

I N F O R M

*Catholic Women's League Archdiocese of Sydney
April/May 2020*





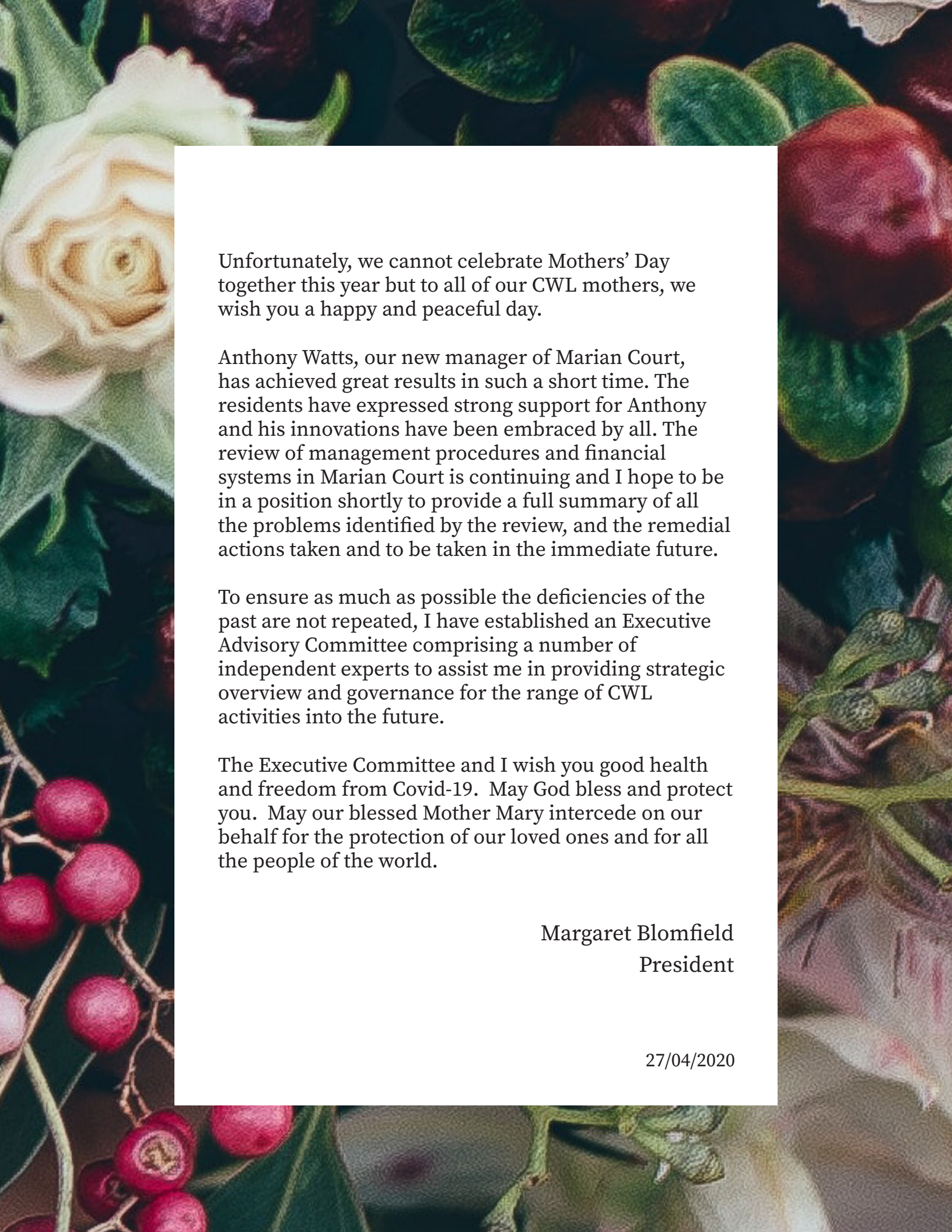
President's Message

Easter 2020 will always be one to remember as we were unable to attend Easter celebrations. Many of us were able to participate from afar by watching the Easter Mass celebrated by Archbishop Fisher OP live streamed from St Marys Cathedral in Sydney. It was lovely to see one of our own, the always elegant Michelle Pederson read the First Reading, proudly wearing her Catholic Women's League badge.

The news of Cardinal Pell's acquittal was long overdue and an answer to our many prayers. On behalf of CWL Sydney I sent Cardinal Pell a letter to welcome him home and renew our expressions of support. During this time of social distancing and closure of our office, we have maintained contact through mail and phone. Please send us your experiences during our isolation so we can share with all members.

