

# *Inform*

Catholic Women's League Archdiocese of Sydney

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## **Father Ray's Message**

### **Reflection on Sunday the 31st June:**

The first reading was about the replacement of King David, by his son King Solomon, who had much to learn but had the wisdom to ask for wisdom. He was given one wish and requested the wisdom to rule well, something which would be good for all leaders to ask for. This gift is the most precious as it allows you to guide your own life, be tranquil and benefit others. This was seen through Jesus Christ as he showed wisdom and authority. This can be seen through the last three Popes. There are wise people all throughout the world, who preach through their lives and actions and will be awarded in Heaven. The prayer of Solomon can be our prayer. We can aim to have a heart which is wise and true, to decide what is right and to be free from fear in order to help us to love.

### **Reflection on Sunday the 3rd September:**

Jesus told Peter to get behind him, showing him thinking as a human, not a

God. We are told what not to eat and what to eat the guidelines of health are often hypocritical. People are pulled in different directions.

Jesus wanted to share with Disciples what God's plan was, noting that death and salvation was part of this plan. There was not a good understanding of life after death at this time. Peter is a real person and is an example that all would do well to follow, coming back to Jesus again and again. He makes mistakes, but he carries the cross on a daily basis. Peter is human and therefore a relatable figure to us. We go to church to become better followers of Jesus and be nourished by God. Focus on what Jesus is telling us in the Gospel; "Follow me every day". Temptation to bypass the difficulty in spiritual life; we must have the courage to do it. Pray for the grace to do the right thing, and lead to everlasting life.



## *President's Report*

How this year has flown! It has been a busy year for our Executive and Councillors. The many and varying events attended by us as always are both rewarding and challenging. CWL Sydney's recently finished Project of the Year with Wilcannia Forbes and St Patrick's Brewarrina is something we consider to be a mighty success, in that we really felt we had helped in the children's education. The art work from the students remains a continuing lesson as to the outstanding ability of our precious young people. We proudly display one of the works in the CWL office. We look forward to working with those in the Enngonia community for our next Project of the Year, helping to refurbish St Francis Xavier Church.

Recently, together with the Sydney Executive, I attended the Western Region Reflection Day. Five Dock branch had taken the time and effort to organise a wonderful day. Reports were presented and read from Denistone, Fairfield, Drummoyne, Enfield, Summer Hill, Concord West and Five Dock; each branch's individuality apparent in their reporting. Guest speaker Fr Peter from Louisiana has been studying Canon Law with Fr Richard from Five

Dock. Fr Peter spoke on Fatima, a subject close to his heart.

We all know the Fatima story and some members have reacquainted themselves by viewing the recent screening of the movie. Fr Peter said that Fatima is classed as a modern miracle (1917). The three children were known to be 'unlettered', when questioned by theology professors, looking for 'pious' mischief. They were totally unprepared for the mystical knowledge, the children were able to synthesise the sacred mysteries.

Fr Peter spoke further on our present day modern people. We don't know God, and are ambivalent to God and his love for us – a time of atheism and secularism – alienated from God's love, the deepest source of our identity. Fr Peter said that today more than ever we need to pray.

I thank Five Dock for the excellent morning tea, companionship and thought provoking guest speakers.

As we come to the end of our year together I applaud you and thank you all for your faithfulness to CWL and encourage us all to work together for CWL in the coming year.

Blessings and peace to you all this Christmas.

—Helen Cook

## **SYDNEY NEWS**

At our July branch meeting, we had a guest speaker from the Senior Rights Service. Melissa was very informative, as she provided insight into the free services that the organisation provides, as well as tips to prepare for the future. Senior Rights Service is an independent, NSW based organisation that provides education, advocacy and legal advice. Everyone was taught the importance of planning for their future through actions such as writing a will. By choosing a guardian to assist with issues such as health and accommodation, and a power of attorney to deal with legalities and finances, everyone can be prepared for their future. Melissa also spoke about the necessity of choosing someone for these roles that is trustworthy and will act in accordance with your wishes.

We are very grateful for the helpful presentation Melissa gave, and further assistance can be gained through the Senior Rights Service as they provide resources and advice. For those interested in learning more, we have a few copies of brochures in our office.

