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CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE AUSTRALIA

*"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

From the National President



We have reached that time of the year when we are once again being bombarded with advertisements as companies compete for our 'Christmas dollar'. After clearing a bumper crop of junk mail from my letterbox the other day, I was reminded of the poem "*Mary's Christmas Dream*". In

it, Mary tells Joseph she dreamed that many people were going shopping, buying presents and decorating their homes to celebrate Jesus' birthday and yet never mentioned His name. Mary then wonders if her Son would have even been welcome at His own birthday celebrations. At the end of the poem, Mary says to Joseph: "I am glad it was only a dream. How terrible if it had been real."

Let us all make a conscious effort to help put Christ back into Christmas. He is the reason for the season!

In response to the Holy Father's invitation to "...join the network of relationships which the digital era has made possible...", Matt Price (CWLA's webmaster) and Robyn (our Public Relations Officer) have worked many hours to launch CWLA into the world of social media and also to build a dynamic online presence through our new website (at <http://www.cwla.org.au>). A recent study found that nearly two-thirds of Australian internet users now have a presence on social networking sites such as Facebook etc. In embracing social media and having an accessible online presence, the League can help to bring the light of the Gospel to a wider audience and to contribute to the transformation of our culture into a civilisation of life and love. Our 'tweets' now reach a network of over 74,000; Fr Paschal Corby's talk about Dr Sr Mary Glowrey on our YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/CWLAustralia>) has already had hundreds of 'views'; and the number of subscribers to our e-newsletter continues to grow. Robyn has also been busy building relationships with community members and organisations who can work side-by-side with CWLA as ongoing partners. I am deeply grateful to Robyn for her support and hard

work on behalf of the League over the past two years. The League has certainly benefited from her many talents, faith, integrity, enthusiasm and sense of hope for the future.

As this is my last report, I would like to also acknowledge and thank the other members of my Executive—Pat Coloe, Gertie Mangan (2010), Brenda Finlayson (2011), Ann Robinson and Louisa Ashton—for so generously giving of their time and talents for the benefit of the League. My deep gratitude also to my husband Tom who has been a wonderful gopher but who I dare not ask to fold a raffle ticket ever again! Thank you also to Thora Reagan, our outgoing National International Secretary, who trudged through ice and snow to represent CWLA at the Commission on the Status of Women sessions at the United Nations in New York. Thora also represented the League at the WUCWO ASPAC Conference in Korea and at the WUCWO Centenary General Assembly in Jerusalem. We are grateful to Betty Roberts, our outgoing Social Issues Convenor, who has worked so hard for many years to create awareness about the many serious social issues affecting our nation. The League is very blessed to have Anna Krohn as our Bioethics Convenor. She has an extraordinary ability to get to the heart of contemporary bioethics issues, and inspire action and response by many in their own lives and communities. Thank you also to Brenda Finlayson and Catherine McGrath whose respective tenures as the WUCWO Board Member Australia commenced and ended during our term of office. We are also deeply grateful to Fr David Cartwright, our National Chaplain, for the beautiful Masses he has celebrated for us and for his guidance during a period of significant change for the League. Finally, I thank the members of the National Council for their contributions over the past two years and their willingness to embrace change to ensure the future of the League.

Come the 31st December, Tom and the Missionaries of God's Love (MGLs) will not know what to do with all the spare time they will have as they will no longer be getting requests for prayers from our Executive (sometimes on a daily basis)! Poor St Joseph has also been 'hit hard' over the past two years with many prayer requests and messages of thanks to take to His Son, so he too will be able to take a short break!

A Big MGL Thank You!



CWL Victoria and Wagga Wagga were most generous in allowing the current National Executive to use an office in Mary Glowrey House. Helen and Leon, the much-loved caretakers at Mary Glowrey House, spent a great deal of time doing up the office before we moved in and have provided wonderful support throughout our term of office. I ask for your prayers for Leon as he is seriously ill in hospital, and also for Helen and their family at this difficult time.

Our prayers will be with the incoming National Executive led by Jean Tanzer. We wish them well for their term of office and are delighted that they will be assisted by some incredibly talented women including Dr Brigid McKenna, our new Research Officer; Jane Munro, our incoming National International Secretary; Marcia Riordan, our incoming Social Issues Convenor; and the incomparable Anna Krohn.

The image on our front cover is of the magnificent nativity window in St Joseph Catholic Church, Macon, Georgia, USA. My sincere thanks to Steve Mastrangelo, Director of St Joseph's Parish Administration, for his efforts in helping us find a high resolution photo of the window and to Alexis Xenakis who allowed us to use his stunning photograph.

As we go in peace glorifying the Lord by our lives, let us remember that it is never too late to touch the heart of another, nor is it ever in vain.

May the peace that comes with the birth of the Christ Child be with you and your families this Christmas.

O Come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Madge Fahy

Archbishop Denis Hart officially opened and blessed the new Missionaries of God's Love (MGL) Melbourne seminary at St Benedict's Parish, Burwood, Victoria, on Saturday 5th November. The MGLs would like to thank all those members of the League who have given so generously to the Seminary Building Appeal.

Archbishop Hart said that his support for the seminary and the MGL presence in Burwood was the result of the MGL witness and commitment to outreach in the parish, diocese and beyond.

"The true missionary of God's love is one touched by the love of God, filled with his Spirit and ready to see the humblest service as an expression of that love," he said. "Yet it must also be remembered that this service is missionary and dynamic. The particular genius which we find in the Missionaries of God's Love is to try and capture that dynamism and make it alive in the world of today. That is why I wanted the Missionaries to come and be in the Burwood parish and to have their seminary here. The ripples of what comes from that love are shown so powerfully in the Sunday evening Mass. They reach into our Catholic Theological College and they do so because here are young men touched by the love of Christ, open to his transforming power and generous and unreserved in the way they respond to it."

The MGLs still need to raise a further \$50,000. Donations to the MGL Seminary Building Appeal can be sent to 6 Boake Place, Garran, ACT, 2605 or made online donation at <http://www.givenow.com.au/mglseminary>. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

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From the National Chaplain



During the beautiful liturgical seasons of Advent and Christmas, we can be reminded of the presence of the Lord with us. It is all too easy to forget this amongst the commercial nature of the season and the personal demands that are made upon us at this time of year.

As members of the CWLA, we have reflected over the past two years upon the words of the Holy Father that it is 'never too late to touch the heart of another and it is never in vain'. These words can be very relevant during this time of year when people are often more open to the spiritual aspect of the season; a time when we see our churches full of people and when a spirit of goodwill seems to be present in the lives of people more than at other times.

We can use the seasons of Advent and Christmas to help others see the value of the spiritual in their lives and use this to call them to a deeper and more fulfilling relationship with the Lord and the Church. Our example, as well as our words, can touch the hearts of others in a new way this Christmas.

Recently the Bishops of Australia were in Rome for their *Ad Limina* visit to the Holy Father—the visit that all Bishops make each five years to give

an account of their ministry and, to meet and be encouraged by the Holy Father. In his address to the Australian Bishops at the end of their visit, Pope Benedict made the following comments about being an example to others, reflecting on the life of St Mary of the Cross (McKillop):

Saint Mary is now held up within the Church for her openness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and for her zeal for the good of souls which drew many others to follow in her footsteps. Her vigorous faith, translated into dedicated and patient action was her gift to Australia; her life of holiness is a wonderful gift to your country and to the world.

