



St. Justin Martyr Catholic Women's League Highlights of 2024



Hello sisters of the League, 2024 passed by so quickly. As we close the year, let us look back to what we, together, have accomplished for the year.

Our council is so blessed with having so many talented members who, with the guidance from our Lady of Good Counsel, have continuously strived to be better in their service to the Lord.

Our sisters are actively involved in the various ministries in the parish such as the layperson ministry, lectors, RCIA, RCIC, Music Ministry, Food Drive, Refugee coordinator.

The Catholic Women's League (CWL) is a national organization, which calls its members to grow in faith, Social Justice, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service. Our members come from many backgrounds and cultures. The diverse landscape has brought us closer as we pool our talents and charm to bring about the many programs and activities in 2024.

The year began with our members attending the Value-based Time Management online seminar presented by Ontario Provincial Council and the Toronto Diocesan Council (TDC) President and Vice President Workshop presented by TDC Past President Sue Lubowitz. Nine members and Monsignor Vid, our Spiritual Advisor, attended The Prayer for Christian Unity mass at St. Mark's Orthodox church.

In February, we held the Valentine's Raffle which featured thirteen wonderful prizes. The annual Pancake Breakfast Sunday in partnership with the Knights of Columbus took place, where parishioners enjoyed hot pancakes, sausages and drinks while mingling with fellow parishioners. Our members also attended the TDC Development Day training and the Introduction to Horizons of Hope presented by Dr. Moira McQueen, Executive Director of the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute on invitation



from Ciscily Winkler, CWL, St. Patrick's Parish Markham.

March was a busy month. Our council donated seven boxes of diapers for the annual Baby Month. We had two weekends of Easter fundraising selling plant arrangements and chocolates where we raised \$1290.10 for ShareLife. A cheque for ShareLife was presented to Monsignor Vid at the March Council meeting. Monsignor Vid celebrated his 74th birthday on March 12th in the presence of many members of the parish ministries. Several CWL members also attended the 34th Annual Ordinandi Dinner held on March 19th and the 14th Annual Dynamic Women of Faith Conference on March 23rd. At the Easter Vigil, many of our CWL sisters, who were the sponsors, witnessed the baptism of their Catechumens in a very solemn and lovely ceremony.



The month of April saw our executive team planning and getting things ready for the bi-annual Friendship Tea. Our members were busy selling tickets and fascinators for two weekends after every mass. One of our members, a lay apostolate lead, organized two dinners for the St. Augustine's seminarians and priests. On April 28th, two of our past presidents attended Blessed Trinity Council's High Tea. The 103rd Annual TDC Convention was held at Ajax Convention Center on April 29th & 30th. Many members attended the two-day session and the dinner. Our council was presented with an Increase in Membership Certificate of Recognition. The event provided lots of learnings to take away. Past President Diane Olmstead was honoured to be appointed North York Regional Chair by incoming Toronto Diocesan Council President Kate O'Quinn.



The month of May started with our council joining the Legion of Mary in celebration of the “Crowning of Mary” and participated in praying a decade of the rosary. On May 5th, we held the much-anticipated Friendship Tea with the theme “Celebrate Mothers”. The parish hall was elegantly decorated in pink and white motifs with homemade sandwiches and baked goods specially prepared by our members. Our speaker was Ms. Ruth Ann Onley, spouse of the late Honourable David Onley, 28th Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Ontario, contributing author of the book “Faith, Life and Leadership: Vol 2, a mother, and a grandmother of nine. Everyone was captivated by Ms. Onley’s powerful rendition of faith-based songs as she narrated her personal life experience and faith journey. Twenty-five anniversary pins were presented to our members for their services to the council. The event was very well attended with more than 130 guests. On May 11th, some members attended the ordination for Fr. Marko, and Fr. Ryan (currently Associate Pastor at St. Justin Martyr Parish). On May 12th, Fr. Marko celebrated his first mass at our parish followed by a reception. Our council presented Fr. Marko with a spiritual bouquet. On May 26th, our members participated in the AMICA Unionville Fashion Show in support of Shoppers Foundation for Women’s Health.



