

SAULT STE. MARIE CWL DIOCESAN WINTER NEWSLETTER

Issue 01/2026



Prayer for Passion on the Mission

Jesus, our Lord, we come to You with open hearts seeking passion for Your mission.

Your deepest desire was to draw all peoples into the embrace of the Heavenly Father's Kingdom.

Send Your Holy Spirit to ignite our hearts with the fire of Your passionate love, to empower us with enthusiasm for our Mission.

May we be instruments of Your love to our sisters in the League, our families, parishes, and communities.

As we journey together, may the flame in our hearts illuminate others to know Your eternal love.

May we hold Your people in our hearts as we place all our trust in You.

Sweet Jesus, each day as we lift up our hearts to You, we offer You our prayers, works, joys, and sufferings.

We humbly ask that our offerings increase our faith, hope, and charity.

O Most Sacred and Passionate Heart of Jesus, may our hearts and Yours beat together as one.

We make this prayer to You, Jesus, in the power of the Father and in the union of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

- Betty Colaneri



IN THIS ISSUE

Patricia's Sparks!	2
Message from Father Jeff	3
Important Dates	3
105 th Diocesan Convention Officer Workshops.....	4
Diocesan Executive Testimonials.....	9
Regional Development Days – Fall 2025	11
Congratulations, Life Member!	12
Provincial Convention Report	13
National Convention Report.	15
Coldest Night of the Year	18
New Parish Executives!.....	19
Parish Council Activities	20
Milestone Anniversary	22
Upcoming Events!.....	23

(ctrl+click to jump to the topic)

Faith

Service

Social
Justice

Patricia's Sparks!

A new year beckons, the old year offers opportunity to reflect, and a renewed spirit sparks initiative and life-giving encounters. Let's IGNITE together in 2026!

A very warm welcome indeed to all new council presidents and a heart-felt thank you to the new past presidents, many of whom have kept things going in councils and mentored new members to encourage them to respond to the invitation to lead within the League.

In 2025, our diocese was represented by 1,808 members in 30 parish councils across the regions of North Bay, Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie. We welcomed a new president and executive at St. Andrew the Apostle in Sudbury, a reactivated council! Many more new presidents and executives have been installed in parish councils following elections. A warm welcome to you all.

Regional development days were held in each Region in the fall. These days of learning and fellowship offered opportunities to engage and learn more important issues in our community like human trafficking, mental health issues, and intimate partner violence. The trade show booths included information on local community organizations as well as contacts for councils to engage with to enhance their membership gatherings with guest speakers and information. We extend our thanks to the Ontario Provincial Council for their generous grant to assist us in hosting these 'first ever' regional development days.

Come to Sudbury May 1-3, 2026 and 'Ignite your Passion' to "Empower His Mission" at the 106th annual diocesan convention. Mark your calendars, gather a few friends for a road trip or a 'stay-cation' while enriching your faith and connecting with like-minded women across the diocese. Guest speakers, officer workshops, instructed votes, diocesan elections, fellowship and fun await!

Visit www.ssmcwl.ca soon for your registration package and to check back for future updates. Speak with your council president if you are a first-time attendee.

The diocesan executive looks forward to welcoming members at the annual diocesan convention - to pray, to learn and to enjoy fellowship. See you in May!

Patricia

Patricia Clizia, President – SSM Diocesan Council



Message from Father Jeff

IGNITE YOUR PASSION...

Pope Benedict XVI had a popular quote. He said “being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction”.

The upcoming 2026 national theme for the Catholic Women's League of Canada is "Ignite Your Passion. Empower His Mission".

Pope Benedict's statement serves as a catalyst to ignite the faith in the lives of those in our church, and especially our catholic women serving in the Catholic Women's League of Canada. It is clear that our desire to draw closer to God begins with a true and new encounter with Christ.

On the road to Emmaus in Chapter 24 of Luke's Gospel, the risen Christ encounters two discouraged men who walked away from the crucifixion scene with little to no hope. Jesus approached them on the road, but without knowing that it was He, their eyes were opened as the scriptures were explained to them. They were so deeply moved at the end of the encounter with him that they stated, “ ... Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” Luke 24:32.