More information at <http://seniorsrightsservice.org.au/>



### Annual Mass and Luncheon

On the 8th of August, we had our Annual Mass and Luncheon. The day began with Mass in the Chapel of our Lady, followed by our branch gathering. Our guest speakers for the day were Sister Monica Whelan and Brother Mark Paul from the Barefoot Nurses, who spoke to us about the incredible work they do in Timor Leste creating health programs.

We were also fortunate to have CWLA-NSW President Ann Pereira and Secretary Irene O'Grady join us for the day. Ann briefly spoke on updates from State matters as well as National news.

Lunch was a delicious hot roast and dessert. We would like to say thank you to those who helped throughout the day and who helped serve lunch. We are grateful for the work you graciously do at our branch meetings.

We hope those who attended had an enjoyable day!

### Australian Church Women Reflection Day

On Monday 17th July, myself and Noreen Keoghan represented Catholic Women's League at Australian Church Women Reflection Day at Woy Woy. Noreen and I were unexpectedly met at Woy Woy station by a Salvation Army lady, Pam, who we later discovered was the Moderator for the day. Pam drove us to our venue where we enjoyed a welcoming morning tea. This was followed by a truly meaningful presentation by a

couple, John and Alison, that included several thoughtfully chosen joyful hymns and a video depicting the creations of God—so beautiful that everyone gasped at its completion.

Although we were invited to bring our own lunch, the ladies provided delicious hot tomato soup.

The afternoon session included reflection and discussion on The Book Of David, Psalm 103. At the end of the day we were invited to ask our immediate neighbour to pray for each other for a special reason. Following this exercise we really felt we had made a new true friend and addresses and/or phone numbers were exchanged.

Mariam drove us back to the station via St. John the Baptist Church Woy Woy, a most modern architecturally designed building.

It was a truly meaningful experience and Noreen and I were delighted to have the opportunity to participate.

— June Clarke

## WUCWO



As WUCWO women we are encouraged to practice interfaith dialogue, as did Jesuit Fr Fausto Dall'Oglio. Fr Fausto re-established the Catholic-Syriac Monastic Community in Syria in the 1980's. In the August monthly message, we learn that Fr Fausto was strongly involved in Interreligious dialogue with the Islamic world; believing that his efforts led a way towards peace and

mutual respect. In this monthly message we also learn that, as per the theme of the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council of Irreligious Dialogue held in June; it is the “role of women in educating towards universal fraternity.”

In his address to the assembly the Holy Father reflects “on three aspects: to appreciate woman’s role, to educate to achieve fraternity and dialogue... men and women are called to work together towards education in universal fraternity that is, in the last analysis, education to peace in the complementarity of their diverse sensibilities and roles. Thus women, connected intimately to the mystery of life, can do much to promote the spirit of fraternity, with their care for the preservation of life and with their conviction that love is the only force that can make the world habitable for all.” One of the goals of WUCWO is the work of ecumenism, and we know that women are a strong force in building bridges and creating dialogue, thus this serves as encouragement to continue doing the wonderful work that we do.



**CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE AUSTRALIA INC.**  
**NATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
**ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, 2017**

*By Sally Fennell*

At the National Council meeting Loretta Chester was a delegate for NSW and I was an alternate delegate.

Madeleine Banister was elected to the position of National International Secretary; Madeleine is the granddaughter of Patricia Banister from CWL Maitland Newcastle. Sonia di Mezza, Research Officer, will accompany Madeleine to the UN CSW62 Meeting in New York in 2018 to assist and support her in her new role.

The conference commenced with Mass in the Cathedral on Monday evening. A very atmospheric experience as due to a power failure the Cathedral was only lit by a few candles on the altar. Fortunately the power was on in the hall next door where supper was served.

On Tuesday the conference opened with an address by National President Anne Marie Clark and one from National Chaplain Fr John Herd. A letter was read from the Mayor of Adelaide welcoming us to the city.

Fr Richard Leonard SJ the first keynote speaker was inspiring and thought provoking. He distributed a list titled *The Good We Rarely Tell Anyone* outlining the "good" of the Catholic Church, including that 75% of Catholic employees are women and is the third largest employer in Australia: Wesfarmers, Woolworths the Catholic Church, BHP, as well as the largest welfare provider outside Government.

Mr Bill Denny spoke on the friendship huts set up during WWI I.

A team of 3 young people spoke on the work with the Youth Ministry in the Adelaide Archdiocese.

Archbishop Philip Wilson addressed us on the second morning.

