



St. Justin Martyr Council Of the Catholic Women's League Highlights of 2021

The Catholic Women's League (CWL) is a national organization whose mission is to call its members to grow in faith and to witness the love of God through ministry and service. It is based on three pillars: faith, service and social justice. In 2020 we celebrated its 100th anniversary in Canada. In 2021 the Toronto Diocesan Council (TDC), which we fall under, celebrated its 100th anniversary.

The St. Justin Martyr Council of the CWL was formed in February 1997 with an initial group of 16 women. Membership has ebbed and flowed over the years and is at 50 members.

Overall, 2021 saw a continuation of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with the rest of the parish, our normal activities and fundraisers were curtailed, meetings were held via Zoom. There was a slight reprieve in the fall and we held combination in-person and online meetings and in December, many came out in-person to enjoy the fellowship of a Christmas gathering at a local restaurant.

The year began with CWL sisters joining others for a Zoom talk by Dr. Mary Healy, Professor of Scripture at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit: "The Most High is My Refuge".

At our **February** meeting, we received Lenten guidance from Fr. John and heard an impassioned talk by founding member Ruth on the need for expanded palliative care in the face of MAiD. We enjoyed taking part in a Lenten quiz to test our knowledge.

At 'Development Day' an annual event put on by the TDC, we heard a TED talk by Pope Francis: "The Only Future Worth Building Includes Everyone".

March saw members viewing the annual Ordinandi celebration on Zoom. The 'Dynamic Women of Faith' conference, normally held in Mississauga, took place on Zoom and we heard several inspiring speakers talk on aspects of our Catholic faith.



Our council held an outdoor food drive to replenish our parish food cupboard. Many sisters came out bearing donations of food and big smiles under their masks. Sister Rose delivered \$150 of diaper and



wipes from our council when the call went out for contributions. At our regular meeting we welcomed new members Wendy and Felisa.

Later that month we listened, with our TDC sisters, to Dr. Moira McQueen, Director of the Canadian Bioethics Institute give an informative and timely talk on



"Vaccines: Faith and Science Working Together".

A joint meeting between North York and Scarborough Region CWL sisters took place and we listened to what our neighbouring councils have been doing.

In **April** our meeting focused on Earth Day with a quiz for all. Many participated in a livestreamed mass to celebrate The Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel on April 26th.

The month of **May** was a busy one. Our sisters generously gave \$400 of gift cards, toiletries and cosmetic bags to The Sisters of Life in Toronto to support their work with young mothers.

We began and then suspended a Mother's Day flower basket and chocolates sale for the parish when new COVID restrictions were brought in. This was our first foray using Google forms for ordering and is a positive going forward for future fundraising.

Members participated in the annual TDC convention online.

We learned about Mary Gardens, their history and various plants as part of the TDC CWL Wednesdays program.



The May general meeting featured parishioner Patrick playing popular hymns on his guitar. The meeting also featured Lerryn Pitcher, the Executive Director at Evergreen Hospice speaking on the palliative care and support services available to our community. A moving prayer service was held with sisters reciting 'The Beatitudes for Caregivers' and prayers for palliative care.

With some restrictions eased in **June**, we were able to offer a flower and chocolate sale for Father's Day. This together with the partial Mother's Day sale netted \$813 in profit which was all donated to ShareLife.

We were sad to say farewell to Fr. John, our wise Spiritual Advisor, transferred to Holy Martyrs of Japan Parish. We are happy to say that Msgr. Vid is our Spiritual Advisor now.



The TDC 100th anniversary celebration took place online on June 3rd with sisters all across the Toronto Diocese.

In **July** some sisters and Msgr. Vid gathered for dinner at an outdoor patio to welcome our new Associate Pastor Fr. Raymond.

September saw the restart of in-person council meetings, the first since February 2020. We began the instructed voting process on changes to the CWL national bylaws and a proposed fee increase.

National President, Fran Lucas, updated us on the strategic planning process.

Along with our TDC sisters, we gathered via Zoom for a Cultural Diversity Celebration. We also had an informative update on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action on another evening Zoom.

I represented our council at a mass on **October 7th** at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica to celebrate the TDC's 100th anniversary. Sister Antonietta generously provided a beautiful floral arrangement to mark the occasion.



In **November** members were asked to participate in a training and development survey as part of the League's strategic planning process. Our general meeting that month featured Fr. David Reilander, President of Catholic Missions in Canada speaking to the groups in-person and on Zoom.



Our council was proud to nominate Sister Kathy for the Ontario Provincial Council's Social Justice Award for 26 years of work organizing Caring and Sharing at our parish.

We held our first online sale of poinsettias and chocolates. It was quite successful, with a profit of \$1,460.

As mentioned, in mid-**December** many gathered for a Christmas dinner at Novita where we enjoyed much laughter and conversation along with a lovely meal. Sisters generously donated \$360 of gift cards for Tim Hortons and Starbucks which were given to Union Villa as a thank you to their PSWs.



Along with the gift cards for Sisters of Life and for Union Villa staff, our council donated \$3,313 to various Catholic and local charities.

As 2022 begins, we remain hopeful and pray that the pandemic will end and that we will have a return to our normal, in-person activities. Planning is already underway for our 25th anniversary celebration in May which, God willing, will feature a high tea and fashion show.

Our council meets on the third Tuesday of every month at 7 pm on Zoom for the time being. We welcome all women of the parish to join us! If you would like more information, please contact Diane through the parish office.

Thank you for supporting the Catholic Women's League,

Diane Olmstead, President