If we truly want to “empower our mission” as followers of Christ and as catholic women of faith, let us strive to return to our true love ... the love Christ has for us, and beg for a new encounter with Him so that our faith is re-ignited once again with great zeal. From that experience, we will go forth to all the world and tell others with greater boldness of the love of Christ.

The theme for 2026 for the Catholic Women's League is deep and meaningful and it has many different aspects to explore. But essential to it all is this very real and personal encounter with the God in our midst who desires to ignite our faith and send us out on mission with greater love and zeal. Lord, make me your instrument and ignite my faith. Amen.

Fr. Jeff



Important Dates

106th Diocesan Convention
**Friday, May 1 to Sunday,
May 3, 2026**

**Steelworker's Hall in
Sudbury**

79th Provincial Convention
**Sunday, July 5 –
Wednesday, July 8,
2026**

Thunder Bay, ON

106th National Convention
**Sunday, August 9 –
Wednesday August 12,
2026**
Halifax, NS

105th Diocesan Convention Officer Workshops

Our diocesan officers presented workshops at our diocesan convention last May instead of oral reports. It was a first-time endeavor with much enthusiasm and energy! The only complaint was a lack of time to attend all of the terrific workshops.

Here are summaries of the workshops presented, with links to contact the officers for more information.

Vice-President – Kathleen Niro

Ice Breaker – You're up! Who's on deck? Getting to know you and prayer partner.

- Each member received a note sized piece of paper.
- They wrote their name, parish, # of years as a member, what draws them to be a member and something personal, i.e. likes to cook, garden, paint etc. They were assigned a number.
- When done they crumpled the paper and threw it into the bin provided.
- Each person selected a crumpled ball from the bin and introduced the person
- The members kept the paper they drew and will pray for that person.

Activity – What are your talents, gifts or skills?

Each member chose a crayon: after they picked the crayon, they shared briefly why they picked that colour.

Drawing exercise – each person was given a blank page on a clip board. Each person drew something on the paper, then handed their paper to the person to the right. This continued until they received their original paper again. Numbers were used for easy tracking. The result was a team/group effort, to make a picture, a final product.

Similar to the CWL members working together, many talents and inspirations can be found which can complement or enhance the work we do. Our original plans could take a change in direction when others are invited to participate even for one small part. All members have value. Inclusiveness validates members, they have a place in their council.

Additional Material Covered

- Reminder of the 2025 fall regional meetings membership information card
- Welcome Program
- The '1' Campaign, drawing attention to the May word

May: Be a Mentor to '1'

Dedicate May to honouring mothers—the first teachers of faith who guide members on their spiritual journey. These mothers may be biological mothers, godmothers, grandmothers, aunts or special women who have played a significant role in their lives. Honour them by following their example and passing on the gift of faith and guidance by mentoring '1' other person.

- Refer to The League Magazine, spring 2025, page 5, [Retaining Membership](#)
- Annual Report as a tool

Please contact Kathleen at vicepresidentssmcwl@gmail.com for more information.

Past President – Lisa Henry

"Finding Joy in Elections (and a Little Mentorship Magic!)"

This workshop aimed at injecting positivity and engagement into the CWL election process. The presentation emphasized that elections are more than just selecting names; they are about shaping the future of the organization and fostering fresh ideas. Attendees participated in an interactive "Name That Skill!" activity, humorously connecting skills to potential roles. The workshop also highlighted the critical role of mentorship in nurturing future leaders. It emphasized that mentorship involves guiding new members, sharing wisdom, and empowering them to grow into confident and capable individuals. A quick quiz dispelled common misconceptions about mentorship, reinforcing that it is about empowering others and encouraging them to step up.

The session concluded by encouraging attendees to embrace the election process with open minds, hearts, and a sense of humor, recognizing that the real joy lies in the journey of camaraderie and shared mission. An email sign-up sheet was circulated to create a network for continued coaching, mentoring, and idea-sharing, fostering ongoing support and development within the CWL. Handouts included: Election & Nominations Process, Gift Inventory Worksheet, Role Description Placemats and How To Be A Good Mentor. Finally, all Council Presidents were supplied with a takeaway council activity titled "Slicing Up Success!", a pizza-themed activity designed to encourage reflection on individual gifts and their suitability for various leadership positions within the council to invite future leaders.

