, not only for those women who were able to attend the Centenary Assembly, but also for the countless thousands around the world who journeyed with us in prayer.

The Commission for the Status of Women (CSW), United Nations, New York: The CSW convened from 22nd February to 4th March 2011. The

theme for CSW 55 was: "Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work."

In preparation for CSW 55, I attended the 63rd Annual United Nations DPI/NGO Conference, Advance Global Health: Achieve the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) held in Melbourne last year. Round table meetings were held on the 11th November 2010 and 28th January 2011 in Canberra for members of the Australian Delegation and Non-Government Organisation representatives. During CSW 55, the League sponsored a Parallel Event for CABOM (Caucus for the Advancement of the Billings Ovulation Method™). I have been supporting the two American women who gave the presentation on 'Fertility Management'.

We have been so aware of the extreme weather events that have caused the loss of life and so much devastation in areas of Australia. Images of the tragedy that was unfolding brought to us the reality of the situation. As people and communities at large continue their journey of recovery in the wake of the destruction, I offer my prayers and heart-felt concern to all members, their families and our fellow Australians.

Having embarked on a new year and a new decade, we can reflect on the fact that WUCWO now represents 100 Catholic women's organisations worldwide and has stood 'the test of time'. In the words of WUCWO's Ecclesiastical Assistant, Father GianMaria Polidoro, O.F.M.: "May WUCWO become an example so that the world may see how to transfer love in everyday life."

Thora Regan AM National International Secretary

"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem" (Mk 10:33). With these words, the Lord invites the disciples to journey with him on the path that leads from Galilee to the place where he will complete his redemptive mission. This journey to Jerusalem, which the Evangelists present as the crowning moment of the earthly journey of Jesus, is the model for the Christian who is committed to following the Master on the way of the Cross. Christ also invites the men and women of today to "go up to Jerusalem". He does so with special force in Lent, which is a favourable time to convert and restore full communion with him by sharing intimately in the mystery of his Death and Resurrection.

*Message of the Holy Father John Paul II,
Lent 2001*

SOCIAL ISSUES



The Rights of Children to be Protected from Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances

Children need an enabling and protective environment free from maltreatment by parents or other carers. I have found that most neglect and abuse of children occurs when the adults responsible for their care and protection are 'out of it' on legal or illegal substances.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in November 1989 and came into force the following year. The purpose of the CRC was to legislate on rights for children on the basis of the special needs for children. A Treaty Monitoring Body called the Committee on the Rights of the Child was established in 1991 to examine progress made by State Parties to the CRC and to provide advice on how to interpret and apply the Treaty. The Committee is comprised of 18 international experts on children's rights.

Within the overarching principle that the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration, the CRC requires State Parties to take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, and educational measures to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

One of my first questions to the Committee would be "have you examined the harmful effect of drugs on unborn infants and children breast fed by a substance abusing mother?" Having received drugs through the placenta and the breast milk, many babies suffer withdrawal. Their troubled environment starts in utero and continues throughout their childhood.

It is my view that "the best interests of the child" cannot be served until we tackle the problem of addiction by aiming for a drug free society.

Living with people who are abusing powerful mood changing drugs is a recipe for disaster because their environment is never reliable or rational but entirely unpredictable. Narcotic and psychotropic substances move the parent or parents to another zone, where they are physically, cognitively and emotionally unavailable to their children.

Drugs and other addictions devour the family income, children are unsupervised much of the time and often hungry, cold and neglected. They may not get to school regularly because their home life is simply too chaotic or they are needed at home to care for their parents and siblings. Role reversal is common with children caring for parents. Every adult who enters the home is likely to be a drug user and the children are a higher risk of physical and/or sexual molestation.

Alcoholic and other substance abusing adults often suffer blackouts where they appear to be functioning normally but where there is nothing written on their memory. The user can wander off during a blackout and be away for several days with no idea of how long they are absent. Children may be left to wander the streets or beg food from neighbours.

Children will sometimes act out at school to achieve the attention they seek, their acting out becomes a catalyst for negative attention that is better than no attention at all. They may try selling the 'stuff' and become youthful dealers. Their home environment may lead them to sample the 'stuff' and thus the pattern of addiction is repeated in subsequent generations. Research shows that of the four children in a family with a drug addicted parent, two are likely to become addicts and the other two are likely to marry an addict.

