

I N F O R M

*Catholic Women's League Archdiocese of Sydney
June/July 2021*



President's Message

Once more we are in lock down and having to cancel functions and meetings. We are well into the cold weather but on the bright side, the shortest day has been and gone.

June is the month of devotion to the Sacred Heart. Saint Margarete Mary Alacoque was a devotee of the Sacred Heart. She was born in 1647 in L'Hautecour, Burgundy, France, in 1647, entered the convent at age 24 and was professed on 6 November, 1672. She was canonised by Pope Benedict XV in 1920.

In the monastery St Alacoque received several revelations of the Sacred Heart that revealed to her the form of devotion required; reception of Holy Communion on the first Friday of each month, Eucharistic adoration during "holy hour" on Thursdays, and celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Thankfully all of these devotions continue today.

Sally Fennel and I were privileged to attend Mass at St John of God Parish Church in Auburn on 14 May, celebrated by Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP. This Mass was in part a celebration of the life and devotion of our past Chaplin, Fr Ray Farrell, both to his parishioners and to CWL Sydney. Fr Ray died in January 2020 during the early lockdown caused by the pandemic so we were unable to attend his funeral service. This was an opportunity to both



mourn and celebrate Fr Ray's life and devotion to his faith.

Once again our Christian values are under attack as euthanasia activists are pushing to remove safeguards included in Victorian legislation, claiming doctors are being dissuaded from getting involved in the process because of legislative disincentives imposed by the law. Please keep this vitally important issue in your prayers.

On a lighter note, our recent buy, swap and sell day was a relaxed and successful event with \$426.00 being raised. But no sooner are we almost back to normal when here comes lockdown again, and our activities calendar has to be cancelled. Our guests from the Etico program who were to present at our July meeting have been cancelled, but we hope to reschedule them for September or October if we are able.

Please keep our sick members in your prayers, Margaret Burke, Carmel Brereton, Helen Cook (if there are others please let us know), Vicki's husband Joe, and Tex's husband Pete. Say a prayer also for all our invaluable doctors, nurses, emergency workers and everyone else who are putting their own lives and wellbeing at risk while attending to us and protecting us from COVID.

We hope the Inform keeps you all connected and in touch as we look forward to gathering in the near future. You are all in our prayers.

God bless you all.

Margaret

Margaret Blomfield
President

06/07/2021

CHAPLAIN'S REFLECTION

I would never have become a priest unless a discalced-Carmelite-friar made some footprints in the snow in January 1916. It was a bitterly cold morning in Logrono Spain. A then sixteen-year-old boy named, Josemaria, noticed a trail of footprints in the snow. He was startled! Startled because the footprints seemed to have been made, not by shoes, but by bare feet.

Curious as to who in their right-mind would walk barefoot in the cold snow, Josemaria followed the trail of footprints until he arrived at the door of a monastery Church. There inside he saw a lone Carmelite-friar kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament in fervent prayer. He had no shoes on because he was a discalced-Carmelite — discalced meaning shoeless.

So moved was Josemaria by this priest's utter devotion to God – the gentleness of his footprints; the goodness of his piety; the peacefulness of his prayer; the love shown in his poverty – that it inspired him to ask himself: “Could I dare to love God like that?” He writes: “I began to have intimations of Love, to realize that my heart was asking for something great, and that it was love.” This love drew him to become a priest; a priest who would found a movement that encouraged the laity most of all to discover their own call to holiness – to self-sacrifice – in the midst of an indulgent world. This movement would spread as far as Australia where a small number of independent schools were established that sought to teach the Catholic faith intelligently; that challenged students to think critically; that, most of all, helped students to pray — to love the mass, to seek regular confession, and to discern their own vocations.

It was because I moved to one of those schools – sheerly by providence – and was (for the first time) captivated, intellectually, by the beauty of the Catholic faith that the seeds of my own priestly vocation were born. And, so, as I think back on my first ten years of priesthood – which, of course is a small but perhaps the first significant anniversary – I am humbled to think that my own vocation and any good I do as a priest is all because of those footprints of love made by that friar in Spain in 1916. Little did he know how significant those footprints would be...

We should never underestimate, therefore, how God can use the most

minor and mundane of human activities to inspire a whole new generation of saints. The point is this: anything we do for God, no matter how small, that is animated by self-sacrifice will bear fruit; fruit that can change the course of history for some and, thus, have eternal consequences for many.