Please contact Lisa at pastpresidentssmcwl@gmail.com for more information!

Secretary - Colleen Murphy

Given the many responsibilities of the amalgamated Secretary position, I chose to create a powerpoint slide for each of the duties: Agenda and Minutes, Communication, Correspondence, Signing Officer, Contact lists, Website, Social Media, Newsletter, with tips and tricks I use to manage.

There was a handout with notes from the slides, as well as recommendations to enlist help, use contacts distribution lists, folders for documents, email labels. Templates of minutes and motion sheets were sent to those attending.

Please contact Colleen at secretaryssmcwl@gmail.com for more information.



Treasurer – Deborah Hickey

A treasurer is an integral part of every Council, overseeing the financial stability of the Council and ensuring the finances are accurate and transparent. She must have a basic understanding of bookkeeping principles to maintain accurate Council financial records.

Duties of Treasurers

- Ensure there are three signing officers on the bank account; Two signatures are required on each cheque (not pre-signed).
- Maintain Council's revenue and expenditures in a ledger or software system
- Receive all revenue, make bank deposits and record all incoming monies and file all supporting documentation; Issue payment for any Council expenses, record transactions and file supporting documentation;
- Reconcile the cheque book, financial records to the bank statement monthly.
- Prepare and present a monthly report showing all revenue, expenses and bank balances for all Council financial accounts for presentation at executive or general meetings at the request of the Council President.
- If a petty cash fund is used for small expenses, ensure that a proper recording process is in place expenditures
- Maintain a list of annual donations and other payments by the Council each year to assist in preparing an annual budget. Budgets are a calculated "guesstimate" based on the historical records of income and expenses of previous years; Monitor the actual revenues and expenses to the budgeted revenues and expenses.
- Have the financial records examined (or audited) annually at the fiscal or calendar year-end by someone with an accounting or bookkeeping background.

Additional Duties

- Attend all executive and general meetings/gatherings
- Work closely with the President and Membership Coordinator to ensure that the membership dues are collected and submitted to National.
- Prepare any Treasurer's Annual Report as requested by the Diocesan Treasurer.
- Donations to the Clergy Benefit Fund in support of our Diocesan Clergy can be forwarded to the Diocesan Treasurer, cheques payable to "The Catholic Women's League" with Clergy Benefit Fund on the memo line.
- Donations to the Bishop Bernard F Pappin Memorial Bursary Fund are to be forwarded to the Provincial Treasurer with cheques payable to "the Ontario Provincial Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada" with Bishop Pappin in the memo line.
- Donations to The National Voluntary Fund Remittance are payable to "The Catholic Women's League of Canada" and sent to the National office.
- At the completion of your term, ensure that all the books and documentation are in order before passing them on to the new treasurer. The outgoing Treasurer should also be prepared to assist the incoming Treasurer

Please contact Deborah at treasurerssmcwl@gmail.com for more information.

Faith – Debbie Mattiazzi

Creating a Prayer Experience

Choose a theme: unifying the experience

CLR: Three rhythms of prayer

C – Centering

A few tastefully selected icons can help to focus on the theme

-table covered with a cloth, symbols connected to the theme, bible

-breathing in/out directed or undirected

Closing of eyes and relaxing facial muscles

Sitting and stilling the body

Light a candle

L – Listening

-Scripture / Reading

-use biblegateway.com to help find the reading to connect with the theme

-Music connecting with the theme

R – Responding

-journal exercise

-rote prayer

Prayer Example with the theme 'Peace and Hope'

-table with dove representing peace and an anchor representing hope

Reading from Romans 5: 1-5

Music - Sing refrain Christ Be Our Light

Respond - Rote prayer

Please contact Debbie at faithchairssmcwl@gmail.com for more information.

Service – Dorothy Boyer

Service is helping others or giving them what they need. It means giving people things like help, goods or useful things they need in their daily lives. Using the toolkit from the CWL website gives us ideas of how we can serve others in many ways that are not necessarily financial in nature. We have included the calendar for social justice as it overlaps with service. Information was available on 'The Coldest Night of the Year' concerning poverty & homelessness and 'the Moose Hide Campaign' dealing with violence in particular regarding indigenous women.