The basic health and welfare of children born to and/or reared by substance abusing adults is in jeopardy. Children living with substance abusing adults learn very early in life, three unwritten rules- *don't talk, don't trust, don't feel*:

1. don't talk about what is happening at home,
2. don't trust anyone because every promise is broken and
3. don't feel because feeling hurts too much!

UNICEF's Child Protection Strategy 2009 states that "successful child protection begins with prevention". The reality is however that the health and welfare of children of drug addicted parents is often neglected until a catastrophe occurs that directs the spotlight onto their circumstances. Recently in Hobart, a 12 year old girl was prostituted to over 100 men to earn money to pay for her mother's drug habit. The

mother's partner was also involved in prostituting this child which left her with sexually transmitted diseases. Had the Government's child protection policies been focused on prevention, this child may have been protected against the appalling damage inflicted upon her by two drug addicted adults.

If our society is serious about protecting children from the effects of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, Governments need to devote considerable resources to tackle the money hungry Mr Bigs of the drug industry, the dealers, the addicts and the drug culture that is at epidemic proportions throughout the world.

Children have the right to protection from drugs. The time to act is now.

Betty Roberts OAM
Social Issues Convenor

The Idea of Perfection

Chush is a Jewish school in Brooklyn, New York, that caters to learning disabled children. Some children remain in Chush for their entire school career.

At a Chush fund-raising dinner, the father of one student delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended. After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he cried out, "Where is the perfection in my son, Shaya? Everything God does is done with perfection, but my child cannot understand things as other children do. My child cannot remember facts and figures as other children do. Where is God's perfection?"

The audience was shocked by the question, pained by the father's anguish and stilled by the piercing query. "I believe," the father answered, "that when God brings a child like this into the world, the perfection that he seeks is in the way people react to this child."

He then told the following story about his son Shaya. One afternoon, Shaya and his father walked past a park where some boys Shaya knew were playing baseball. Shaya asked, "Do you think they will let me play?"

Shaya's father knew that his son was not at all athletic and that most boys would not want him on their team. But Shaya's father understood that if his son was chosen to play it would give him a comfortable sense of belonging. Shaya's father approached one of the boys in the field and asked if Shaya could play. The boy looked around for guidance from his teammates. Getting none, he took matters into his

own hands and said "We are losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him up to bat in the ninth inning."

Shaya's father was ecstatic as Shaya smiled broadly. Shaya was told to put on a glove and go out to play short centre field. In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shaya's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shaya's team scored again and now with two outs and the bases loaded with the potential winning run on base. Shaya was scheduled to be up. Would the team actually let Shaya bat at this juncture and give away their chance to win the game?

Surprisingly, Shaya was given the bat. Everyone knew that it was all but impossible because Shaya didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, let alone hit with it. However as Shaya stepped up to the plate, the pitcher moved a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shaya should at least be able to make contact.

The first pitch came and Shaya swung clumsily and missed. One of Shaya's team-mates came up to Shaya and together they held the bat and faced the pitcher waiting for the next pitch. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly toward Shaya. As the pitch came in, Shaya and his teammate swung at the ball and together they hit a slow ground ball to the pitcher.

The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could easily have thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shaya would have been out and that would have ended the game. Instead, the pitcher took the ball and threw it on a high arc to right field, far beyond reach of the first baseman.

Everyone started yelling, "Shaya, run to first. Run to first." Never in his life had Shaya run to first! He scampered down the baseline wide-eyed and startled. By the time he reached first base, the right fielder had the ball. He could have thrown the ball to the second baseman who would tag out Shaya, who was still running. But the right fielder understood what the pitcher's intentions were, so he threw the ball high and far over the third baseman's head.

Everyone yelled, "Run to second, run to second." Shaya ran towards second base as the runners ahead of him deliriously circled the bases towards home.

As Shaya reached second base, the opposing shortstop ran to him, turned him in the direction of third base and shouted, "Run to third." As Shaya

rounded third, the boys from both teams ran behind him screaming, "Shaya run home."

Shaya ran home, stepped on home plate and all 18 boys lifted him on their shoulders and made him the hero, as he had just hit a "grand slam" and won the game for his team.