All vocations, but perhaps especially to the priesthood and religious life, are inspired by visible examples of self-sacrifice. Because self-sacrifice is the living presence of the cross; and the cross is, paradoxically, actually what attracts. Why? Because the cross is the complete truth about what love is and what love looks like. It is the exact opposite of self-indulgence...

Although I responded to a call to the priesthood at a young age, I never wanted to be a priest. I had my own ambitions of being a lawyer – a worldly advocate –, married with a large family, and, like most others, wealthy. But God made it very clear to me that my vocational adventure was to serve others as a priest.

And, so, ten years ago, on the 21st of May, I prostrated myself on the floor of St. Mary's Cathedral as is customary in the rite of ordination. In many ways, it is like a mini-Pentecost. The priest-to-be lays on the ground as if he were dead to the world; and like those first apostles he awaits the coming of the Holy Spirit that comes to him through ordination. And, so, he walks in a man; but walks out a spiritual father; a witness to the power of grace...

I could never, ever, ever have imagined that my first ten years of priesthood would have been so wonderful, so eventful, but, indeed, so challenging. Although always and forever unworthy, I thank God sincerely for the gift of being a priest – to hold Christ, Lord of the Universe, in my hands in the confection of the Eucharist; to forgive sins in the sacrament of confession and watch joy radiate on the faces of those who have been absolved; to have baptised and wedded; and to have shared the last moments of so many persons' life – holding their hand as they prepare to meet Our Lord. I would never have imagined 10 years ago that I would have studied in England and now be teaching philosophy – a subject I used to hate; but now adore!

But perhaps providentially, this morning I came across a line in an article which said: "Unbelievers will not go to hear philosophers, but they will go to hear saints..." So, I pray for that grace. But it is a grace that we should all pray for – the grace to live our vocations not with self-indulgence but with the Spirit of Self-Sacrifice. For, who knows, maybe your footprints, if impressed by a heart of self-sacrifice, will be what God uses to inspire a new Pentecost in the life of the Church today.

PROJECT OF THE YEAR



The Order of Malta Community Van

The Van is driven by NSW Branch volunteers who also distribute seasonal items to those sleeping rough and a nurse from St Vincent's hospital, offers healthcare.

Poor health amongst the homeless is common and much of it is preventable. Our Community Care Vans provides much needed support and protection to some of the most vulnerable and marginalised members of the community.

Our Community Care vans operate in Sydney and Parramatta and are staffed by volunteer drivers who visit 'hotspots' around Sydney and Parramatta to distribute seasonal items to help protect those sleeping on the streets and a nurse travels with them to offer healthcare.

Heatwaves cause more deaths in Australia each year than any other natural disaster and have a greater negative impact on population health than any other natural hazard. The homeless are particularly vulnerable. Consequently, in summer our volunteers distribute water, sun hats and sunscreen.

Winter presents other challenges to the homeless. Our volunteers distribute our 'Coats for the Homeless' to those sleeping rough to provide some warmth, comfort and protection.

\$100 could purchase three specially designed Coats for the Homeless.

PROJECT OF THE YEAR



The Order of Malta Community Van

Year round we also distribute simple hygiene packs containing toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap and sanitary items for women. These packs make a big impact on not only their daily life but longer term physical health. \$50 could purchase five hygiene packs for women containing sanitary items or ten male packs

“For women on the street, who are usually in desperate and difficult circumstances, the provision of sanitary items not only promotes their health and wellbeing but self-worth and dignity,” comments Paula Hannan, Order of Malta Outreach Nurse, St Vincent’s Homeless Health Service. “It is something many of us take for granted and should not have to be a choice for anyone”. The items we distribute and running costs of the vans are funded entirely by charitable donations.

Community Care Van Distribution volumes in the last 12 months:

1,677 bottles of water

507 Male/Female Hygiene packs (since March 16)

432 Coats for the Homeless

361 Sunhats

322 tubes of Sunscreen

ENFIELD BRANCH

Sr Kath turned 92 on 20 April . The Branch members celebrated Sr Kath's birthday at their monthly meeting on Wednesday 28 April. She received blessings from Fr Kim the Parish Priest. Our Chaplain Fr Gregory is making his way around to all the branches and he visited Enfield on 23rd June. Enfield Branch thanks Fr Gregory for his very inspiring thoughts, and for taking part in their discussions.