Please contact Dorothy at servicechairssmcwl@gmail.com for more information.



Social Justice – Shirlene Condie-McVeigh

We explored the impact of letter writing campaigns and writing resolutions. We also provided practical handouts to help in creating effective and motivational letters and resolutions.

The Power of Letter Writing Campaign asks participants to identify an issue, gather facts, identify the appropriate government level, write a letter using the template, encourage others to do the same and share your efforts.

Writing a resolution Guide will share the story of the Diocesan 2024 resolution as an example. It was drafted by a parish council, passed at that level, brought to the social justice chair, gifted to the diocesan council, presented and passed at diocesan convention, then gifted, presented and passed at the provincial convention. A link is included to the resolutions on the provincial website. The sign-in sheet asked attendees if they would like a workshop via zoom on letter writing or resolutions.

Additional resources included are:

1. [Government of Canada: How to contact your elected officials](#)
2. [Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops: Social Affairs](#)
3. [Catholic Women’s League of Canada: Resolution resources](#)

Please contact Shirlene at socialjusticechairssmcwl@gmail.com for more information.



CONTACT INFO

We welcome comments on this newsletter and suggestions for up-coming newsletters.

Please email Colleen Murphy at secretaryssmcwl@gmail.com

Diocesan Executive Testimonials

Our Diocesan executive is nearing another election season, with elections for a new diocesan executive to be held at our 106th Diocesan Convention in 2026 in Sudbury. Nomination packages have been sent to those eligible to stand for diocesan nominations. Each of our officers here gives a testimonial regarding their position on our diocesan executive.

Lisa Henry, Past President

When I look back on my time as Past President, I am filled with gratitude. I chose to serve because I wanted to give back to the League that had given me so much — friendship, faith, and a sense of belonging. What I treasure most are not the meetings or the reports, but the faces and stories of the women I have walked with—women of faith who encouraged me, challenged me, and reminded me that leadership in the CWL is about service, not status.

I didn't always feel ready for leadership, but each "yes" brought new growth, new friendships, and a deeper trust in God's guidance. Along the way, I learned that leadership is about drawing out the gifts in others and creating space for them to shine.

Watching members step forward with courage and joy has been one of the greatest blessings of this journey.

Leadership isn't just about elections. It is shaped all year long—through encouragement, mentoring, and simply noticing the gifts in others. Every council has within it women who are ready to grow; they may just need someone to say, "I see this in you."

To every member reading this: perhaps God is inviting you to step forward. Serving in leadership is not always easy, but it is always rewarding. It deepens faith, builds friendships, and strengthens our League's mission in ways that last far beyond a term of office. As St. Catherine of Siena reminds us: "Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire."

Colleen Murphy, Secretary

I have served in the CWL ever since my second daughter was born, 37 years ago, mostly on my parish council executive. Four years ago, when a lovely sister member offered to serve as our parish president, I decided I did have more to give and accepted the role of Sault Ste. Marie Regional Chair on the Diocesan executive. What a step up it was! I learned so much more of the inner workings of the CWL, with so much being done 'behind the scenes'. I think most members are not aware of the dedication and inspiration of wonderful women across our country that serve us in the Catholic Women's League at the upper levels. Now, as Diocesan Secretary I'm finding more things to learn! This position is an amalgamation of 3 previous positions, so has a lot of responsibility, best shared with others. The friendships I have made within the CWL are so very valuable. I appreciate the beautiful faith of my Catholic sisters. When times are challenging, an encouraging word brightens my day and inspires me to carry on!

Deborah Hickey, Treasurer

I was recently asked why I am so dedicated to my service within the CWL and particularly my position on the SSM Diocesan executive. After a pause and a prayer, I tried to put into words what I felt in my heart. I explained that I can spend time alone in prayer, study and reflection and I can grow in my faith. But to become part of the Catholic Women's League of Canada, at the Parish and the Diocesan levels, has offered an opportunity to join a community of women that are convicted in their faith, the desire to grow in our faith, and to carry out that faith in service of others. Being a part of the CWL has allowed me to grow in ways that I would never have thought possible, to meet such a diverse group of beautiful women living out their faith journeys. The sharing, the laughter, the shared tears, the support, the prayers and of course the hugs make the nervousness I felt walking into my first meeting worth it a hundred-fold.