In concluding his address to the Bishops, the Pope spoke about the new translation of the Roman Missal which we are now using in our parishes. This of course is a wonderful source for leading others to the Lord and touching their hearts through worship and prayer. The Pope concluded:

The new translation of the Roman Missal...is intended to enrich and deepen the sacrifice of praise offered to God by His people. Make every effort... to render the celebration of the Roman Ritea moment of greater grace and beauty, worthy of the Lord and spiritually enriching for everyone.

My time as your National Chaplain has been a graced time where I have learnt so much about the wonderful work done by members of the League; I have been inspired and encouraged by the example of so many women who work in service of God and neighbour. Thank you for your witness and, for your support and prayer during these two years.

Fr David Cartwright

Giving God Permission

His Eminence John Cardinal O'Connor, founder of the Sisters of Life, described his first meeting with Mother Teresa as a pivotal moment of grace: "I was coming down the steps from the awesome high altar of St Peter's in Rome, having just had the Pope place his hands on my head and ordain me a Bishop. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Mother Teresa almost pressing herself into the stone wall of the Basilica. I had never met her before, but I broke the line, incurring the wrath of the Master of Ceremonies, and went over to her. I said nothing. She looked at me and said, 'Give God permission.' That was all. 'Give God permission.' Let God work through you. Let God use your hands. Let God speak to people through your lips. Let people look into your eyes and see God. It's as simple as that. 'Give God permission.' I don't, most of the time. But when I give Him permission and get out of the way, He does an awful lot.

Introducing Our Research Officer



Dr Brigid McKenna MBBS MBioeth is a medical practitioner with post-graduate qualifications in bioethics from the John Paul II Institute for Marriage & Family. For the past seven years, Dr McKenna has engaged in research, policy development and education in the areas of biomedical

and healthcare ethics. She is also busy with three children under the age of four.

Dr McKenna has worked as the Life Projects Support Officer, Australian Catholic Bishops' Commission for Pastoral Life; the Life Issues Policy Officer (on a part time basis) at the Life Marriage and Family Centre, Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney; a lecturer, tutor and course coordinator of the ethics curriculum for 1st Year Medical Students at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney; a lecturer in human biology at Campion College Australia, Sydney; and a lecturer in Christian ethics/ bioethics at the Catholic Adult Education Centre, Sydney.

Dr McKenna was an adjunct lecturer in bioethics at the John Paul II Institute for Marriage & Family in Melbourne and the Director of the Life Office, Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. She was also a Medical Registrar in Palliative Care at the Broadmeadows Health Service in Melbourne.

She was awarded the John Paul II Institute for Marriage & Family *Archbishop George Pell Prize* for outstanding academic achievement in philosophy and theology in 2002 and 2003; the University of Tasmania *Sandoz Price* for highest marks in Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics in her 5th and 6th Year of medical studies in 1995; and the University of Tasmania Rev. James Scott Memorial Prize for English Literature in 1989.

She is a registered medical practitioner, an associate member of the International Association of Catholic Bioethicists and a member of the Life Council for the Australian Catholic Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life.

She is a highly sought after speaker whose work has been published in a range of media as well as peer-reviewed journals.

The League is truly blessed to have Dr Brigid McKenna lead our new Research Centre in Hobart. More information about the CWLA Research Centre is available on our website at http://www.cwla.org.au/index.php?option=com_form&Itemid=196.

“ *Jesus' example teaches us that in our own prayers we must always trust in the Father's will and strive to see all things in the light of his mysterious plan of love.* ”

Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, Wednesday, 14 December 2011



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To Love Until the End: Preparing for Death with Virtue and Care

Anna Krohn



“Told that I would die within five years (in 1977) and having become interested in philosophy, I saw no harm in making the latter my principal interest rather than following a career-orientated path.” So writes Associate Professor Nicholas Tonti-Filippini, with disarming

understatement, in the introduction to his timely new book titled: *“About Bioethics: Philosophical and Theological Approaches.”*

The book itself is a very rare event—a very readable and at times very personal reflection on the pressing “life issues” by one of the most recognizable and active public ethicists in Australia. It is doubly rare, since it represents the thinking of a bioethicist who says: *“For me the central concept of Bioethics is respect for every member of the human family”* and who has defended and articulated this universal norm in the public square, while making no secret of being *“primarily motivated by Christ’s instruction that we should love God and one another.”*

Associate Professor Tonti-Filippini’s comments about his life’s work seem to be tossed off with a deceptively wry, yet daring, humour which belongs to those, like him, who face death and chronic suffering and disability each day. The comments also imply the courage and deeply Christian faith that such a shocking medical diagnosis can both challenge and call forth.

At the recent launch of his book in Melbourne, and as part of the Archdiocese of Melbourne Life, Marriage and Family Office’s yearlong campaign *‘To Love to the End’*, Dr Tonti-Filippini presented a seminar dedicated to enabling other people to “plan for their future” while facing either terminal illness or the debility of ageing.

During the seminar, Dr Tonti-Filippini, explored some of the major fears and misconceptions which patients, their families and even medical professionals experience during the discussions about the end-of-life.

1. The Fear of Being a Burden.

The first fear to be exposed was a very common one. In fact, many elderly and sick people cite “the fear of being a burden to others” to be an overriding one. Dr Tonti-Filippini discussed the type of shame and discrimination that such fear creates in people at a very deep level. He suggested that the really destructive fiction was the notion that human beings should all be “totally autonomous people” with the absolutely “controlled lives.” Being “in need” is not, he said, a human “failing” nor is it abnormal. He challenged the audience to think of the positive place of interdependence in human lives and also the way in which “being disabled and needy” gives others around us and society in general the opportunity and stimulus to be “more humane”. In responding to the needs of the sick and ageing, the community itself can become more united and learns to value both itself and those in need of care.

2. Maintaining Values and Dignity

Despite the fact that we all have times when we “need” the help of others, and despite the fact that our secular liberal society often proposes unrealistic expectations of “person control”, Dr Tonti-Filippini proposed an alternative ethics of “engaged” acceptance and forward planning for disability or death which is both consistent with a “culture of life” and attractive to those concerned about the human dignity and informed consent in the face of future medical treatment.

In Australia, as in other Western societies, there have been a number of methods, both statutory and regulatory, which attempt to preserve a person’s ability to both appoint another person as a representative should they lose competency and to protect the person’s wishes in the event of such events as dementia, unconsciousness or cognitive disability. Dr Tonti-Filippini briefly explained the



options of guardianship provisions, the notion of enduring power of attorney and the implementation of so-called “advance directives”.

He pointed out to the audience of over 80 people, that today many hospitals as well as laws in the ACT, South Australia and Queensland propose the legally binding documentation of “advance directives”—the documentation by a person at one point of time of their future medical treatment choices based on the prediction of “outcomes” in the face of degrees of disability or loss of future loss of “quality of life.”

Dr Tonti-Filippini commented upon some of the practical and ethical difficulties which arise in some of the “advance directives” processes even when these are done in a fully guided and informed way. These difficulties were outlined as legal, practical and philosophical in nature.

The legal status of advance directives is unclear. In three jurisdictions of Australia documented directives are legally binding while in others (such as Victoria), they are not. Where they are legally binding, the legal difficulties include doubt about the application of such a directive because it is very likely that what the patient envisaged months or even years before signing the directive document may not correspond in detail or completeness with the later actual situation. This causes great difficulties for the patient’s family, the carers, and for medical and nursing personnel. The directive may include an instruction that is no longer in the best interests of the patient, or is impossible to achieve or may no longer correspond with the probable wishes of the patient.