This year, our June year-end gathering was held in Cathy McElroy's home with 35 members and Fr. Jibin in attendance. There was lots of great food, laughter, prayers, and fellowship. It was also an opportunity for our members to wish Fr. Jibin a blessed journey as the Pastor of St Anthony of Padua, Bramalea. A farewell party was held on June 20 with CWL members helping with serving food and refreshments. Belinda attended the St. Augustine Catholic High School Graduation on June 28 and presented the \$250 cheque to Ms. Callista Chan, the recipient of the CWL Character Award.



The months of July and August were the months where our members unwind and re-energize. On July 28, Therese Taber invited CWL members to her beautiful garden for evening an of fellowship, laughter, dance, and refreshments. Everyone had a blast.

On August 1st, some members attended the David Conforti - Reach for the Stars Award and stayed to listen to the band at the Unionville Bandstand. On August 2nd members attended the mass intention offered by the parish office for our deceased member, Ms. Rita Hui, an active parish volunteer and the SJM CWL Spiritual chair until her passing in August 2023. On August 18th, our sister, Wendy Bocti, received the sacrament of Rites of Initiation officiated by Monsignor Vid Vlastic, and is now a Roman Catholic. The Sacrament Coordinators were Vicky Ton and Debbie Chong, CWL members. One of our founding members, Ruth Fuyarchuk, celebrated her 97th birthday on August 19!



On September 4, CWL members joined the other parish ministries in welcoming our new Associate Pastor, Fr. Ryan Nigli, with dinner at Ithaca Greek Restaurant. On September 6, Anita, a CWL member and lay apostolate, together with other CWL ladies, invited some seminarians and priests to a dinner As a way of keeping the seminarians feeling at home as they are away from home. On September 8, Diane, Ricky, and I attended the TDC 40th annual Rosary Sunday at the Martyr's Shrine in Midland Ontario. The event was very solemn and attended by many CWL members, and other visitors. We held our first council meeting on September 17 and commemorated National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by wearing orange shirts to the meeting. Virginia read the book "Every Child Matters" written by Phyllis Webstad. A video was also played on Phyllis' interview where she shared her story on how she felt when her orange shirt was taken away on her first day of school. The shirt she never saw again.



On October 6, a few CWL members joined the Life Chain. It was a peaceful and positive hour with communities supporting the event. Four CWL members attended the TDC Fall Workshop and Information Session held at St. Roch Parish. This year's North York Region Fall Meeting was hosted by St. Justin Martyr Council with the installation of Diane Olmstead as the North York Regional chair, Annabelle Rocha as secretary and the other officers followed by the meeting.



November was another busy month for our Council. We held the annual poinsettia and chocolate fundraiser the profits of which are donated to charities we support. CWL has always participated in the annual parish Christmas Craft Sale, a huge and exciting event for our parish community. CWL hosted the tearoom in a beautiful setting where guests enjoyed a cup of coffee or tea, and sandwiches, butter tarts and cinnamon rolls made by our members. There was also a separate table selling scarves, hats, mittens, and other accessories. On November 19, we held our election for the 2025-2026 executive led by Past President, Diane Olmstead. Congratulations to the following officers: Virginia Liscio, President; Brenda Homuk, Vice President; Teresa Chan, Treasurer, Wendi Bocti & Prescilla Lam, Secretary, Noeline Emmanuel, Chairperson of Faith, Mary Jacinta, Chairperson of Social Justice.



We kicked off December with the celebration of Monsignor Vid's 45th Anniversary of his Ordination. Besides being the Pastor of St. Justin Martyr Parish, Monsignor Vid is also the Spiritual Advisor for the Catholic Women's League of St. Justin Martyr Parish Council. To honour this milestone celebration, a Spiritual Bouquet with prayers collected from the various ministries was presented. Our council gave a "Blessings on his Anniversary of Priesthood" card and a monetary gift. A reception was held at the parish hall where our council members helped with plating and replenishment of food and clean up. To close off the year, we held our Christmas dinner on December 10th at the Symposium Café and Lounge Restaurant. The dinner event was filled with laughter, fellowship and fun games with prizes given to the lucky winners.



2024 was a momentous year as we completed the 2-year term of office on December 31st. The executive team would like to thank you, our wonderful members, for your steadfast support and contribution, without which, our membership, spiritual growth, fundraising and other events would not have been as successful as they would have. I ask that you continue to lend support to our upcoming 2024-2025 executive team. Together, we can “lighten up the yoke” and help each other to support the St. Justin Martyr Parish CWL Council.