Sr Patricia Keane rsj gave a most interesting address on the family of Mary MacKillop. Research Officer Sonia di Mezza spoke on Elder Abuse.

As well as the Speakers, the State Presidents, Convenors & Research Officer gave their reports and the motions passed at the National Council meeting were ratified.

As Mary MacKillop is the patron of CWLA SA the liturgy of the conference was very St Mary of the Cross centric.

CWLA Western Australia will be the incoming Executive from 2018 and the next CWLA conference will be held in Bunbury WA.

It was a very enjoyable conference attended by approximately 200 including 45 members from NSW (7 from CWL Sydney). The Adelaide Hilton was an excellent venue, the food plentiful and delicious. It was lovely to catch up with other CWL members and renew friendships. We would like to congratulate the National Executive from SA for an interesting and informative conference. Well done ladies.



CWLA-NSW Delegates Sally Fennell, Peg McEntee, CWLA-NSW President Ann Pereira and Loretta Chester



Group photo of all NSW attendees at the National Conference



Conference dinner L-R Anne Maree Cantrall, Margaret Blomfield, Loretta Chester, National Chaplain Fr John Herd, Glenys Oxlee (Parramatta) Sally Fennell, Margaret Burke, Anne Wells  
(Absent: Michelle Pederson)

# **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

## **Women's Reconciliation Network Meeting**

On Thursday 28 September 2017 thirty people attended the WRN meeting. The guest speaker for the day was Carol Vale, a Dhunghutti woman from the mid-north coast. Carol works in a key role as a cultural change agent with Indigenous Land Use Agreement. Carol also supports women in developing their confidence in craft areas with micro finance. She also does work with women in prisons. Many of the women are there for minor offences, such as not paying for tow fines or for not voting. Carol wants to assist them by helping to turn oppression into opportunity. Carol challenges the government to be supportive of Indigenous community and initiative, but on Aboriginal terms.

— Marlene Wallace

*The following is an extract from Women's Spirit Event organised in the Blue Mountains recently to commemorate 20 years Anniversary of "Bringing Them Home" report documenting experiences of the stolen generation:*

### **What's meant by 'treaty' in Australia?**

Calls for a treaty in Australia refer to a formal agreement between the government and Indigenous people that would have legal outcomes. A treaty in Australia could recognise Indigenous people's history and prior occupation of this land, as well as the injustices many have endured. It could also offer a platform for addressing those injustices and help establish a path forward based upon mutual goals rather than ones imposed on Indigenous people. Treaties are accepted around the world as a way of reaching a settlement between Indigenous people and those who have colonised their lands. New Zealand, for example, has a treaty of Waitangi, an agreement signed 1840 between British Crown and over 500 Maori chiefs, while Canada and the United States have hundreds of treaties dating as far back as the 1600s.

### **Whys is Treaty so important? Because it would be:**

- A symbolic recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and prior occupation of this land
- A redefinition and restructuring of the relationship between Indigenous people and wider Australia
- Better protection of Indigenous rights
- A basis for regional self-government
- Guidelines for local and regional treaties
- Structures and systems for local and regional decision making processes

*“Social justice is what faces you in the morning. It is awakening in a house with adequate water supply, cooking facilities and sanitation. It is the ability to nourish your children and send them to school where their education not only equips them for employment but reinforces their knowledge and understanding of their cultural inheritance. It is the prospect of genuine employment and good health: a life of choices and opportunity, free from discrimination.”*

- Mick Dodson, Annual report of the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, 1993

## **Around The World**

### **Hurricane Irma**

In early September, Hurricane Irma hit the Caribbean, including Haiti and Dominican Republic. Some parts of the United States were also affected. This hurricane has impacted millions of people, their homes and livelihood. A reported 23 people have died in the Caribbean, and roads and homes have been flooded, damaged or destroyed. A huge effort is required to clean up and rebuild. Tropical storms continue to strike these regions, hindering the rebuild process. Find out on how you can help through Caritas <http://www.caritas.org.au/learn/emergency-response/latin-america-emergency-appeal>



### **Earthquakes in Mexico**

On the 9th of September, a magnitude 8.4 earthquake hit Central Mexico, resulting in destruction of roads, homes, and buildings. A second magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck again on the 19th of September, causing further damage. Many lives have been lost, currently estimated at 230+ across the region, with rescue searches in operation. Tragically, a school building collapsed in the second earthquake, killing 21 children and four teachers. Many people are now in unsafe and precarious circumstances, fearing the possibility of aftershocks and further building collapse. With hope, there are reports that across the region people are being pulled alive from the rubble even 24 hours after a collapse.