"That day," said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, "those 18 boys reached their level of God's perfection."

This story has appeared in various forms on a number of websites. It is a true story which first appeared in Rabbi Paysach Krohn's 'Echoes of the Maggid' in 1999. Shaya's father had told the story to Rabbi Krohn.

Introducing our Newest Member



Marcia Riordan is the Executive Officer of the Life, Marriage and Family Office Melbourne (formerly Respect Life Office). This office promotes the *Gospel of Life* in the parishes, schools and hospitals of the Archdiocese, amongst the various Catholic associations, interfaith groups and in the community more broadly. The Melbourne Respect Life Office, established in December 2000, was a first for Australia and is modelled on similar offices overseas. There are now similar offices in the Archdioceses of Perth, Sydney and Brisbane.

Marcia believes that we can personally contribute to the transformation of our culture into a *civilisation of life and love* by following the program of the Good Samaritan, and having a heart which sees where love is needed and acts accordingly. Marcia has been instrumental in establishing Respect Life Sunday which has now become established in a number of other dioceses, apart from Melbourne. Marcia works to raise awareness of the Church's positive message on the life issues and to produce high quality resources on topics including; euthanasia, reproductive technologies, stem cells and human cloning, post-abortion grief,

pregnancy support, prenatal screening, population control and the link to female Gendercide.

She believes that liberal abortion has not lead to greater freedom for women; instead it has increased male sexual aggression, and added to the sexual exploitation of women and girls. Far too often women feel obligated to "choose" abortion at someone else's demand. Marcia is working to raise awareness of the harm abortion does to women and their families as well as helping to bring hope and healing to all those suffering after abortion. Through initiatives such as *Walking With Love*, she is encouraging the Catholic community to stand in radical solidarity with all those facing unexpected pregnancies and encouraging them to reach out with love to all those whose lives have been affected by abortion.

Marcia completed a Masters degree in Bioethics at the John Paul II Institute in Melbourne; she is a Member of the Australian Catholic Bishop's Conference Life Council. Before taking up her position in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Marcia was a graduate in biological science from La Trobe University and a microbiologist and immunologist at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne.

If you would like to more information about the Life, Marriage and Family Office, please go to <http://www.cam.org.au/lifemarriagefamily/>

CWLA Biennial Conference

The 45th CWLABiennial Conference will be held from the 13th to 15th September 2011 at the Bayview Eden, 6 Queens Road, Melbourne, 3004. Full registration is \$270. Conference registration forms will soon be available to members. The CWLA Conference accommodation rate at the Bayview Eden is \$162 per night (twin share or single). Breakfast is \$20 extra (most hotels in Melbourne charge extra for breakfast). Tea making facilities are available in each room.

The Opening Mass will be held at St. Patrick's Cathedral at 9.30am on 13th September and will be celebrated by Archbishop Denis Hart. The Conference Dinner will be held on Thursday 15th September.

If you would like to book accommodation at the Bayview Eden, please contact them on 039250 2222 or toll free on 1800 003 001 and advise them that you are attending the CWLA Conference in order to obtain the quoted rate. Bayview Eden can also be contacted via email at reservations.bem@bayviewhotels.com. If you wish to make an online booking via Bayview Eden's website, www.bayviewhotels.com/eden/promotion, please ensure the word "CWLA" is typed into the promotional code box to obtain the quoted rate.

DO NOT WALK ALONE

This article was first published in Kairos Vol 22 Issue 3.



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QUEENSLAND

This is my first contribution to the CWLA newsletter. For those of you who do not know me, I have had a long history with CWL in both South Australia and Queensland, and I look forward to meeting with you sometime soon.

During my term of office, I will be ably supported by my team including Ronaldah Gorrin (Secretary), Mary Talbot (Treasurer), Betty Pierce (International Secretary), Veronica Box (Social Issues) and, our Vice Presidents Bonnie Mulroney, Lydia Toohey, Connie Refalo and Rhonda Barbe.

Last year we had a great biennial State Conference at St George, which is about five hours northwest of Brisbane. Sadly, St George was one of the many communities affected by the floods which devastated so many parts of Queensland, both city and country. Regardless of where people lived in Queensland, the aftermath of the floods and cyclone Yasi showed the depth of the human spirit—generosity, resilience, compassion, humour and endurance. Thank you all for your friendship, assistance and best wishes during these times.

