

I N F O R M

**Catholic Women's League
Archdiocese of Sydney**

February/March



President's Report

We concluded 2022 with our Annual General Meeting held on 8th November. Our new Constitution had been circulated to all members and notice had been given of a Motion to be put at the AGM adopting that Constitution. We had a good attendance and in addition, many members forwarded their proxy vote instructions. The Constitution was adopted by a large majority of members. Also at the AGM Council members were elected and we welcomed Jean Burns from Summer Hill Branch as a new Councillor.

Our Project of the Year is The Farm at Galong, a rehabilitation centre for women that aims to assist in overcoming substance abuse and other anti-social behaviour by re-introducing participants to the workforce through various educational and motivational programs. To date we have donated \$5,000.00 to this project. Also, just before Christmas we presented the Centre CEO, Kate Cleary, with twenty Christmas pamper packs that for some residents was the only Christmas present received.

On 23rd January, Tex Quirk, Jay Turner and I attended the National Council of Women of NSW Inc Australia Day awards presentation at University of Technology, Sydney. We had sponsored Mariatu Tholley, a refugee from Sierra Leone, with a grant of \$1,000.00. Mariatu survived a brutal civil war in her home country before escaping and spending some time in a refugee camp and subsequently migrating with her parents and six siblings who now call Australia home. By hard work and dedication Mariatu has educated herself and is now in her 3rd year of a Bachelor of Social Work at the Australian Catholic University.

Other donations made during the year included a secondary school scholarship of \$20,000.00 over 2 years (2022 and 2023),

\$1,000.00 to the Tongan Appeal, \$1,000.00 to CWL Lismore for the flood victims, \$500,00 to St Charles Parish Ryde for a Vinnies Van, and \$500.00 to Kara Minds to assist with their ongoing research into dementia.

On 7th February we held our first Council meeting for 2023 with all Councillors showing renewed vigour and plans for this year.

Our opening Mass was held on 14th February and celebrated by our Chaplain Fr. Greg Morgan. We were delighted to welcome 48 members, our largest gathering since before COVID. No doubt our guest speaker, Leila Abdallah, was a great draw card. She is an inspirational speaker and a truly committed catholic, and we were very privileged to hear her story of despair and forgiveness.

God bless all our CWL members and their families.

Margaret Blomfield



**Margaret with Monica Doumit,
Leila Abdallah and beautiful baby Selina Abdallah.**



Sally Fennell, Maragret Blomfield, Mariatu's ACU mentor, CWL sponsor Mariatu Tholley, Tex Quirk and Jay Turner at the NCW Australia Day awards.



CWL Enfield had lunch with our beloved Sr Kath Maher on Wednesday, 22 February 2023, after our meeting. Sr Kath will be "retiring" to the Convent in Maitland. She has been an inspiration to us all and we will miss her dearly. Sr Kath is 93 years young.

Fr Greg's Homily

Saints Cyril and Methodius were two brothers and bishops of the ninth century. They were Greek by birth but were sent as missionaries to what we might broadly refer to as “Eastern Europe”. Hence, St Pope John Paul II referred to them as the “Apostles to the Slavs”.

They were by no means the first missionaries to go to that part of the world. But they were the first to truly evangelise it. And they were sent there because Prince Rostislav, who was one of the rulers of that region at the time, declared that the only way his people were going to convert is if someone could make the faith intelligible: “Many Christian teachers have reached us from Italy, from Greece and from Germany, who instruct us in different ways. But we Slavs ... have no one to direct us towards the truth and instruct us in an understandable way”.

Saints Cyril and Methodius are remembered for making the faith understandable by translating the scriptures and the liturgy from Greek into Slavonic; even designing a new alphabet known as Cyrillic. Of course, this certainly made the faith understandable at a superficial level. But their real genius was that they knew that evangelisation is not simply a matter of translating texts. Far more importantly, one must gain access to the “interior world” of the culture they are wanting to convert.

This is a difficult thing to do - to try to see the world through the unique history and experience of the people you are wanting to talk to. But once you do this, you begin to develop concepts/metaphors/and



By painted by Zahari Zograf

images that bring the faith alive by making it understandable; even if it remains a source of inexhaustible mystery.

Throughout history, the Church has often been gravely misunderstood. In the early Church, Catholic-Christians were persecuted by the Roman Empire because they were thought to be advocating cannibalism; declaring to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ. The seemingly innocuous “sign of peace” – also known as the “kiss of peace” – and the fact that Christians called each other “brother and sister in Christ” led them also to be accused of advocating incestuous relationships. Protestantism evolved largely out of a misunderstanding of the papacy and even now misunderstands what Catholics believe about Our Lady.

Even one of my elderly parishioners told

from the CWL Opening Mass

me about her cousin, Fr Francis Douglas, who could one day become a Saint for being martyred on account of a great misunderstanding about confession. Fr Douglas was born in New Zealand but soon after his ordination he was sent as a missionary to run a Parish in the Philippines during the Second World War. In 1943, American guerrilla forces were beginning to push back the Japanese occupants. Hearing of a Catholic priest in the area, the Americans invited Fr Vernon to hear their confessions.