Some advance directives assert that it is a patient’s “quality of life” that is the outcome in the balance rather than promoting a discernment of the proportionate benefit or harm of a particular treatment option. This tends to divert attention to a more utilitarian and yet vague attitude to the human capacity for adaptability and virtue in the face of suffering.

By contrast with these implicit modes of thinking and the very real legal difficulties connected with advance directives, Dr Tonti-Filippini proposed a more palliative, flexible and holistic approach, entailed under what is a “future planning” ethos.

The philosophy of “future planning” promotes a more community and family engaged statement of wishes and values—documented by the patient—in order to guide those entrusted with advocating for him or her, while allowing for unexpected medical outcomes and contexts. The “future planning” approach assumes that the person’s life, no matter how disabled, requires appropriate and competent care but does also allow for appropriate withdrawal of treatment where it is burdensome or futile. Dr Tonti-Filippini suggested that documentation of these aspects of a patient’s wishes can offer a rich, reassuring and fulfilling way for them to plan for disability and a “good death” while helping them to grow spiritually and personally. It enables those facing ageing and death to pro-actively reflect upon and engage the values which are most important to them.

Associate Professor Nicholas Tonti-Filippini’s new book, “About Bioethics: Philosophical and Theological Approaches”, can be ordered online at Connor Court Publishing at http://www.connorcourt.com/catalog1/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=179 or by calling them on (03) 9005 9167.

World Down Syndrome Day

Wendy Wright

Brazil has proposed a resolution at the UN to establish an annual World Down Syndrome Day on March 21. Over 60 countries celebrate Down Syndrome Day on that date, chosen because 3/21 represents the three copies of chromosome 21, the unique trait of people with Down syndrome.

Oscar-nominated actor Liam Neeson explains the reason for establishing a special day: “Activities and events held on World Down Syndrome Day can have a tremendous impact, showcasing the abilities, talents and accomplishments of people with Down syndrome.”

Muttiah Muralitharan, a record breaking Sri Lankan cricketer, said: “The aims of World Down Syndrome Day are to promote awareness and understanding, seek international support, and to achieve dignity, equal rights and a better life for people with Down syndrome everywhere.”

One statistic reveals the need for better awareness—over 90% of unborn babies discovered to have Down Syndrome are aborted. It would be hard to find any other people group who is experiencing such near-total extinction.

Mark Leach’s daughter is one of the few allowed to survive. He writes in “*My Daughter’s Paradoxical Genes*” (the whole article at http://www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/my_daughters_paradoxical_genes is well worth reading):

“My daughter Juliet was born with two genetic conditions that have been historically discriminated against One of Juliet’s genetic conditions is that she has a third copy of the 21st chromosome in every one of her cells .”

“In most Western countries, it has been standard of care for the past several years to offer prenatal testing for Down syndrome to all expectant mothers. Should the test be positive, medical



guidelines require that the physician counsel his or her patient on abortion”

“It is a paradox, then, that ethicists, physicians, and policymakers have taken the exact opposite position for my daughter’s other genetic condition . . . Juliet also has a duplicate X-chromosome in each of her cells. This double-X condition is commonly diagnosed as “female. The Ethics Committee for the American Congress of Obstetrician and Gynaecologists (ACOG) issued an opinion in 2007 that said it was unethical to use prenatal testing for sex selection. This was the same year that ACOG also recommended that all women be offered prenatal testing for Down syndrome. For double-X, prenatal testing is unethical if its purpose is to abort based on the sex of the baby; for Trisomy 21, it is ethically required to offer prenatal testing in order to allow for aborting the baby based on its genetic condition”

“The United Nations Population Fund hosted an international forum to address the sex imbalance occurring in Asian countries due to sex selective

“*The aims of World Down Syndrome Day are to promote awareness and understanding, seek international support, and to achieve dignity, equal rights and a better life for people with Down syndrome everywhere.*”



Introducing our Incoming National International Secretary

abortions against girls. Nobuko Horibe, the Director of the UN's Asia and Pacific Regional Office declared at the opening: *'We must join forces to ensure that sex selection is understood as discrimination against women and girls and should end.'* Horibe further justified a 'zero tolerance' approach to prenatal testing for sex selection based on societal consequences. Due to what has been called the 'gendercide' against girls in Asian countries, there is a 'marriage squeeze.' With more men and fewer women, Horibe expressed concerns about the *'risks of potential social unrest, increased sexual violence against women, and trafficking.'*

"... in France, where 96 per cent of foetuses with Down syndrome are aborted, a Parisian Deputy in Parliament wondered last month: *'The real question I ask myself is why is there still 4 per cent?'*"

"What will it take to view the high percentage of abortions to be the 'gendercide' equivalent against Down syndrome such that there is another UN official calling for zero tolerance to the unethical practice of selectively aborting Down syndrome pregnancies?"

Perhaps celebrating World Down Syndrome Day will be a start.

Wendy Wright writes for Turtle Bay and Beyond. This article first appeared on the Turtle Bay and Beyond blog (<http://www.turtlebayandbeyond.org>). Turtle Bay and Beyond is sponsored by C-FAM (Catholic Family & Human Rights Institute), a New York and Washington DC-based research institute (<http://www.c-fam.org/>). This article appears with permission.

Jane Munro commences her term of office as our National International Secretary (NIS) on the 1st January 2012.

Jane is married to Ron and they have seven children: Nicola (a zoologist and environmental scientist), Benjamin (a forester who teaches geography in the USA), Monica (a graphic artist at Skye Television in the UK), Rebecca (a teacher who is currently volunteering in Ethiopia), Alexander (a mechanical engineer), Katherine (a nurse working and studying in ICU) and Rachael (who is studying for her honours degree in music).



Jane is involved as a Senior Teacher with Billings LIFE; as a telephone counsellor with Pregnancy Counselling Australia, a crisis-pregnancy help line, as well as a trainer of new volunteers; and as the Secretary, Pregnancy Support Group, Albury Wodonga Inc, which provides practical help and face-to-face counselling for new mothers.

Jane has also taught Christian Religious Education, to upper Primary grades (5/6), at the local State School and was the Area Co-ordinator. She prays regularly outside an abortion clinic in the nearby city of Albury. Jane and her husband, Ron, started the local Helpers of God's Precious Infants group 14 years ago. Last year, a group of young mothers joined the Helpers enabling more hours of prayerful witness.

In addition to her extensive work in the community, Jane is also the Secretary of the Sandhurst Diocesan Committee of the Catholic Women's League of Victoria and Wagga Wagga. She is also the Editor of the CWL Victoria and Wagga Wagga magazine, The Horizon, which has been in continuous publication since 1916. Ten issues are published annually.

In her local Parish, Jane takes Holy Communion to the sick at her local Hospital, helps with monthly Mass held at the Hospital, is a member of the Baptism Preparation Team, is one of the co-ordinators of the Funeral Catering Group, initiated and co-ordinated a Parish Community Care Group, is the representative on Combined Churches Committee and is a member of Rosary Prayer Group.

She is truly putting her hands to strong things! (Proverbs 31:10-31)

Jane can be contacted at cwlainternationalsecretary@bigpond.com.



My Grandma's Hands

Melinda Clements

Grandma, some ninety plus years, sat feebly on the patio bench. She didn't move, just sat with her head down staring at her hands.

When I sat down beside her she didn't acknowledge my presence and the longer I sat I wondered if she was OK.

Finally, not really wanting to disturb her but wanting to check on her at the same time, I asked her if she was OK. She raised her head and looked at me and smiled. "Yes, I'm fine, thank you for asking," she said in a clear voice strong.