Our thoughts of course naturally turn to the people of Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania, South Australia, Christchurch NZ and Japan as they are exposed to natural disasters in their communities. Our prayers are with them.

I look forward to a continuing, open relationship with all of you during the next two years.

Heather McIntyre
State President - Queensland

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

In 1918, the Catholic Women's League of South Australia purchased a property at 178 East Terrace, Adelaide, and set up St Mary's Hostel, an accommodation facility for Catholic girls coming from the country to study. The Hostel was in use until 1972.

In December 1972, the Catholic Women's League of South Australia applied to the Commonwealth Government for a Grant to build a Child Care Centre on the site, one of the first of its kind in South Australia. The Centre opened in February 1975.

For 35 years, the League in South Australia has built up the Child Care Centre, with many people

making generous contributions of time, energy and finances. We have always been proud of the service offered to children by the Centre.

Over the past 10 years, the Child Care scene has changed dramatically with involvement by State and Federal Governments, and operators of Child Care Centres required to be familiar with Enterprise Agreements, Workplace Relations, Child Care Benefits and Subsidies, Staff/Child Ratios, Occupational Health Safety & Welfare issues and much more.

Whilst the day to day running of the CWL Child Care Centre is vested in the hands of a Director and a Board of Management, with CWL representation, the ultimate responsibility for everything at the Centre resides with the whole State Council. Therefore, the CWL is responsible for the overall liabilities and decision making about the Centre. If a child or person present in the Child Care Centre were to suffer an injury, then the liability for that injury would rest with CWL and not the persons running the Centre. Similarly if any employment liabilities arise, such as underpayment of wages, the CWL would be responsible for meeting payment of the same.

Over the past three to four years, it has become increasingly evident that our members are ill-equipped to deal with these complex issues. There has been discussion by some members about the wisdom in these times of having such a large responsibility on their shoulders, and whether, with the Government now largely controlling the sector, that we should put our energies into supporting other social concerns in our society.

Another concern is that our current office location and facilities are inadequate. We are largely 'invisible' and we need to be visible and 'out there' in the community. But with membership numbers not increasing, our only income being membership fees and a \$2 million property in the Adelaide CBD (the Child Care Centre) for which we receive no income – what to do?

Property managers, accountants and some members say 'SELL!' Others say: 'Lease the property to someone who'll pay us well.' And others: 'Lease the property to another Child Care provider.'

Imagine our delight when a Catholic College nearby expressed an interest in leasing the Centre and continuing to run it as a Centre for 0-5 year olds, and put forward their proposal. We still have a way to go, but hopefully the College will follow through and fulfil all the requirements of the Government,

obtain the Licence, and continue to provide quality Child Care for many years to come.

And with a small income from the Lease payments, we will find a suitable office and get on with the task of "Charity, Work and Loyalty". We have much to do!

Pauline Victory
State President - South Australia

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WA State Council: On Monday 7th February, the feast day of St Luke the Wonderworker, we held our first State Council Meeting for 2011 and wonders were achieved in abundance. We were truly blessed to have our State Chaplain, Father Wayne Davis, celebrate Mass for us at our Headquarters, Downey House. During Mass, the new members of our State Council—President Karyn Kammann; Secretary Sheila Cullinane; Treasurer Maria Parkinson; Archdiocesan President Barbara Paterniti; Bunbury Diocesan Delegates to State Council, Tika Baxter and Josie Criddle; and Bioethics Convenor Joan Smurthwaite—read a Commissioning Prayer and were welcomed to their term on the State Council.

Vice President Barbara Paterniti made a 'thank-you' presentation to Dorothy Beyer in recognition of her loyal service to CWL WA as State Treasurer from 2008 to 2010 and for her dedicated work on the Downey House Committee.

We have extended our prayers and love to fellow League members in Queensland through their State President, Heather McIntyre, as they endure another flood and cyclone, resulting in much devastation to their homes, businesses and farm lands. Father Wayne Davis celebrated Mass for their intentions on 14th January. Messages of love and prayers were also sent to the President General Victoria and Wagga Wagga, Jeanette Sheahan, for members and their families who were affected by the recent flooding in Melbourne and country Victoria.