I challenge all members to become more active in your Parish Councils, open your hearts to the power of the Holy Spirit for guidance, share your faith, gifts and talents with others.

Debbie Mattiazzi – Faith Chair

The past year and half have been a very special time in my journey as the Diocesan Faith Chair. It all started with a yes. Trusting that this is exactly where God was leading me. My faith and love in our God have sustained me through personal challenges while on this journey. The love and support through prayer and service with one another allows us to truly live out our baptismal call. I encourage anyone who desires to grow closer and walk with Jesus to consider a Faith Chair position.

“What we dwell on WE CREATE, what we think WE BECOME, what we ponder WE EMPOWER” - Mary Davis

Dorothy Boyer – Service Chair

Working on the diocesan council as the service chair has been enlightening.

I have enjoyed working with the provincial chair Sue Lubowitz and my counterparts across this great province of Ontario. Information received has been shared with presidents and service chairs across the diocese of Sault Ste Marie.

As part of service pillar, I supplied much information on local services and charities that assist the less fortunate in the community. At the parish level, I have organized a month-long collection of gently used shoes, boots and socks for numerous agencies in the Sudbury area. Over the first twelve days, our collection consists of 8 pairs of boots, 26 pairs of shoes, 178 pairs of socks, 11 hats, 27 scarves, 47 pairs of mitts and gloves, plus some clothing items and hand, foot and toe warmers.

February 28, 2026, plans are underway to have teams throughout the diocese participate in the “Annual Coldest Night of the Year”. More details to follow.

Regional Development Days - Fall 2025



Regional Development Days were held in Sudbury, Sault Ste Marie and North Bay. The focus was a response to the National Unity Outreach Surveys, and the Diocesan follow up survey of the last term. This was done in a trade show style. Community agencies were invited to have a booth with information, time to speak to the members individually and to the group as a guest speaker.

The days also included the three pillars of the league story boards and CWL information, membership story board and CWL resources, each attended by a Diocesan Executive member. We began each day with Mass and included a faith component in the day supported by the Spiritual Advisors and Faith chairpersons, diocesan and parish. The workshop The Joy of Leadership, module 2: Strategies to Engage Members, was presented by Kathleen Niro, Diocesan Vice President.



Each attendee was provided with a passport – League 411. This included the websites of the community guests, CWL websites and social media information for all levels and an evaluation. The members would take home the resource information, and we kept the evaluations and the member information.

A free will donation jar was available to help offset the costs of each day.

Thank you to everyone that attended!

Sudbury: Sat. Sept. 27, at St. Kevin, 18 evaluations, 7 of 16 councils, 31 members

Sault Ste. Marie: Sat. Oct. 4, Precious Blood Cathedral, 14 evaluations, 7 of 9 Councils, 28 members

North Bay: Sat. Oct.25, at the Pro-Cathedral of the Assumption, 14 evaluations, 5/5 Councils, 31 members



Kathleen Niro, Vice-President

Congratulations, Life Member!

At our Sault Ste. Marie Regional Development Day opening mass on Saturday, October 4 2025, Past Diocesan President Cathy McKinney was presented with a Life Membership!

In Ontario, a life member must have served in executive positions at diocesan level for a minimum of eight years, including two years as diocesan past president. She must also have proven her willingness to serve on provincial level by letting her name stand for a previous provincial election. Life membership gives to the recipient, in addition to the honour, a permanent place on the national council, the same voting privileges as accredited delegates at an annual meeting or convention, a voice in its affairs and eligibility for a national appointment.

Cathy is a proud third-generation member of the Catholic Women's League of Canada and has been serving God and Canada for 44 years. She had the privilege of serving as Council President for two terms at St. Gregory's Parish in Sault Ste. Marie.

Her mother, Rita Souliere, a Life Member herself, inspired her journey. Watching her serve the League at the diocesan, provincial, and national levels gave Cathy a deep appreciation for her dedication and the strength of women in the League. During Cathy's term as Past President, she also served as the Regional Spiritual Chairperson for Sault Ste. Marie. One of the most meaningful highlights of her League journey was chairing the Diocesan Convention hosted in Sault Ste. Marie in 2010.