Caritas are taking tax deductible donations to go towards emergency relief, support for local community kitchens and providing vouchers to families.

<http://www.caritas.org.au/learn/emergency-response/latin-america-emergency-appeal>

**National Council of Women NSW**  
**Foundation Day Luncheon—Recognition Awards 2017**

*This year CWL Sydney President Helen Cook nominated Margaret Blomfield for the NCW NSW Recognition Award, presented at the NCW NSW Foundation Day Luncheon. The following is Margaret's profile, showcasing some of the fantastic work Margaret has contributed to over the years.*

Since 2000, Margaret has been a member of Catholic Women's League Archdiocese of Sydney, an organisation of women concerned with the promotion and protection of a woman's role in modern society, including the protection of rights, welfare, education, and wellbeing of women generally.

Margaret was one of the founding members of the Denistone branch of CWL where she has held various positions, currently being Vice President. In 2004 she was invited to become a Council member of CWL Sydney Archdiocese.

Continuously since then Margaret has served on the Board of Management having held various positions, more recently five years as Secretary and currently Vice President.

In her role on the Board of Management, Margaret initiated and coordinated through CWL branches a project to encourage teenage girls in Kenya to attend school. These girls often did not attend school following menstruation because they have no sanitary protection. Margaret arranged for CWL Branches to make towelling sanitary pouches and pads for these girls and obtained donations of appropriate underwear. The provision of these products has allowed for the girls to attend school without embarrassment.

Since 2007 Margaret has also been a member of the Board of Management of Marian Court, a retirement complex owned and operated by CWL Sydney Archdiocese.

With a family of four sons and seven grandchildren, Margaret has given time to school committees and tuck shop activities. After her school involvement ceased, Margaret initiated weekly visits by a group of ladies to a local nursing home to provide companionship for the mainly female patients/residents, and these visitations continued for a number of years.

In the early 1980's, Margaret and her husband were Foundation Members of the Juvenile Diabetics Foundation and remained involved in the Foundation.

Margaret was also a constant monthly volunteer at Matthew Talbot Hostel.

Margaret's secondary school education was in boarding school in Bathurst. Since leaving school she has maintained her connection with her school friends through her involvement with the Ex-Students Association. She continues to give emotional support to her old school friends.



# Member Profile: Patricia (Pat) Percival

Pat and her family originally moved to Canley Vale in 1948 and was part of the Sacred Heart Church which became its own parish in 1949.

Pat has been a member of the Fairfield branch of the Catholic Women's League for 11 years.

With the support of Fairfield branch President

Sandra Skarsky she is able to attend her branch meeting, the monthly meeting in the Polding Centre and the Reflection days that are held.

Pat has had a tremendous contribution to both her parish and community. This is seen through her assistance at Parish events such as fetes, and support for the Silver Circle and Planned Giving Schemes. Pat also taught Scripture for 52 years, being the Catechist Coordinator for 50 of these years, as well as teaching Sacramental programs to the State School Children on Sundays. This amazing work was recognised in 2011 when Patricia received the Pope John Paul II Award at St Marys Cathedral for 50 years of continuous teaching.

Also within her community, Pat has belonged to the Sacred Heart Sodality and the Legion of Mary. She is currently a Special Minister of the Eucharist at Mass and until recently had also taken communion to the sick and housebound every Saturday for the past 26 years. Pat previously worked in the St Vincent de Paul store in Canley Heights for 10 years, and continues to support them through her volunteering at the piety store.



All of these remarkable contributions were acknowledged on Australia Day in 2003 when Patricia was presented with the 2003 Achievement Medallion by the Mayor of Fairfield to recognise her work in the community. In 2012, Pat attended the Jean Arnot Luncheon at Parliament House to celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Earlier this year Patricia celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday with her 6 children and their families. Pat has eight grandchildren and one great granddaughter! Since Pat's husband's passing 28 years ago, she has remained in the family home which they first moved to in 1948, supported by her family. Pat still has had a full drivers licence, which she's had since 1950 and continues to drive herself to Mass, on shopping trips, and to her Catholic Women's League meetings.