"I didn't mean to disturb you, Grandma, but you were just sitting here staring at your hands and I wanted to make sure you were OK," I explained to her.

"Have you ever looked at your hands?" she asked. "I mean really looked at your hands?"

I slowly opened my hands and stared down at them. I turned them over, palms up and then palms down. No, I guess I had never really looked at my hands as I tried to figure out the point she was making.

Grandma smiled and related this story:

"Stop and think for a moment about the hands you have, how they have served you well throughout your years. These hands, though wrinkled shriveled and weak, have been the tools I have used all my life to reach out and grab and embrace life.

They braced and caught my fall when as a toddler I crashed upon the floor.

They put food in my mouth and clothes on my back. As a child, my mother taught me to fold them in prayer. They tied my shoes and pulled on my boots. They held my husband and wiped my tears when he went off to serve our country in time of war.



They have been dirty, scraped and raw, swollen and bent. They were uneasy and clumsy when I tried to hold my newborn son. The left hand is decorated with my wedding band, they showed the world that I was married and loved someone special.

They wrote my letters to him and trembled and shook when I buried my parents and my spouse.

They have held my children and grandchildren, consoled neighbours, and shook in fists of anger when I didn't understand.

They have covered my face, combed my hair, and washed and cleansed the rest of my body. They have been sticky and wet, bent and broken, dried and raw. And to this day when not much of anything else of me works real well, but these hands hold me up, lay me down, and again continue to fold in prayer.

These hands are the mark of where I've been and the ruggedness of life.

But more importantly it will be these hands that God will reach out and take when he leads me home. And with my hands He will lift me to His side and there I will use these hands to touch His Face."

I will never look at my hands the same again. But I remember God reached out and took my Grandma's hands and led her home.

When my hands are hurt or sore or when I stroke the face of my children and husband, I think of Grandma. I know she has been stroked and caressed and held by the Hands of God.

This reflection was written by Melinda Clements © 2004 and is reprinted with permission.

From our Social Issues Convenor

The distinguished American scholar, Professor George Weigel, gave a thought provoking lecture titled *Benedict XVI and the Future of the West* to mark re-opening of the magnificently restored St Patrick's Church in Soho Square, London, earlier this year. I would like the whole world to read the full article! I encourage all our readers to go to http://eppc.org/publications/pubID.4511/pub_detail.asp and take some time to both read the article and reflect upon it.



On an entirely different topic but one which I written about many times in the past, a study by Dr Vincent Matthews from the Indianapolis University School of Medicine has found that playing violent video games produced significant changes in brain function. Dr Matthews reported that playing these games resulted in reduced activity in regions of the brain involved in attention, inhibition, and monitoring of emotions.

This study is one of the first to document the effects of violent video games on brain activity. If you would like to know more about this study, please go to <http://www.medconnect.com.au/tabid/84/ct1/c343687/Default.aspx>.

Betty Roberts OAM

“ *God made himself small so that we could understand him, welcome him, and love him.* ”

*Pope Benedict XVI,
Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord,
24 December 2006*

What's in it for me? Understanding Young Volunteers

Last year 6.4 million Australians (or 38% of the population) undertook some kind of voluntary work. This is a huge increase in voluntary work since 1995, when the first ABS Voluntary Work Survey revealed a volunteering rate of 24%.

Despite the 35-44 age group having the highest rate of volunteering (44% in 2006), and lots of discussion about the potential volunteering goldmine offered by retiring baby boomers, it is the 18-24 age group where the growth has occurred.

The number of young Australians (aged 18 to 24) engaged in volunteering **doubled between 1995 and 2006**, from 16% to 32%, with no indicators this trend is slowing down.

Research into volunteering by young people by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) —the peak body representing the youth sector in the state—found that young people's volunteering was shaped by a number of factors, including their age and stage, gender, whether they had a disability, where they live and their cultural background.

The report "**Volunteering is Catching: A study into young people's volunteering in Victoria 2011**" by YACVic researcher Clare Wynne, found that young people want to volunteer in 'youth specific' areas alongside peers, identifying volunteering areas that overlap with the activities of youth participation. For these young people, a 'community of volunteering', where they volunteer with their peers and meet up to talk volunteering, is important.

The report says that young people are unlikely to be exposed to volunteering in their school community (language schools, secondary schools or tertiary institutions), and there is a lack of youth friendly information informing young people about volunteering, particularly for young people who were not part of a community of volunteering.

The report also reveals that an important factor in motivating young people to volunteering is increasing their future employment opportunities.

Founder of social trends research organisation the Korn Group, Neer Korn, **recently wrote** about young people and volunteering in the article 'The Art of Selfish Giving'.

Korn said young people view society as extremely competitive and are more ruthless than previous generations. "They expect something back, even when giving", Korn said.

Korn said young people expect volunteering to build their CVs. "They seek experiences which offer adventures and personal growth opportunities thereby enhancing their life skills, or ones that directly contribute to improving their CVs thereby making them more appealing to employers."

The YACVic report made a number of key recommendations to 'support the continued development of young people's volunteering'. While these recommendations are aimed at governments, they can assist Not-For-Profit (NFP) organisations wanting to engage with young volunteers. The recommendations include:

- ✓ Developing resources (both print and online) that inform young people about volunteering
- ✓ Capacity building of NFPs to be better able to create and identify meaningful volunteering opportunities for diverse groups of young people
- ✓ Meaningful volunteering opportunities for diverse groups of young people
- ✓ Strengthening of volunteering awareness programs and volunteering opportunities in educational institutions
- ✓ Developing the capacity to use online media and social networks to engage with and support youth volunteering
- ✓ The development and support of a community of young volunteers

Want to get more young people involved in your organisation? Download '**Young People and Volunteering – Guide for organisations, managers, trainers and researchers**' [PDF]

*This article by Ryan Witcombe first appeared on the ProBono Australia website (<http://www.probonoaustralia.com.au>) on 5th November 2011 and is reprinted with permission. The Federal Government has recently launched its **National Volunteering Strategy**.*

Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys Over Girls and the Consequences of a World Full of Men

Susan Yoshihara, Ph.D.

(NEW YORK - C-FAM) A new book has raised hackles among abortion advocates about just how much the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) is to blame for more than 160 million missing girls in Asia: aborted in the quest for sons.

Mara Hvistendahl's *Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys Over Girls and the Consequences of a World Full of Men* is "one of the most consequential books ever written in the campaign against abortion" according to a Wall Street Journal review; the book's scholarly credentials bolstered by a standing-room-only event with demographer Nicholas Eberstadt at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington.

While conservatives hail the book's breakthrough research, Hvistendahl's fellow progressives haggle over its findings. The liberal Guardian's review elicited a terse letter from UNFPA condemning Hvistendahl's conclusion that UNFPA and feminist organizations have done little to stop the practice. In the letter UNFPA claims credit for persuading the Chinese to outlaw sex selection in 1994.

That law has done little, however. Sex selective abortion persists despite a similar ban in India, resulting in extremely skewed sex ratios at birth. Normally there are around 105 males per 100 females born, but China now reports a ratio of 120 boys to 100 girls and that has led to trafficking for prostitution and widespread bride buying.

In her response to the UNFPA letter, Hvistendahl dodges direct conflict with the agency and instead criticizes the Guardian's review as "misleading" readers into thinking she had proven UNFPA's direct complicity in the one-child policy that fuels sex selective abortion. "There is a difference between outright funding an injustice and ignoring injustice once it occurs," she argues. Readers may not be so convinced.