In March we donated \$1,000.00 to the Catholic school at Milton NSW, St Mary's Star of the Sea, to help with bushfire recovery. The school Principal was most appreciative and mentioned she is a long-time supporter of CWL.

The month of May is dedicated to Mary the Mother of the Church, our guide and inspiration. The world needs our prayers more than ever at present and we are called to renew our devotion to Mary and the rosary.



Unfortunately, we cannot celebrate Mothers' Day together this year but to all of our CWL mothers, we wish you a happy and peaceful day.

Anthony Watts, our new manager of Marian Court, has achieved great results in such a short time. The residents have expressed strong support for Anthony and his innovations have been embraced by all. The review of management procedures and financial systems in Marian Court is continuing and I hope to be in a position shortly to provide a full summary of all the problems identified by the review, and the remedial actions taken and to be taken in the immediate future.

To ensure as much as possible the deficiencies of the past are not repeated, I have established an Executive Advisory Committee comprising a number of independent experts to assist me in providing strategic overview and governance for the range of CWL activities into the future.

The Executive Committee and I wish you good health and freedom from Covid-19. May God bless and protect you. May our blessed Mother Mary intercede on our behalf for the protection of our loved ones and for all the people of the world.

Margaret Blomfield
President

27/04/2020

THANK YOU FR RAY MAY YOU REST IN PEACE

Our dear Chaplain of many years Fr Ray Farrell passed away on the 27th March at St. Joseph's Village in Auburn.

Fr Ray first became the CWL Sydney Chaplain in 2003. Over the years we have shared many wonderful memories with him.

We will always remember his beautiful, thoughtful sermons and contributions to *Inform*.

He made us laugh with his good humour and loved joining us at our branch gatherings.

We will always remember the 70th birthday party we held for him, where he very much enjoyed the chocolate crackles and western themed music!

Fr Ray held a big place in the heart of our organisation and we will miss him dearly.

Thank you Fr Ray for your dedication to Catholic Women's League Sydney over the many years.

We ask you to please keep Fr Ray and his family and church community in your prayers, particularly his parish in Auburn.



Fr Ray celebrating mass in the Chapel of Our Lady, Polding Centre; Birthday cake for his 70th birthday; At the CWL Sydney Centenary celebrations

FR TERRENCE BELL'S REFLECTION

I begin these thoughts in Easter week when the whole Church is rejoicing in the Resurrection of Jesus following his cruel suffering and death on the Cross for the sins of the world. I had already received an email with thoughts from the works of Fr Joseph Kentenich, the founder of the Schoenstatt Movement. He wrote:

Our Easter joy should consist in seeing and acknowledging the risen Lord in our own hearts, in the hearts of our dear ones, of those entrusted to us, and in the hearts of all Christians. We could say very shortly: the one who is filled with the spirit of Easter is one who, in the light of faith, deeply comprehends the mystery of Easter in its entirety in the life of Christ and of Christians and who endeavours to carry this into everyday life.”

With the whole world this Easter, we are struggling with the presence of Covid-19 and may find it hard to find joy in our everyday lives. The restrictions that are necessary for our own health and the health of others can be a frustration and sometimes an annoyance. However, we know deep down that they are good not only for us but even more so for others. The sad thing we see often is the selfishness in people, and even violence to get their way. The challenge we face is to find joy in our being for others, carrying Christ with us into our everyday lives, revealing the compassion and generosity of God who has not abandoned us but who is with us in our anxiety and suffering.

As a band of women seeking to be models of Christ and of Mary, your sorrow in the midst of joy has been increased with the death of your chaplain, Fr Ray Farrell. I first came to know Ray when, still as a seminarian, he was sent to Lewisham parish for his pastoral placement. Then after a short time, I was moved from Lewisham to Revesby and Ray came with me to continue his pastoral experience. Fr Michael Foster had arranged for a group of the parishioners to provide feedback to Ray on his pastoral work and on the reflections which he gave during Mass. At first, Ray was hesitant about this experience. But later he admitted that it was the best thing that has happened for him in his life. The feedback, while being challenging, was most affirming and personally most helpful. He celebrated his 50th Birthday there and was ordained Deacon (1995) and Priest (1996).