Geraldton Diocese: Members from the Geraldton Diocese reported that fourteen ladies attended their first meeting for 2011. Father Peter Downes has been appointed Chaplain since Father Geoff Aldous has now left the Diocese. There will be a few CWL members attending the ordination of Emmanuel Dimmobi in Perth on 4 March—he was supported by CWL during his time in Geraldton. On 8th March members joined in the celebrations for International Women's Day at a gathering initiated by the Office for the Participation of Women in the Church.

Among the activities which Geraldton members will be engaging in throughout 2011 are teaching English to migrants, teaching religion in State schools, Mission to Seamen, ministering Holy Communion to the elderly and infirm at the Nazareth House nursing home, working in Vinnies and supporting the priests in the Cathedral.

Archdiocese of Perth: The first meeting for 2011 commenced with a morning tea to welcome members and to especially welcome those new to the Council. The executive decided to contact all members by mail so they could be aware of the coming meetings and events throughout the year. Many of these members are elderly and have been the backbone of our organisation, but unfortunately due to various reasons can no longer attend meetings in person. They are always interested in the comings and goings of the League and we will endeavour to keep them informed. The goal this year is to increase membership and women from various ethnic groups will be approached personally to be informed of the work of CWL and to build up a rapport with them. One of our members, Betty Ryan from the Nedlands branch, will be approaching women on the verge of retirement from work who may be looking for another avenue to explore. We can offer that avenue for them! We are looking forward to an exciting year and hope all our intentions with respect to our membership will come to fruition.

Bunbury Diocese: Most branches within the diocese have held their first meeting for 2011 and it is pleasing to note that all twelve branches are maintaining membership and looking to build on it. Once again many positions on State Council have been filled by members from the Bunbury Diocese with these ladies travelling long distances to get to meetings. The logistics are sometimes difficult to imagine. A couple of the ladies arose around 4.30am to catch a train from Australind so as to then connect with a bus from Perth and still arrive at the State Council meeting on time. Well done ladies! It is this type of spirit which augers so well for our organisation.

The first Diocesan Council meeting for 2011 was held in Kojonup on 26th February and we are delighted to announce that our newest branch at Margaret River will host the Bunbury Diocesan AGM in May.

A highlight for all Catholics in the Bunbury Diocese was the Dedication of St Patrick's Cathedral in Bunbury on the 17th March. Our CWL Diocesan President attended this wonderful event. Since the old cathedral was 'blown over' by a tornado in 2005, we have eagerly awaited this new "birth". A

story about the Blessing and Opening of St Patrick's Cathedral is at: <http://www.bunburycatholic.org.au/st-patrick-s-cathedral/blessing-and-opening-of-st.-patricks-church-bunbury.html>.

"O God, you gifted Jesus with vision and courage; support all those whose vision and gifts further the work of bringing this world to fullness of life, especially in their times of trial, and we bring to mind the people of Egypt, as they struggle for peace and democracy."

In Charity, Work & Loyalty,

Karyn Kammann
State President - Western Australia

NEW SOUTH WALES

Mass for the installation of new executive for the Catholic Women's League in NSW: On Thursday 10th February, the Mass of Installation for the new State President, Carolyn Metcalfe, and her Executive, took place at St Mary's Catholic Church, Noraville. Members from all over the State were present and invited guests included Lynn Webster, representing Wyong Council, Doreen Todd, representing the National Council of Women, and Carmel Keys, representing Australian Church Women. The principals of the two Catholic Primary Schools in the Parish, Kevin Williams (St Mary's in Toukley) and Anthony Weir (St Brendan's in Lake Munmorah) were present. Unfortunately, the National President of CWLA was unable attend as she was recovering from eye surgery but sent her best wishes.

Moya Fleming, Diocesan President of CWL Broken Bay, welcomed everyone to the Mass and acknowledged the Darkinjung people, the original people of this area.

Bishop David Walker presided over the Mass with Father Peter D'Zouza PP, Father Joseph Rebello and Father Gregory Vutelo concelebrating. The Mass was very beautiful. The Gospel reading was the story of Martha and Mary and Bishop David's Homily was a wonderful reflection on this story. He showed us that we need to be a little of both characters as we live our lives. The Gospel was very appropriate for us as members of the Catholic Women's League.