Hvistendahl ably demonstrates that despite UNFPA's touted mission to fight gender discrimination, the agency deliberately refrains from taking a position on sex selective abortion. UNFPA officials told her privately this is because they are "in a bind" since, as one demographer working with UNFPA put it, "the right to abort remains UNFPA's 'priority issue.'"

"How do you hold on to this discrimination tag and at the same time talk about safe abortion access to it?" a UNFPA officer told her: "It has been a huge challenge to us...We are walking a tightrope."

Internal UNFPA directives tell officers to shift the blame, emphasizing "women whose husbands beat them or threaten divorce if they don't produce an heir." One pamphlet directs advocates to "avoid language that holds the mother responsible . . . she has very little control over the decision...choice in the absence of autonomy is no choice."

Hvistendahl cites a 2010 internal staff memo warning UNFPA country officers to stay away from the 1995 UN Beijing statement on women that condemned "prenatal sex selection and female infanticide" and to avoid associating the practice with human rights. As soon as they acknowledge how many women go through numerous abortions to get a boy, a Canadian sociologist told her, "the Vatican will be the first one to say, 'Ban abortion, make abortion illegal!'"

"Fear of the 'A-word,'" Hvistendahl concludes, has "immobilized the very people who should be crying oppression."

Susan Yoshihara, Ph.D. writes for C-FAM. This article first appeared in the Friday Fax, an internet report published weekly by C-FAM (Catholic Family & Human Rights Institute), a New York and Washington DC-based research institute (<http://www.c-fam.org/>). This article appears with permission.

“ Let us entrust our prayers and our commitment to unborn life to the Virgin Mary, who welcomed the Son of God made man with her faith, with her maternal womb, with her attentive care, with her nurturing support, vibrant with love. ”

*Pope Benedict XVI,
Celebration of First Vespers of the First
Sunday of Advent for Unborn Life,
27 November 2010*



BILLINGS LIFE CHRISTMAS APPEAL

This Christmas, give the gift of knowledge that could save a woman's life.

The money that you donate will help Billings LIFE create greater awareness about the Billings Ovulation Method™ in rural, remote, regional and metro areas across Australia. Your gift also enables us to help women safeguard their reproductive health through health promotion programs, educational services and research.

Make a secure online donation today at:
www.givenow.com.au/billingslife

Alternatively, you can send a donation to Billings LIFE at
2A/303 Burwood Highway, East Burwood Victoria 3151.

Billings LIFE is a fully registered health promotion charity and all donations over \$2 are tax deductible. ABN 57 067 377 959

Collective Shout's 'Cross'em off your list' Christmas Campaign

Don't pay for sexploitation this Christmas!

It's that time of year again. The time of year when companies ramp up their advertising in order to compete for your Christmas dollar. There is nowhere you can go without companies placing their product and logo in your face.

Now is the time to recall which companies used sexploitation to sell and promote their products over this past year. You can make a difference by voting with your dollar against sexploitation.

Following the positive response to Collective Shout's inaugural 'Crossed off' list of 2010, they have compiled an updated list of corporate offenders (which is available at <http://collectiveshout.org/2011/11/crossem-off-your-list>), who they have selected for specialising in sexism, objectification and sex industry themes in 2011.

Beside each logo, you will find a link to more information about why Collective Shout is encouraging you to boycott this company. And don't forget to let them know why you won't be buying from them – Collective Shout has included their contact details as well.

Source: *Collective Shout and the Archdiocese of Sydney CMail News.*

Prayer Books for Catholic Military Personnel

The Knights of the Southern Cross (KSC) are raising funds to print 10,000 Military Prayer Books containing the revised translation of the Mass and prayers specific to military personnel, which are a source of support in their Faith journey and in times of need.

Everyone can assist by sponsoring one or more prayer books at a cost of \$4.00 each and donations are tax deductible. More information about the project is available at the KSC national website www.ksca.org.au under "What's New". A brochure is available online to be downloaded and the sponsorship section can then be sent with a donation.

For those without internet access, you can donate by sending a cheque made payable to the *Armed Services Catholic Diocesan Revenue Fund* to the KSC National Office, PO Box 216, Campbell ACT 2612 with your name, address and phone number. A tax receipt will be provided.

“ *It is great wisdom to know how to be silent and to look at neither the remarks, nor the deeds, nor the lives of others.* ”

St John of the Cross

News From Our Member Organisations

QUEENSLAND

As we begin the season of Advent, we are challenged to be “alert” and to “prepare”—this is a time for new beginnings, a time to take stock, to look at what we have done and what we failed to do, to be open to The Lord and what He wants of us and for us.

At this time of the year, we look back over 2011, a year of hardship and resilience, of prayerful love and support for various parts of our State. We thank all CWL members for their support both prayerfully and financially in response to the natural disasters that affected us in the early months of the year. We realise that Queensland was not the only State affected and sincerely thank the members in other States for their support even when they were in need themselves. We had them in our prayers too.

We enjoyed the ‘coming together’ of CWL members from all over Australia in Melbourne during those few days in September. It was a time of meeting, rejoicing, and of fellowship and hope for the future. It was a time to renew friendships and forge new beginnings. The enthusiasm generated by the various speakers and liturgies must continue.

Our State Conference will be held in Brisbane in September 2012, with preparations well under way. We hope it will be well attended and bring the members together in celebration for the gifts that are bestowed when “two or more are gathered in my name”.

The last two Branch AGMs, in the Brisbane Archdiocese were held in November and as well as the Memorial Mass for members who have gone on to their eternal reward in the past twelve months. We thank Father Bryan Roe for celebrating the Mass and his wonderful homily and friendliness.

The Townsville Diocesan Council Meeting and Annual General Meeting were held in early November. These were hosted by the Ayr Branch. It was a pleasure to be with them as they celebrated with prayer and thanksgiving for the successes of the past year and hope for the year ahead. Jean Tanzer OAM, National President Elect, resigned as WUCWO Liaison Officer for the Townsville Diocese. We wish Jean and her team God’s blessings for the next two years as they represent us all in the Catholic Women’s League throughout Australia.

The Installation Mass for the National Team for 2012/2013 will be held in the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Townsville on Sunday 12th February 2012.

Chinchilla Branch in the Toowoomba Diocese farewelled Sr Martina Joyce in November. She has been a member of CWL and the WUCWO Liaison Officer for the Diocese for many years. Sr Martina has ministered to the parishioners there for twenty years but will now move back to Brisbane.

We are saddened that two branches in the Brisbane Archdiocese will close at the end of the year and a Townsville branch closed recently. Age and illness are often the usual reasons for these closures. Hopefully, these women will continue to work in their parishes for ‘*The Honour and Glory of God*’ even though their CWL membership has ceased.

As we gather for Christmas parties with fellow members and friends, let us always be mindful of the miracle of Christmas. May the love, joy and peace that the Christ Child brings be with you during this Holy Season and throughout the New Year.

*Heather McIntyre,
State President, Queensland*

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

“May we have Wisdom in our heart and mind, Success in every challenge we find, Courage to seek life’s purpose for all, and Belief in ourselves to make it come true. Strength to do our best and endure with the guiding light of our faith to ensure. That wherever we go, whatever we do, God’s love will always see us through. Amen.” Author Unknown

I believe that the above is what we, as members of CWL, have made our mantra this past year and, as women with families, work and commitment to the wider community, we can look back with thanksgiving, pride and love for all that we have received and achieved.