A Japanese soldier witnessed Fr Vernon in the jungle meeting privately with a number of the Americans and quickly came to the conclusion that Fr Vernon was not a priest but a spy. On returning to his parish, he was abducted by Japanese soldiers and taken to another parish church which was being used to hold 250 prisoners and to torture them. He was tied to the baptismal font, brutally tortured whilst they interrogated him: "What did the Americans tell you?" His only response was: "You have no right to ask me that question, and I cannot, in conscience, answer it." Eventually he died from the extreme torture in defence of the seal of confession.

All this said, we should take great consolation that Christ, Himself, God-Incarnate, was readily misunderstood by many. He did His best to make His teaching accessible through a creative use of imagery and parables; but, nevertheless, He too was executed.

Today's Feast of Cyril and Methodius invites you as members of the CWL to

apprehend two important points as we begin this new year of outreach:

1) being misunderstood as Catholics by the broader culture is part and parcel of the Church's history. It can be frustrating at times; it can be irksome; but it is somewhat inevitable. The question is, what are we doing to counteract this "misunderstanding".

(2) One of the most misunderstood dimensions of the Church's life/teaching is its approach to women. A hot topic. CWL should have a significant and serious role about promoting what women do in the life of the Church and begin a centre of formation for women to discern their vocations to be saints.

As Cyril and Methodius demonstrated, it is not enough just to use contemporary words. We have to understand what is going on — it all begins with a solid diagnosis. I encourage you to reflect on how you (and I) can become more effective and attractive on this score. What did we do last year that was different and was it successful? If we haven't changed anything then we're likely not evangelising the culture.

The human voice is a powerful thing. It can be used to do incredible good and incredible evil. But the very best thing we can do with our voice is to speak the truths of faith with apostolic fervour and integrity. The CWL must always rediscover that power and use its voice to bring women closer to God.

God bless you all!

Fr Greg Morgan



Sadly Marlene Wallace resigned as a CWL Councillor last year, she has been such a diligent, supportive and overall wonderful member of the Councillor's team for many years.

At our Last meeting for 2022 Marlene was presented with a certificate of Appreciation for her many years of dedicated work to the Catholic Women's League, Archdiocese of Sydney. We look forward to continuing to see Marlene at our Branch meetings. Thank you Marlene for being such a dedicated and supportive member!



Pictured is The Farm at Galong's CEO Kate Cleary receiving the Christmas Pamper Pack's from Margaret Blomfield for all the current clients at The Farm at Galong.

Kate was most appreciative of this incredible effort and gesture made by CWL members, she mentioned early this year that the clients were so delighted with the gift packs – it was cheering for them because they are not at home giving and receiving presents from their families.

Update from Thanh Tâm Special School, Đà Nẵng

Thanh Tam Special School was part of the CWL Sponsorship in previous years.

In Central Vietnam, the effects of Covid-19 pandemic on the economic welfare of the population are still lingering, compounded by annual storm season that has become more and more devastating with heavier flooding, higher tides and stronger winds that peaked in October throughout November. Thanh Tâm Special School and Ưu Đàm Orphanage in Huế were no exceptions to these devastations.

Our endowments have allowed the sisters to meet some of Thanh Tâm School's urgent needs and to accomplish the following:

Continue to provide scholarships to the disadvantaged students attending the school.

Urgently fix damages caused by the floods so the school can continue to operate seamlessly.

Reinforce their vegetable plot in the wake of the storms.

Explore and experiment with new beneficial crops to expand their vegetable repertoire.



I AM

by Dedan Gills (1945-2015)

I am old and wise as the night. I am as beautiful as a bird in flight.
I am the moon and the sea. I am the robin and the bee. I am the soil
and I am the tree.
I'm the lion and the gazelle. I am heaven and I am hell. I am the ring
and I am the bell.
I am the joy and I am the tear. I am the brave and I am the fear.
I am the blistering desert. I'm the freezing snow.
I'm the cringing coward and the gentle hero.
I'm the aged and I am the young. I am weak and I am the strong.
I am the smile and I am the frown. I am the pauper and I am the
crown.
I am the wrong and I am the right. I am the day and I am the night.
I am now and I am never. I am yesterday and I am forever.
I am the bitter and I am the sweet. I live on the hill and I live on the
street.
I am the top and I am the bottom. I am Martin, Hitler, Gandhi and
Saddam.
I am red, black, yellow, brown and white. I love, hate, laugh, cry and
fight.
All the universe is reflected in me. I am all that was and ever will be.
When I lose, it's the lesson that I win. Judging others is my sin.



We were so grateful to have the Wivenhoe Quintet appear for the Catholic Women's League Branch Meetings twice last year! We are hoping they can be an annual event here at CWL

Become a Diocesan Member of the Catholic Women's League Archdiocese of Sydney Today!

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

I am willing to receive information by email: YES/NO

Please return with remittance of \$40 to:

Catholic Women's League Level 8, 133 Liverpool St, Sydney 2000

Ph: 9307 8383 Email: cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org

If you wish to join a Branch as a branch member please contact the CWL Sydney.

*Upcoming Dates at
Catholic Women's League
Archdiocese of Sydney*

APRIL

Tuesday 11 - Buy, Swap & Sell Market Day

Bring in your unused jewellery, scarves etc or bake something

10.30am start lunch \$20.00

RSVP

admin@cwlsydney.org.au

02 9307 8383



MAY

Tuesday 9 - WUCWO Day

Mass: 10.30am

Lunch \$20

Guest Speaker TBA

Bookings essential

RSVP by May 3rd

admin@cwlsydney.org.au

02 9307 8383