MY DELIGHT

Submitted by Helena O'Neill

Holy Spirit speak to me, inspire
as with gentle breath
You touch face, hands all entire
And bring me back from death

Speak Love, I wait upon your word
Whispered in my ear
Tell me what was never heard until You
made me hear

Life You are, infuse divinely
Radiate, set alight
Break me open
Life my own be
You are my delight



SYDNEY'S GPO

Every building has a story to tell but Sydney's old GPO in Martin Place has more colourful tales than most. The main building facing Martin Place was built in 1874 in Victorian Italian Renaissance style. A new section in Pitt Street was added in 1885. Finally the clock tower was completed in 1891 and the GPO became the city's best known landmark until the Sydney Harbour Bridge opened in 1932.

The facade of this grand old building has recently been given a multimillion-dollar facelift by its new custodians, the Fullerton Hotel group. This has rejuvenated many of the original sculptures and other features incorporated into the building architecture. Do you know that the ornate sculptures on the Martin Place facade represent states, countries and continents, or that the Pitt Street carvings by Tomaso Sani depict real life people and events. Would you like to know more about these sculptures and carvings, see the magnificent ballroom with its vaulted ceiling, and learn about the many other features of this historical building? Well you can, and for free!

The Hotel conduct walking tours of the GPO for guests and for the public. These last about 90 minutes. There are stairs and confined areas so the tours are not suitable for people with walkers or mobility issues. Tours are held at 11.45 a.m. weekly on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday and bookings are essential. Book a tour by contacting the hotel concierge on 8223 1111.

State Conference

On Sunday afternoon of the 16th May and on the 17th May fifteen CWL Sydney members gathered at Rydges World Square for the CWL State Conference. Overall there were approximately fifty members attending from throughout the State. Speakers were Kristy Robertson CEO Caritas, Bernard Holland Catholic Earthcare, Catherine McGrath WUCWO Board Member, Deirdre Little State Bioethicist and a short Zoom address from the CWLA President. Michelle Pedersen was installed as President at Mass on Sunday afternoon celebrated by our own Fr Greg who is now also the State Chaplain. The theme of Michelle's term "Mary MacKillop – Living by the Power of the Cross". There was a successful trading table conducted and the major raffle was drawn – unfortunately no winners from the Sydney Archdiocese. It was lovely to catch up with our CWL colleagues from throughout the State.

-Sally Fennell

(NOT PICTURED MONICA DOUMIT AND KATHY HAMMOND)