On the 14th October, a Special General Meeting was held at the Redemptorist Monastery Retreat House to move that the Revised Constitution of CWLWA (Inc.) in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act of WA, be accepted. The Resolution was duly put to a secret ballot vote and was carried unanimously in favour. Certificates for twenty years of membership and service in the

League were presented to Pat Miragliotta, Tina Mangano, Geraldine Mincham, Molly Berger and Dot Wilson. Group photos of the twenty one members who attended the National Conference were presented to the attendees from WA as a reminder of the wonderful time we enjoyed at the Conference. We were very honoured to have CWLA National President Madge present with us at our Special General Meeting. She spoke of the new and exciting things that have occurred at the National level—the e-newsletter, the new website, the CWLA Twitter and Facebook accounts and, the appointment of Dr Bridget McKenna as the new CWLA Research Officer who will be based in Tasmania. Madge also spoke about Dr Sister Mary Glowery JMJ.

After Mass—which was concelebrated by our Archdiocesan Chaplain Father Roy Pereira and Bunbury Diocesan Chaplain Father Wally Kevis—and lunch, we adjourned to the Monastery Garden for a garden party celebration to mark the beginning of CWLWA's 75th birthday. Guests included members of the Knights of the Southern Cross, Muslim Women, Legion of Mary, Focolare, Catholic Outreach, National Council of Jewish Women, National Council of Women WA and Ruah as well as many CWL members. A presentation of bath towels was made to Ruah for use in their outreach service of providing showers to the homeless.

Entertainment with some lively and beautiful singing was provided by Veronica Moylan OAM and her ladies choir and the celebration cake was duly cut by Betty Moran and CWLWA Life members Alice Gee, Molly Indermaur and Joan Quinlan. The weather was perfect and a wonderful afternoon was enjoyed by all present.

We were privileged to have Mr Tony Stefanoff, a member of the Knights of the Southern Cross and a Chartered Accountant, attend a recent State Council meeting to speak and enlighten us on some of the options and decisions we need to consider as stewards of the proceeds of the sale of our Headquarters Downey House earlier in the year.

As State President, I was invited to join the Knights of the Southern Cross at their AGM Dinner, where Bishop Max Davis, Catholic Military Ordinary, was the after Dinner speaker.

In the Bunbury Diocese, members recently participated in a Diocesan Council meeting in Boyup Brook. Some lively discussion followed the responses to a "Discussion Paper" which had

been sent out beforehand and some decisions were reached. These included the agreement that members no longer see a need for zone meetings; that two council meetings and an AGM were sufficient forums for face-to-face Diocesan communication. However, it was suggested that informal activities organised at the discretion of neighbouring branches would be excellent opportunities for further fellowship and inter-branch communication. In keeping with the CWL aim of an annual day of reflection, members suggested that a Diocesan "THEME" would be very useful and could give a unified aspect to all branches in the diocese when organising their reflection days. Other aspects discussed included the compiling of an annual Diocesan calendar to ensure there was no overlap of activities and to enable maximum attendance at events; suggestions of items for inclusion on council meeting agendas were guest speakers, meeting procedure hints, spiritual input, discussion on motions particularly direction on current issues which could be pursued as motions and the regular update of the Bunbury Diocesan pages of the State handbook; membership building was also mentioned and could incorporate talks and presentations from other branches; and a CWL banner and brochures to be given to all branches to use alongside activities as well as the constant advertisement of all branches' meeting days and times and, relevant contact person in the Diocesan quarterly magazine the "Grapevine". All in all a very fruitful Council meeting!

The Geraldton branch continues to engage in some interesting activities. On 8th September, Our Lady's birthday, members travelled in convoy to Mullewa enjoying the sights of magnificent wheat and canola crops on the way—it has been a long time since the farming families in the areas have expected such a good harvest. Many wildflowers and the tall flowering wattles were still in bloom. They were greeted by Father Michael Morrissey and visited the presbytery and the beautiful Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, both built by the legendary Bishop Hawes. The Geraldton Cathedral and many other churches in the Midwest are also testament to the building work of Bishop Hawes. Maria Flavel reported that a "Timeline" roll of the Mullewa school and parish from 1881-2010 was brought out and some of the women spent time on their knees poring over old paper clippings and photographs bringing back memories of teachers and friends from the past.

On 20th October, the Geraldton branch celebrated CWLWA's 75th Anniversary at St John's Church. The day commenced with a gathering of members and friends in the church hall for fellowship over coffee and scones and then progressed to the Church for a Retreat facilitated by Sr Therese Denny SGS. The retreat was based on the Beatitudes which Sr Therese placed in contemporary society and in her inspiring talks directed attention to the qualities of Blessings of Gratitude, Compassion, Courage, Justice, Mercy, Truth and Wisdom. The talks were of great spiritual value and gave a new insight to the teachings of Christ. After the Angelus at midday, a beautiful Thanksgiving Mass was celebrated by our Geraldton Chaplain, Father Peter Downes assisted by Father Larry Rodillas. The day concluded with lunch, much talk and laughter and the cutting of a "jubilee" cake.



The Perth Archdiocese incorporated its last meeting with Breast Cancer week and contributed \$200 towards Breast Cancer Research. A great effort! Whilst State Council continues to discern its future meeting place, the Archdiocese has found a very comfortable temporary home at the Legion of Mary premises which has proved to be situated conveniently for drivers and those using public transport.

The members of CWL WA (Inc.) express their sincere gratitude to the National President, Madge Fahy, and members of the National Executive for the commitment, drive and love they have demonstrated during their term of office, and we ask God's blessings on them as they pass on the Office of Catholic Women's League Australia to Queensland.

This Christmas season, we wish all members of Catholic Women's League and their families and

friends, a time of Prayer, Hope, Love and Peace.

In Charity, Work & Loyalty,

Karyn Kammann

State President, Western Australia



CWLWA Treasurer's Maria Parkinson (2nd from the left) and Karyn Kammann (3rd from the left) taking flight in a hot air balloon!

TASMANIA

It certainly has been a busy time for the Catholic Women's League in Tasmania and also the League nationally.

Our State Mid-Term Meeting took place on the 7th September at St Francis Centre at Riverside in Launceston. After a busy morning, Holy Mass was concelebrated by Fathers Southerwood and Harchier followed by a wonderful lunch which was catered by the Launceston CWL Branch ladies. During the afternoon, we enjoyed an interesting, informative and entertaining presentation on 'Ageing and it's Possibilities' by Dr June Hazelwood.

The League in Tasmania celebrated its 70th birthday on the 19th October, 2011. The League was established in Launceston in 1941, when Mrs. Gwen Mullins, recently arrived from South Australia, where she had become familiar with the League and its work, met with a group of interested women in Launceston and established the first group. Other branches quickly followed and a state-wide motto was chosen: "God be glorified in all we do". Our members have been very busy organising the celebration for this important milestone. Eighty people attended the day, past and present members, religious, family and friends. It really was a great turnout. We had the loveliest weather as well!

The day commenced with Holy Mass celebrated

by Father Terry Southerwood, our State CWL Chaplain at Mt Esk Nuring Home Chapel. Members travelled from the North West by bus and carloads came from the North and the South. After Mass we went to 'Sandors on the Park' in Launceston central where we enjoyed lunch, chatting, catching up with friends, looking over old photographs and even some entertainment. Father Southerwood gave a presentation on the history of CWL in Tasmania; Father is a gifted author and talented speaker. He also entertained us with some hymns sung in Latin. We are very blessed to have him as our Chaplain.

A lovely birthday cake was cut and many photographs taken. Good wishes were received from the CWLA National Executive and from Executive of the Canberra/ Goulburn Diocese.