When I visited him in St Joseph's Hospital, he spoke of the suddenness of his illness and of his readiness to face his soon departure into eternity. His only puzzle concerned the cause of his illness, his liver. He said: "But I don't drink!" He has been a true friend and a faithful servant. It is sad that his death at this time prevented us from participating in his funeral and burial. We will have the opportunity at a later stage to celebrate a Memorial Mass. We must do so with firm faith and Christian joy as we commend him to the mercy of God and the glory of his eternal kingdom. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace!

The month of May brings with it the opportunity to express again our joy and gratitude to Jesus for giving to us his very own mother as our mother too. We choose to be her children and to follow the example of her holy life – her union in prayer with God, her readiness to follow God's will, her fidelity to Joseph her husband, her compassion towards others, her suffering in silence with her Son, and her continuing to carry out His will by embracing us as her children, revealing herself on many occasions, and encouraging us to follow Jesus on our way home to the Father.

With Pope Francis, we call upon her under her title, Health of the Sick, to support those suffering from the virus, the Nurses and Doctors who care for them, those who have died, and those who mourn their deaths. May she be with us all at the hour of our death.



MOTHER'S DAY SPECIAL

This year, President Margaret invited the CWL Sydney Executive and Councillors to send in stories about their mothers or motherhood in general. We have received some very special stories, poems, and prayers. We thank those who sent something in, and hope you enjoy reading them.

Chris McKirdy

"A mother is your first friend, your best friend and your forever friend. No one will ever love you as much as your mother.

Every day I become a bit more like my mother...and I couldn't be any prouder.

The most precious jewels you'll ever have around your neck are the arms of your children and grandchildren.

As a mother and grandmother our job is to take care of the possible and trust God with the impossible."



Chris with mum Patricia Downes and children Larissa, Luke and Shane on a holiday in Queensland

Viki Pampar

I found a Mothers' day card from my then 43 year old daughter which was deeply satisfying.

Quote: "A great mum waits patiently while you take the SCENIC route!"



Mother's Day Special

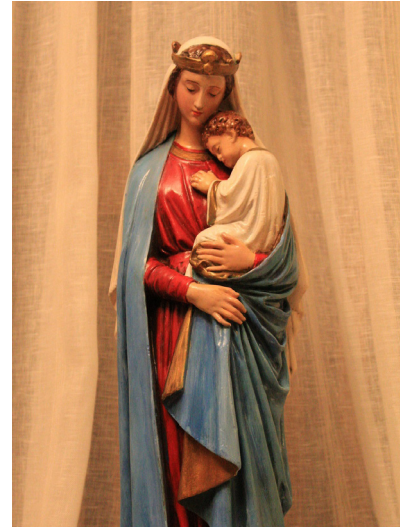
Tex Quirk

Not your average natural born Mother, as a new Mum, I was prepared to take advice when it was offered. It is probably fair to say we did well to survive our first day at home, our eldest and I.

The bath water temperature was perfect, everything was laid out ready; baby stripped down, wrapped securely in a towel, when a knock at the door interrupted proceedings. With babe in arms, I answered the door, to find someone wanting to collect money for some charity or other. I politely, if anxiously, explained that I did not have time for this just now (the bath water was cooling). This charming, little old lady determinedly advised me, "That's the trouble, dear, we don't have time, do we?" After clearly stating, "Well I don't!" and shutting the door, we got back to bath time. Suffice to say that, by the time we got through the process, we were both in tears. Not an auspicious beginning!

On an extremely hot day, a month or so later, after our final medical check-up, returning home on public transport, a lady approached me at the bus stop, asking, "did I think the baby might be a bit too warm wrapped up like that?" As I was not too sure, I unwrapped said baby, and continued on our way. When we alighted at our required bus stop, another lady advised that, "babies like to be wrapped up tight and warm, even on hot days like this." After all this totally unsolicited, conflicting advice, I decided to let common sense prevail, and decided to do it my way. I may not have always got it right (not by a long shot), but, with God's Grace, and probably a lot of luck, we have all managed to survive.

Our children end every conversation with, "Love you, Mum (or Dad,)" so we must have got something right!



Sandra Skarsky

As a teenagers and as a young woman, I didnt always take much notice of the things my Mother said, in fact sometimes I dismissed them altogether, however, now that I am 68, I have turned into my Mother.

She would tell me that the older you get the quicker the years go. The older you get, the harder it is to lose weight.

When we were out and about she would ask me to slow down and not walk so fast.