Pat still enjoys keeping busy driving, gives communion and volunteers at the piety stall when needed. One of the things which Pat likes to do is to tend to her 'park-like' garden and she also enjoys reading the daily news and doing crosswords. Pat also keeps in contact with her family and friends through writing letters and cards which she sends via 'snail-mail' as she has not yet mastered the computer and email.



*Pat with friends at a branch meeting*

***In memory of..***

**CECILIA CELIE MADDOCK**



Cecilia Maddock was one of the initial members of the Enfield branch when it first formed over 30 years ago. She will be dearly missed.

***In memory of..***

**ANNE O’GARA**



Anne O’Gara was the founding President of Fairfield branch, with the first meeting taking place in September, 1982. Anne was a Fairfield parishioner from when she was a young mother with 8 children. Anne was very involved in St Vincent de Paul, and championed many other causes, including pregnancy help and supporting refugees. Thank you Anne for the wonderful contributions you made to our community throughout your life. You will be dearly missed.

***In memory of..***

**MARY KEARNEY**



Mary Kearney passed away on the 27th of September. Mary was a vibrant, long term member of CWL, known by members across New South Wales. She was part of Luncheon Club, was involved with the tea room at the Coroner’s Court, and was Wester Region Councillor—very much involved in our organisation and full of life. Mary was a charming, witty, delightful lady, who dressed beautifully and was always one of the first people to get up and dance. She will be remembered for her warm and welcoming qualities.

*(Image of Mary from 2005 at a Luncheon Club Meeting)*

## **Branch News**

If your branch has an up coming event or any exciting news to share, please let us know! Email [cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:cwlsydney@sydneycatholic.org) Phone: 9307 8383

Address: 133 Liverpool St Sydney 2000

### **RYDE-GLADESVILLE**

Some news from our Ryde Gladesville Branch. Our member Merryl Foster was presented with the Dempsey Medal by the Archbishop for outstanding contribution to the Parish. Merryl turned 90 recently, she is still a Catechist, we had a surprise Birthday Party in our St Charles Hall Sunday afternoon on the 12th August.

We also received a letter from The Hon. Anthony Roberts MP, Member for Lane Cove, congratulating us on the great work the League does in support of charities like Fr. Chris Riley's Youth off the Street and St Vincent De Paul.

*"On behalf of a grateful community thank you for your dedicated and hard work."*

Apparently he saw our Advert for our Fashion Parade in the local TWT paper.

### **FIVE DOCK**

The Western Region Reflection Day held on Friday 8 September was well attended by the Branches. The day began with Mass celebrated by Fr. Greg MacGregor and Rev. Peter Faulk (visiting from Louisiana USA).

We were fortunate that Fr. Greg, Fr. Richard Waddell and Rev. Peter enjoyed morning tea with members in the Parish Hall. An inspiring reflection was presented by Rev. Peter on the story of Our Lady of Fatima, the importance of prayer and the call to "conversion"- a change in our hearts and lives. After a delicious lunch, Sydney Archdiocese President Helen Cook chaired the meeting and each Branch presented a report. \$360 was raised for "Food Bank – School Breakfast program", the Charity chosen to receive proceeds of the donations. Heartfelt thanks to all for your attendance and friendship.

## **DIARY DATES**

**Tuesday 28th November, 12pm:** CWL Sydney and Marian Court Christmas Luncheon, Burwood RSL. \$40 per person. Raffles prizes to be won, and guest entertainment following lunch. RSVP 14th November



We pray for the repose of the souls of **CECILIA (CELIE) MADDOCK** from CWL Enfield branch, **ANNE O'GARA**, founding member of CWL Fairfield branch, and **MARY KEARNEY** of CWL Sydney Harbour North

# A Blessing

*May the light of your soul guide you  
May the light of your soul bless the work you do  
with the secret love and warmth of your heart.  
May you see in what you do the beauty of your own soul.  
May the sacredness of your work bring healing,  
light and renewal to those who work with you  
and to those who see and receive your work.  
May your work never weary you.  
May it release within you wellsprings of refreshment,  
inspiration and excitement.  
May you be present in what you do.  
May you never become lost in the bland absences.  
May the day never burden.  
May dawn find you awake and alert,  
approaching your new day with dreams,  
possibilities and promises.  
May evening find you gracious and fulfilled.  
May you go into the night blessed,  
sheltered and protected.  
May your soul calm, console and renew you.*

*John O'Donohue*

Cover artwork by Helen Cook.

View Inform in full colour on our website under "Newsletters".

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