Carolyn and her Executive accepted their roles at the Commissioning Ceremony and this was followed by the Prayer of Dedication which was

said by all Catholic Women's League Members who were present. When said in a body of women such as this, the prayer was particularly meaningful and powerful.

The day concluded with a celebratory luncheon in the Parish Hall.



L-R: Michelle Pederson (Editor of "The Vine" Newsletter), Beth Stewart (Social Responsibilities Co-ordinator), Colleen Addison (State Secretary), Pauline O'Malley (State Treasurer), Irene O'Grady (Public Officer), Rev Bishop David Walker, Carolyn Metcalfe (State President), Nancy Lagudi (State International Secretary) and Margaret McEntee

Australia Day Honour for Pat Okon: We were thrilled on Australia Day with the announcement of the awarding of an Order of Australia Medal to our member, Pat Okon from the Lithgow branch in the Bathurst Diocese. This is a much deserved award given to a most humble lady. We are all very proud of her.

Carolyn Metcalfe
State President - NSW

CWL Sydney Archdiocese: Our Diocesan President, Moya Potts, welcomed members to the Opening Mass for 2011 on Tuesday 8th February. Rev Fr Ray Farrell, Sydney Chaplin, celebrated Mass in Our Lady's Chapel in Polding Centre and asked the members to pray for the victims of the natural disasters of this past month.

The Sydney Executive was presented with their badges and joined the members in prayer and reflection. Following Mass, Branch members were informed of upcoming events and CWL activities.

Joining the meeting to address the members was our Guest Speaker, Mrs Kathryn Greiner AO. Mrs Greiner engaged the audience with stories about her many and varied commitments, while speaking

highly of our organisation and the continued role CWL plays within the Church. She spoke of her mother's involvement with the League and was delighted to know the work of the CWL continues.



Mrs Kathryn Greiner AO

We look forward to a successful and productive year for CWL.

Chris McKirdy
CWL - Sydney

TASMANIA

The changeover of the Executive of Catholic Women's League Tasmania has taken place with the new Executive being based in the North West Coast of Tasmania for the next 2 years.

Our first Executive meeting was held on 12th January 2010 on a very wet day. The devastating floods and cyclone which affect our country were very much on our minds. Our prayers and thoughts are with all the victims of the floods and cyclones in Queensland and our near neighbours in Victoria. Some parts of the North West of Tasmania experienced flash flooding and devastating fires affected Perth. We hope in the coming months, some recovery is possible. Many prayers are going to all those victims of recent disasters.

Projects for 2011: Following on from our very successful Conference last September, we chose to undertake three projects in our State for the coming year.

1. Support for Juey Bazaar in Geeveston south of Hobart. This shop is operated by 2 Catholic mothers from the local school. The shop sells recycled women's, men's and children's clothing, all of good quality at cheap prices. All money

raised is sent directly to support an orphanage in Cambodia for abused children. The members of the League have been asked to donate one piece of quality clothing to the shop. The clothing will be collected and delivered to the shop in early April.

2. Support for the Stitch Program in Hobart. This program teaches Sudanese women to make clothing for their families as part of the International Humanitarian Refugee Settlement Scheme at Centacare in the suburb of Newtown in Hobart. The members of the League have been asked to donate large pieces of material, cottons, laces and machine needles, etc. for this project. Also wool which the Sudanese ladies use to knit teddy bears for the Overseas Christmas boxes. We are also chasing up vegetarian recipes to send down to the Centre for the coordinators to cook shared lunches to suit the traditional Sudanese diet. All the sewing needs will be collected from members and delivered in early July.
3. Support will also be given to the Red Cross program at the Risdon Women's Prison near Hobart at their Integrated Management Unit. At this unit, women are getting ready to return to their homes and families. Members of the League are collecting magazines and books for them. The women have asked for craft, gardening and home decorating magazines. These will be collected and taken to the Prison in early October.

In 2012, a number of projects will be undertaken in the North of the State, so we will be kept quite busy.

Our new look *State Review Magazine* has been collated, edited, printed and sent out by our new Editor Elizabeth Verhoeff. We are very happy with the result. The Review is now being published bi-monthly.