Cross your bridges as you get to them, that one I have lived by. And...always get your things ready the night before.

As a young mum, her help and advice was invaluable.

We had some great times together, lots of days out and in, we were great friends. She has been gone for 10 years now and I miss her every day, and I talk to her every day.

I have many wonderful memories.

Happy Mother's Day, from Sandra Skarsky. God bless all our Mothers.



My mother, Josephine Furniss



Mother's Day Special

Sally Fennell

Prayer for Mothers

We thank you, O Lord, for the gift of Motherhood.

May those blessed with children be granted the gifts of courage, perseverance and good health.

May they face each new day with faith and hope in your abiding love.

May all families find in the strength of your love

The priceless gift of peace

And so bear witness to your glory.

Amen

Source: Written by Bishop Kevin Manning, Parramatta Diocese



Helen Cook

Wishing a very Happy Mother's Day to all, including the mother hen's!



Margaret Burke

My Mother was the most wonderful and a very special lady. She was blind but that didn't make any difference to her.

She was the best cook ever and she kept everyone in jumpers for she was a great knitter. We children didn't notice her blindness because she just seemed to be like everyone else.

She raised 9 children and made many moves in her life as Dad was in the Lands Department and was moved around. She managed the ups and downs of life and had many friends.

With my Dad's help she lived a very full life and passed away aged 75 in 1974.



Mother's Day Special

Marlene Wallace

MY MOTHER, EDITH MARY NEARY

1909 – 1995. Mother to 9 children; 5 girls & 4 boys.

My mother Edie, her brother Arthur and sister Betty lived in humble conditions in Revesby/Bankstown area in their childhood. However, despite shortages of food & possessions they enjoyed freedom to play in the bush, climbing trees, building cubby houses & sharing fruit from the neighbour's farms.

Mum was very daring, easily accepting challenges from the boys - a real Tomboy. She was a gifted Sports Woman, captaining the School's Vigaro Team. Arriving a little late from lunch break one day her Teacher said, "Welcome to the Vigaro Queen." The name stuck! Edie was also an early member of Bankstown Ladies Cricket Club.

During WW2 my dad enlisted in the Australian Army & was stationed at Wallangarra, Qld/NSW border. He was to be deployed to Borneo, so mum decided to change the Army's Plan. She decided to write to Dame Enid Lyons, the first female member of House of Representatives, also a mother of a large family, expressing her concerns re her husband's departure overseas. Dame Enid sympathised with mum & arranged for dad to stay in Australia.

Although mum's life was very difficult, she encouraged us ALL to follow our dreams & talents, Sporting or Academic, Socially or Spiritually.

Mum was a very courageous lady and set a great example for us to follow.

Love you mum xxx

Your first daughter

MARLENE NEARY WALLACE



Mother's Day Special

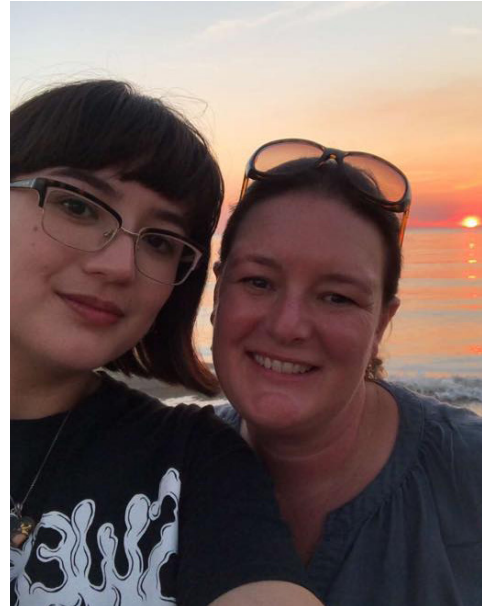
Maddie Er

My mum is my best friend. I can say that, confidently, because it's true, and it's been true pretty much forever. We've had our ups and downs, of course; my teenage years were fraught with arguments, stemming from me wanting more freedom and independence at a time when her instinct was only to pull me closer in.

When I was sixteen, I was lucky enough to travel with a small school group to Japan. I was gone for little over two weeks, and was having so much fun with my host family, my school friends, and all the friends I made on the trip that I think I only spoke to my parents once or twice. When I arrived home Mum said that she had laid on my bed and cried after they had dropped me off at the airport. At the time I was surprised, maybe even a bit bemused, but I understand better now that that's what love looks like.