Buy, Swap & Sell Branch Day



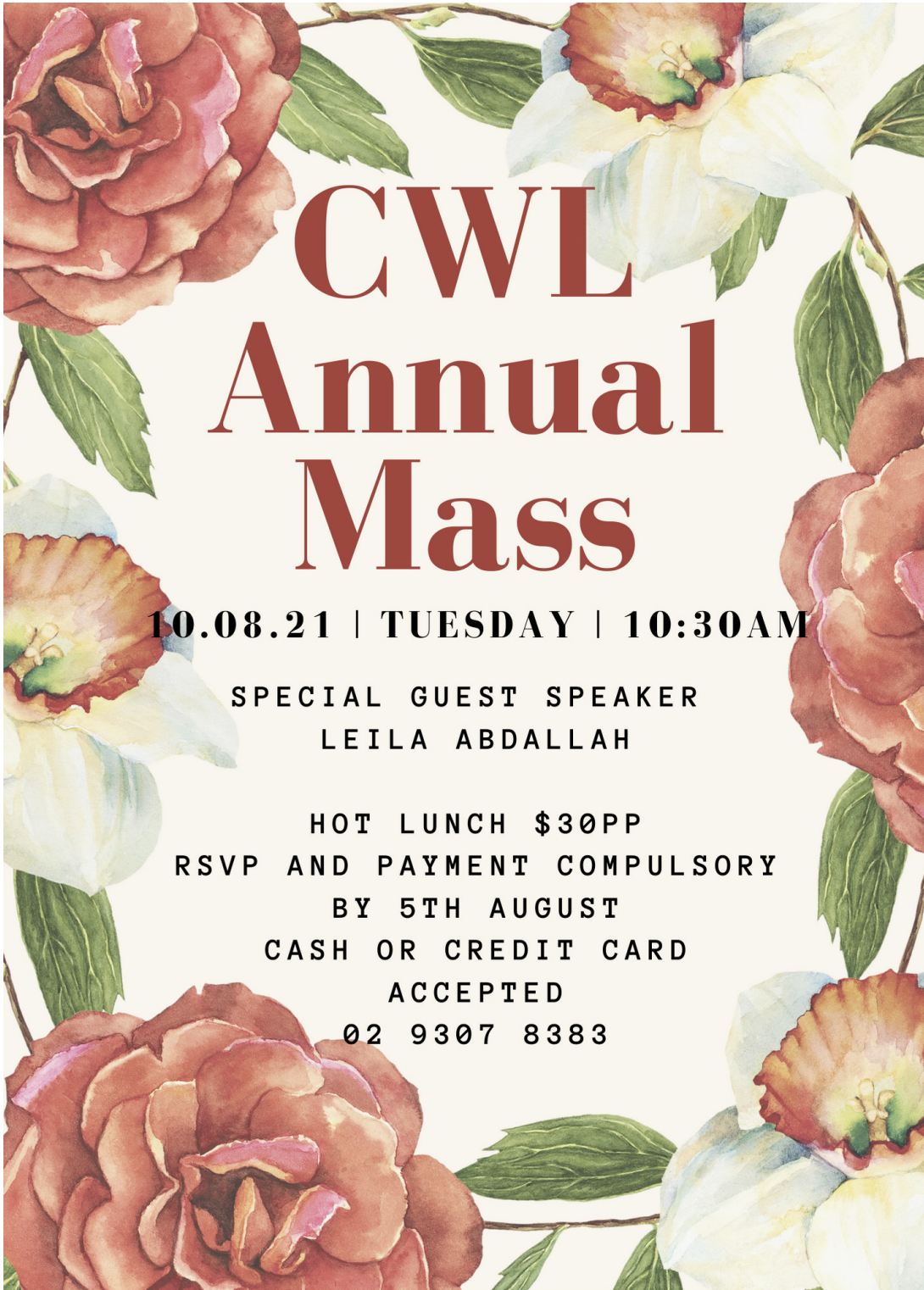
Our annual Buy, Swap & Sell was a hit this year. We raised \$426! Some ladies brought in books, scarves, serving plates, knitted items and wonderful home-made jams and preserves. We all had a lovely time and enjoyed our little 'market day'. Make sure you start putting things aside for next year when we can do it all again.



Memorial Mass for Fr Ray

Sunday 13th June Margaret, Monica and Sally were able to attend Mass at Aubrun Parish with Archbishop Anthony Fisher. It was in part, a memorial Mass for our late chaplain Fr Ray. The Archbishop extended the invitation to our members at the last minute but it was appreciated. The Parish community put on a huge spread of incredible food and treated everyone with their wonderful choir as well.





CWL Annual Mass

10.08.21 | TUESDAY | 10:30AM

**SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER
LEILA ABDALLAH**

**HOT LUNCH \$30PP
RSVP AND PAYMENT COMPULSORY
BY 5TH AUGUST
CASH OR CREDIT CARD
ACCEPTED**

02 9307 8383

BRANCH NEWS AND DIARY DATES

News from Drummoyne Branch: Due to the branch's limited number of available helpers - Drummoyne branch recently collaborated with the Parish St Vincent de Paul Society on their fundraiser for the Vinnies NSW Flood Appeal.

-JUDITH BROWN

BRANCH PRESIDENT

Coming up:

13th July Branch Meeting (POSTPONED)

Special guest speakers- Hotel Etico

Annual Mass and Lunch with special guest speaker Leila Abdallah

August 10th 2021

Mass: 10:30am followed by a meeting then lunch.

Cost: \$30pp

RSVP and Payment is required before 5th August. Call or Email to make payments.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

Please email your stories/pictures to cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org

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

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Cost: \$35 for Branch Members, \$40 for Diocesan Members

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

MOBILE: _____

EMAIL: _____

I'm joining _____branch

OR

I'm joining as a Diocesan member

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

Please return with remittance of \$35 or \$40 to:

Catholic Women's League Archdiocese of Sydney
133 Liverpool St, Sydney 2000

Ph: 9307 8383

Email: cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org

Thank you!

*If you have news from your branch, upcoming events, or interesting articles
you'd like to share, please let us know - cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org*