Sister V.M. Burns ssj presented us with a special poem she had written for our birthday, called *Look Back, Go Forward CWL 1941-2011*:



Marjorie Payton (Ulverstone) and Bernice McKenna (Launceston)

*Seventy years ago those women stood
So strong and resolute to do good.
As ambassadors for Christ in deed
As champions of human dignity and need.
Not just to pay their civic dues
But to proclaim their Christian views.
The powers that be, stopped in their tracks
When challenged by the League's attacks.
So passionate, true and clear
They defended all values held dear.
Through the long years they've walked
And bravely acted, and never baulked.
When stricken down and all seemed lost
They soldiered on whatever the cost.*

*Still today that campaign spirit is afire
Even when some days they struggle and tire,
These valiant women follow that same road
With Christ, to share with him the load.
Their faith keeps their torch alight,
Gives them strength to fight
For human dignity in a world of strife
So all can enjoy their gift and right to life.*

We were thrilled with the recent discovery of significant historical documents proving that there was an earlier 'League' presence in Tasmania. The Catholic Women's Social Guild (now known as the Catholic Women's League of Victoria and Wagga Wagga) established a branch in Hobart in early 1936 and Tasmania sent representatives to the Catholic Women's League International and Inter-State Conference in South Australia in October that same year. Further research will now be undertaken to discover more about the CWSG presence in Tasmania. It would appear from the research to date that we may have just turned 75!

Our third key project for the year is now complete. The last of the books and magazines for the Women's Prison in Risdon were sent via the Red Cross in October.

The CWL Tasmania State Executive met again on 30th November 2011. We discussed our Conference dates, themes, venue etc for 2012. We will be choosing three new projects to undertake in 2012. The projects will centre on community needs in the North and North West of the State.

On 20th December 2011, the Most Rev Adrian Doyle AM, Archbishop of Hobart, will celebrate his 50th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood. The Jubilee Mass will be celebrated on the evening at St Mary's Cathedral in Hobart and CWL ladies will be in attendance by invitation. The Archbishop is retiring as well and the CWL will make a presentation to him after the Mass.

We would like to wish the National Executive, CWLA Member Organisations, Dioceses, members and all their family and loved ones a holy, safe and happy Christmas as well as joy and blessings for 2012.

We will be keeping the incoming National Executive in our prayers for God's guidance and success.

Marjorie Payton
State President, Tasmania





SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Good things have happened for CWL South Australia since the National Conference. As I write, we are in the process of moving into a small but very visible office in the Archdiocesan Building, Ground Floor. Previously a Snack Bar run by St Aloysius College and then Centacare, it became vacant just before we travelled to Melbourne in September.

The issues presented at the Conference —namely, “Walking with Love” and “Collective Shout”—were timely for us to be able to present our case for taking over the space for our State Office. After speaking with Archbishop Wilson and other members of the Archbishop’s Leadership Team, we were given the go-ahead.

With fridges and counters removed, a re-paint and fresh new carpet on the floor, we are very excited at how it is taking shape. As we’re working to clean benches and cupboards, the passing traffic knows that Catholic Women’s League is moving in and the comments we’ve received have all been very positive.

The large windows of the office scream out for advertising and hopefully we can take full advantage for communicating about all sorts of issues affecting our society. I believe that we can also make important connections with the local Church and the wider Church, using our location and facilities to help promote Catholic Mission, Caritas, St Vincent de Paul, Catholic charities and more.

As part of our office, we also have access to an outdoor area, including some outdoor tables and chairs. I’m sure we’ll put that space to good use too.

In the near future, we will have a new phone number and a new email address. As the phone and internet connections are part of Centacare’s system, it is much easier and cheaper for us to keep those connections than to change. Our postal address of 39 Wakefield St, Adelaide, 5000, will remain the same.

Our new State Office was officially blessed and opened by the Most Rev Phillip Wilson DD JCL, Archbishop of Adelaide and President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, on December 6th at 2 pm. The event was attended by the CWL Adelaide Diocesan Chaplain Fr Welling; Chancellors Cathy Whewell and Heather Carey; Dale West, the Director of Centacare; the CWLA National President, Madge Fahy; and many members of the League in South Australia. An image gallery showing the renovations in progress as well as the

official blessing and opening is at <http://www.cwla.org.au/articles/blessing-opening-of-new-state-office-for-the-catholic-womens-league-in-south-australia.html>.



L to R: Fr Eddie Welling (CWL Adelaide Diocesan Chaplain), Mrs Heather Carey (Chancellor of the Archdiocese), the Most Rev Phillip Wilson DD JCL (Archbishop of Adelaide and President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference) and Pauline Victory (President CWL SA) and Madge Fahy (CWLA National President). Copyright Southern Cross newspaper, Archdiocese of Adelaide. Used with permission.

We look forward with great hope to the possibilities that this initiative generates.

Pauline Victory
State President, South Australia

CANBERRA & GOULBURN

Advent begins and as branches wind down their activities for 2011, we have time to reflect on the year that is almost over. So many of our members have gone to their eternal reward during the year, which made our annual Mass for the repose of their souls, during the month of November, even more poignant as we reflected on lives well lived in the service of God and the CWL.

Soon after returning from the CWLA National Biennial Conference in September, motions were acted upon and it was heartening that less than a month later, we saw an end to off-shore processing of asylum seekers. We hope that continuing follow-up letters to the Federal Government, seeking a speedier processing of applications, will be the next step in treating these most vulnerable of people more humanely.

Our Annual Special Day of Reflection was a very beautiful and uplifting experience. Brigidene Sister Lorraine and her assistant Meryl did a wonderful



job of leading us in prayer, scripture readings, using music, poetry and art to convey themes and rediscover the love of our God. If we radiate peace and calm then that is what we can offer our troubled world each and every day. It was good to have enforced 'what would Jesus do?' in any given situation. Most times we would definitely react differently if we applied this question. None of us wanted the day to end!

On the last Friday in October, it was wonderful to see so many League members at the Service to commemorate World Community Day at Holy Rosary Church, Watson. Sister Elizabeth West LCM was the guest speaker and she challenged us to look more closely at our lives and, how we respond to all sorts of atrocities occurring in so many parts of the world. If we truly believe that we can bring darkness into light, in Christ's name, we should be much more willing and prepared to speak up against man's inhumanity to man, while holding all oppressed people in our hearts and in our prayers.

Many members attended the recent Archdiocesan Assembly, which addressed "*The Changing Face of Sunday*". More than 420 attendees discussed issues such as challenges of the liturgy; balancing work/family/life; and the needs of youth and young adults to name but a few.

The Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Mark Coleridge, urged us to find new ways of engaging, taking risks and trying new things. He said: "There are many things that are possible, more than we imagine. But we need to keep in mind what is possible. A spirit of realism needs to engage with a spirit of imagination and energy." Perhaps we could apply some of his thoughts to the future of the League.

Scripture readings for Advent include themes of accountability, judgment on sin and the hope of eternal life. While we look forward to welcoming our Lord and Saviour and to celebrations with beloved family and wonderful friends, let us not forget those less fortunate. We can, and indeed must, make a difference in whatever way we can, so we can truly be worthy to receive Him on Christmas morning.

Deo gratias,

Angela M Devlin

President, CWL Canberra and Goulburn

NEW SOUTH WALES

The year has flown by and while it has been a very steep learning curve, it has also been very challenging and rewarding. I especially wish to thank my Executive and Convenors for taking on their respective roles and for all the support they have given me. My congratulations go again to Michelle Pedersen for the great effort she has made with "The Vine" and for her election as the Vice-President of the National Council of Women. I thank her also for accepting the nomination as our CWLA NSW Inc delegate to National Council of Women. Thank you also to Father Biju for accepting the position of State Chaplain.