Once I outgrew my teen angst, I've never questioned the strength of my relationship with my mum. She's the one I go to when I need advice, as I've discovered that even when it's not the answer I want to hear, mum *always* knows best. When we go shopping together, she knows what dress will look nicest on me. She's got a gentle but strong passion for social justice and environmentalism, and in turn has instilled that same passion in me. She's the only person I trust to read the short stories I write, the person I love to travel with (we have many plans on where to go next), and the person who I most want to spend a rainy day in with; what tv show or movie we watch is almost irrelevant because really, we're there for each other's company and a hot cup of tea (although we do enjoy watching trashy dramas together!).

Whenever I think about having my own children, I always pray that the relationship I have with them is like the one I have with my mum. What I know for certain is that when it does happen, she best believe that I will be relying on her expertise for help - I can't imagine wanting help from anyone else, really!



Maddie with mum Natalie in Darwin



Margaret Blamfield

These beautiful reflections by James O'Brien have been extracted from Madonna Magazine, Spring 2019 www.madonnamagazine.com.au/



Assumption of Mary

Mary's Yes has had a huge impact in human history. All her deeds praised the Lord: her generosity in accepting the angel's invitation, her joy with her cousin Elizabeth, her song of thanksgiving, her courage in pregnancy and birth, her attentiveness as Jesus grew, her wisdom at Cana as he began his public ministry, her solidarity with him in death, and (as Ignatius invites us to consider) her sharing with him in resurrection. When Jesus named her the mother of John, he called her to be mother of the church, a church which celebrates her entry into heaven.

Mary Angels Fresco Trinita Dei Monti Church Spanish Steps Rome Italy. Church built in 1585. Assumption of Virgin Mary by Michelangelo pupil, Daniele Volterra in 1500s.



Coronation of Mary

Jesus overturned the order of power and authority in the world: good news to the poor, release to captives, freedom for the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19). His mother paved the way for this ministry to emerge, singing in her *Magnificat* that her Lord has 'brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly' (Luke 1:52). When we say that Mary is crowned Queen of Heaven, we mean that the kingdom of God follows the pattern not only of Jesus' life, but that of his mother: a poor young woman called to a mighty mission.

Painting of the Coronation of Mother Mary by the Holy Trinity at the Sanctuary of Fatima in Portugal.



ST PATRICK'S DAY BRANCH GATHERING

What feels like a very long time ago now was our St Patrick's Day branch gathering on the 10th March.

Everyone dressed to the theme in green and looked fabulous. We shared a few Irish jokes, stories, and "pub trivia", and watched some fantastic river dancing.

Delicious chicken salad and homemade Irish themed green cakes were served, along with other treats, including a glass of Baileys!

After a successful chocolate themed raffle we said farewell to each other - little did we know, this would be the last time we could gather for some time!

Thank you to those who helped cook and organise the food - it was a real success!

We can't wait for us all to meet again. Thank you to everyone who came, and hopefully we will be able to host another event later in the year.



BRANCH NEWS AND DIARY DATES

CWL Sydney

As you would be aware, due to Covid-19 we unfortunately are unable to host our monthly branch gatherings.

Rest assured that when restrictions are lifted, we will certainly be celebrating together!

In the meantime, we want to stay connected you - we will continue to send out *Inform*, update our website, and be contactable via email. Any voicemails left on our phone in the office will also be attended to, as they are automatically sent to our email.

We hope you keep safe during this strange time.

I think we're in need of a laugh!

A man and his wife went on vacation to Jerusalem. While they were there, the husband passed away.

The undertaker told the wife, "You can have him shipped home for \$5000 or you can bury him here, in the hold land, for \$150.

She thought about it and told him that she would have him shipped home.

The undertaker asked, "Why would you spend \$5000 to ship your husband home, when it would be wonderful to be buried here and you would only spend \$150?"

The woman replied, "Long ago, a man died here, was buried here, and three days later he rose from the dead. I just cant take that chance."

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

We want to open *Inform* up to our readers for our next issue. Send us your stories about how the current Covid-19 situation has affected you. Have you had to learn how to use video calls? Have you had someone do something nice for you? Have you spent time reflecting on the state of the world? What are you doing to stay connected? We want to hear from you! **Please email your stories to cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org**

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Archdiocese of Sydney Today!*

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

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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!

We hope you like Inform's 'new look'

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