Social Issues: Pat Gartlan has been tirelessly undertaking her much appreciated and continued role as the Social Issues Coordinator. She is currently undertaking the task writing letters to Parliamentarians and newspapers in opposition to a number of very important topics including the Tasmanian Charter of Rights; the Relationship Bill; Same Sex Marriage; Euthanasia; Surrogacy; Abortion; Child Protection; and R18+ video classification legislation.

Our work into 2011 will continue under our CWL State Conference theme of *Love, Faith and Hope, our Future*.

Marjorie Payton
State President - Tasmania

CANBERRA & GOULBURN ARCHDIOCESE

During the month of February, branches around the Archdiocese held their Annual General Meetings and we welcomed some new faces to many executive positions. Old and new alike, we congratulate them for their continuing commitment to CWL and wish them well for the year to come.

Our Central Region recently organised a very successful 'Summer Lunch' at the Rheinberger Centre in Yarralumla, ACT, hosted by the St Christopher's branch. It was an outstanding success with a magnificent choice of food, excellent raffle prizes and convivial conversation. It was exhausting for the Executive, but a wonderful effort from all those members who contributed to make the day such a success.

Central Region held their AGM on Saturday 12th March at St Joseph's Parish Centre, O'Connor, ACT and on Sunday 13th March, the Country Region held their AGM at the Services Club, Cloete Street, Young, NSW. The Archdiocesan AGM will be held on Saturday 14 May 2011 also at the Services Club in Young.

Our theme this year, *We Are Ambassadors for Christ*, is adapted from St Paul's second letter to the Corinthians where he tells the people they are ambassadors for Christ. We realise this places a serious responsibility on us and we do not take it on lightly. Ambassadors represent others and in order to speak for Christ we need to know what Christ taught and what He would say or do in whatever circumstances. We need to be in a loving and active relationship with Christ through prayer and sacrifice and with His help we will be up for the task.

We welcome Joan Graham from the Young branch as our new Social Issues Convenor and thank Colleen Connell for her years of hard work and dedication to the social issues portfolio. Joan has already been busy organising petitions against euthanasia and just recently has supported us in calling on the Senate to support the definition of marriage as currently contained within the *Marriage Act* (1961).

The news that Joyce Kennedy, Secretary of the West Wyalong branch of CWL, suffered a massive heart attack, while holidaying in Melbourne in mid-January, was upsetting although initially the news of a possible recovery was very positive. Surgeons at the Royal Melbourne Hospital performed a heart by-

pass, but unfortunately another unexpected heart attack took Joyce from this life in the early hours of Saturday 22nd January 2011. Her funeral Mass at St Mary's Church in West Wyalong on 28th January was a wonderful celebration of Joyce's life and CWL were very well represented from all around the Archdiocese. Current President, Olga Scott, was deeply moved when asked to bring forward Joyce's *Certificate of Appreciation* from CWL in recognition for all her years of dedication to the League. A touching gesture by those CWL members present was when they formed a guard of honour outside the Church to accompany Joyce's coffin to the hearse and later at her graveside, they came forward and placed small yellow flowers, tied up with blue and gold ribbon on Joyce's coffin before it was lowered into the earth. May her dear soul rest in everlasting peace.

As part of my duties, I still have a couple of branches to visit before my first year in office is complete in May and I look forward to doing so in coming months as the weather cools.

I trust this will be a very happy, healthy and prosperous new year and may it bring us ever closer to God and to each other.

Deo gratias.

Angela M Devlin
President - Canberra & Goulburn

VICTORIA & WAGGA WAGGA

Dr Sr Mary Glowrey Stars at Ballarat Information Evening: On the evening of February 22nd this year, the St Patrick's Cathedral Branch hosted an inquiry evening at the Cathedral Presbytery for women who were interested in the League but had previously been unavailable to join the Branch's regular daytime meeting.

It was a wonderful opportunity for the active members of the Ballarat diocese to meet with younger women in order to share their life stories and the role of the League in these. Particular tribute was given to Gertie Mangan and her team for the outstanding response to their Petition to the Legislative Council urging the Parliament to recognize under statute the death and damage caused to unborn children by culpable driving, negligence and violence against women.

The evening began with viewing the engaging *"More than Tea and Cake"* DVD. The DVD highlighted the collaboration of the League with the Anima