Our recent State Council Meeting, held at the St. Joseph's Spirituality and Education Centre, Kincumber South, was a very fruitful meeting. We were able to discuss the suggested amendments to the National Constitution and prepare a document with our comments on these amendments to send to the National Executive and Council for consideration. Following the unanimous acceptance of a Motion put forward at our State Council Meeting which sought the initiation of an Annual Sunday Mass to be celebrated for the victims of sexual abuse in the Church and the regular remembrance of the victims and their families be remembered regularly in Prayers of the Faithful at other times, we have sent a letter to all Bishops in NSW.

The World Congress of Families (WCF) will take place in Sydney during National Families Week from 15th-18th May 2013. The two city venues currently under consideration for the WCF are the Sydney Olympic Park and the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre. Peg McEntee will represent CWLA NSW at the planning meetings.

Throughout the year, Pauline, Colleen and I have attended a range of functions for the National Council of Women which included the Australian Day Awards, the Jean Arnot Luncheon as well as meeting at the NSW Parliament House Theatre where organisations were encouraged to nominate members for [Australian honours](#).

I attended a gathering of reflection, dialogue and prayer for peace and justice in the world sponsored by Catholic Mission and a project of the Bishops Commission for Church Ministry which was held at Mary MacKillop Place, North Sydney from 27th-28th October. The day was called "*Pilgrims of Truth*,

Pilgrims of Peace” and coincided with the invitation from Pope Benedict XVI to leaders of the world’s religious traditions to gather in Assisi for a prayer day of peace.

We attended the CWL conferences of Armidale, Lismore, Bathurst, Wollongong, Broken Bay, Sydney and attended Parramatta’s AGM on the 7th December. We were also privileged to attend the 50th anniversary of the CWL Oberon Branch as well as the 25th Anniversary of the CWL in the Parramatta Diocese. We also enjoyed joining members at the Sydney Forum, the Mass for the Feast of the Assumption, WUCWO Day and a seminar held by Maitland/Newcastle Diocese. It has been a privilege to present Life Memberships to three members of CWLA NSW.Inc. The very deserving recipients of these awards were Sr Kath Maher (Tamworth), Carmel Keys (Manly) and Joy Hogan (Oberon). They have each given so much to Catholic Women’s League and their communities.

As Christmas approaches and we look at all the busyness that comes with the season, we should remember that this is a time of preparation for the birth of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ. I wish you all a very happy and holy Christmas and pray that all the blessings of this wonderful season are poured out abundantly on you and your families.

Carolyn Metcalfe
State President, CWLA NSW Inc.

Catholic Women Connecting Armidale through Faith, Family and Friendship: In February 2011, our Diocesan President, Robyn Judge, and our Secretary, Valmai Hunt, presented their vision to create a group called Catholic Women Connecting that might fill the needs of a ‘younger set’ of women in the Catholic Community. There were eight ladies in attendance at this initial meeting and, they left with much enthusiasm and optimism that this venture could be an avenue for women who are at a very busy time in their lives and yet wish to enrich their faith as well as find fellowship and support through the Catholic Church.

Catholic Women Connecting gives women an opportunity to live their faith away from the hustle and bustle of their busy lives. Spirituality is an integral part of this group. It opens the doors to joint discussion and interaction relating to families and their local community. It is a great way to meet with other women in their own age group with similar interests at times suitable to their busy schedule. Catholic Women Connecting groups are

affiliated with the League in NSW. Their annual affiliation fee covers personal insurance. Members also receive the CWLA e-newsletter, our State Magazine as well as Diocesan Newsletters.

Catholic Women Connecting groups have now commenced in Tamworth and Moree. Congratulations to these ladies on this initiative and we wish them every success.

CWL Wollongong: The League in Wollongong Diocese held a Mass on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, 15th September, which they called a Consoling Mass. The Mass was offered for members of the community who had lost a family member or friend to suicide or other tragic circumstances.

The idea was proposed by Fr Ron Peters, Dean of St. Francis Xavier’s Cathedral, after he had celebrated the Mass for the Unborn. He reminded us that many people are also grieving for adults as well.

A new branch has formed in the Diocese with the re-establishment of the Port Kembla Branch. The number of branches in the Diocese is now nineteen.

Gwynneville Branch hosted an International Day and the country of study was Chile. Father John

Pickering OFM, Chaplain to the Spanish community, celebrated Mass and was our guest speaker. Father Pickering spent about eighteen months in South America, nine of them in Chili, ministering to the people there. He gave us a very good understanding of Chili’s history and culture. A delicious luncheon was served and our raffle raised \$300 which will be sent to a charity in Chili.

VICTORIA & WAGGA WAGGA

Back in 2001, CWL Victoria & Wagga Wagga together with the Mercy Congregation purchased a home, Santa Casa, in the seaside town of Point Lonsdale. Managed by the MacKillop Family Services, Santa Casa has been used as a respite house for young mothers and their children. Sister Noelle Farrell ran Santa Casa with the assistance of volunteers from the local area and it proved to be very popular. Indeed, it was a wonderful haven for stressed mums to have some quiet time away with people to care for their young ones. Sadly, ill health forced Sr Noelle to leave her work at Santa Casa and Sr Cathy Garner took over for a couple of years. Due to a range of circumstances, Sr Cathy’s service at Santa Casa ceased last year and MacKillop

Family Services advised that it was no longer a viable situation. Thankfully for us, the Mercy Congregation offered to purchase our half share of the home as they have another property in the area. We were sad to see this happen as over the years, members have supported the project financially and we were also welcome to visit at any time. But of course, the financial gain to the League at this time is very beneficial.

At the Governing Body's meeting in November, we were all on quite a high as we were able to confirm plans for major improvements to be undertaken at our headquarters at Mary Glowrey House. These include painting of the interior, new carpet throughout, replacing beds and bed spreads, and installing a new air conditioner.

Sadly as I write this report, Leon Farrell (Leon and his wife, Helen, have been our caretakers at Mary Glowrey House since 2003) is very ill in St. Vincent's Hospital. With many prayers being said, it does appear that the outlook is a little better than at first thought, but the suddenness of his illness has been a big shock for everyone and so we have all gone from our high to a rather numb feeling.



Leon & Helen Farrell. Photo John Casamento

This period had also been a learning curve for our Governing Body and Mary Glowrey House Committee as we have the task of replacing a couple who have run Mary Glowrey House with great integrity and compassion. They are and will continue to be our true friends and, they are in our prayers during this difficult time.

All our branches have now held their annual meetings, new committees are in place and we are looking forward to 2012. We hope to encourage women from our own Parishes and beyond to join us although, we acknowledge the challenges inherent in growing our membership.

I have now completed my 3 year term as the General President and Jewell Start from the Ballarat Diocese will take over in 2012. I believe it is a privilege to hold this position. I am sure Jewell will receive the support and friendship that I have experienced during my term. Our final meeting for 2011 will be held on 14th December and will be followed by Mass and luncheon.

On behalf of the members of CWL Victoria & Wagga, I extend our best wishes to everyone for a joyous and peaceful Christmas and may 2012 be an encouraging year for the Catholic Women's League.

Jeanette Sheahan

General President, Victoria & Wagga Wagga

“ Among the many gifts that we buy and receive, let us not forget the true gift: to give each other something of ourselves, to give each other something of our time, to open our time to God. ”

*Pope Benedict XVI,
Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord,
24 December 2006*

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