She was honoured to contribute to the League's future by serving on the national Strategic Plan Marketing Working Group.

Cathy is blessed with a loving husband Ted, of 35 years, and together they have raised two beautiful daughters. She recently retired from a fulfilling career as a Regulated Pharmacy Technician with a large retailer in Sault Ste. Marie. In her leisure time, she enjoys travelling with Ted, gardening and days at their cottage on Lake Superior.

Cathy says "My work with the Catholic Women's League has shaped me into a better wife, daughter, mother, sister, and friend. It has truly been a calling and a blessing."



Our new Life Member!



Cathy and Ted



Sault St. Marie Life Members: Evelyn Theriault, Cathy McKinney, Betty Nori

Provincial Convention Report

Travelling day with my parish sisters on Saturday July 5, 2025, was full of conversation and friendship. Upon arrival at the convention site, we were greeted by many familiar faces and our Diocesan President, Patricia Clizia. True League sisterhood with hugs and smiles! We arrived in time to register and freshen up before we headed to St. Justin's for a Fun & Games night. Decked out in our JOY t-shirts, we boarded the bus for a fun evening of laughter and song as we did the game circuit using our skills, strengths and weaknesses, and team work to bond our experience with those from our diocese and those we shared the experience.

Saturday provided a tour of St. Peter's Seminary. The experience was life filled by our tour guide, Father Michael Prieur, with his knowledge and wit as we walked through the halls, rooms, and chapel. We saw the photos of alumni including some of our own parish priests.

The opening Mass was a beautiful statement of our sisterhood. Chatter before Mass, silence during prayers, attentiveness during the speeches. The installation of the Most Reverend Alan Campeau Bishop as the Spiritual Advisor of the Provincial Council. This was then followed by a reception across the driveway in the parish hall. Enroute, many sisters were captured for the "Convention Chats with Emma!" Check out the OPC CWL, <https://www.youtube.com/@OntarioProvincialCouncilCWL> for full coverage.

The Prayer Room combined both spiritual take aways as well an opportunity to sit before the Blessed Sacrament.

The Resolutions Dialogue was well attended. The volume in the room shows our passion as League members by advocating in social justice issues. There were three resolutions of which two were adopted to move onto the National Council and convention for consideration.

The Diocesan Presidents showered us with sunshine and sunflowers with song and facts. They demonstrated commitment and inspiration to continue the work of the League wherever we live.

The Provincial Executive reported in a news cast style, capturing the activities and purpose of the League. This was very engaging, entertaining and informative.

We welcomed the new Life Members, including our own Cathy Mckinney of Sault Ste. Marie.

The Spiritual Advisors in attendance provided a presentation on formation, each providing a piece for our reflection on our own journey, 'Her Story, His Glory':

Bishop Campeau, Provincial Council Spiritual Advisor – Her Beginning: Divine Indwelling.

Father Paul Kim, London Diocesan Spiritual Advisor – Created for Relationship:

"We are not meant to be alone" Genesis 1:26

Remember your why. A God of relationship, three distinct persons and united. Church as relationship with God and neighbour.

Father Stéphane Pouliot, Kingston Diocesan Spiritual Advisor – Purpose and Calling: “For I know the plans I have for you” Jeremiah 29:11
Come and see; Jesus told me everything I’ve ever done. Elizabeth to Mary’s greeting. How is God calling you in this season of your life?

Father John Lemire, Timmins Diocesan Spiritual Advisor – A New Beginning: Mercy and Forgiveness

What remains unspoken, remains unhealed.

Sacrament of the sick

Sacrament of Reconciliation: a pathway out of darkness and brokenness, pathway to the Father, newness of life unburdened. Grow strong in our brokenness. Mercy to receive and to give.

Colleen Martin, OPC President – Joy Jubilee, and the Pilgrims of Hope
Hope is not passive – it is active trust in God’s promises.

Bishop Campeau led a twilight retreat after dinner: *How deep is your faith?* based on John 17. There was an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

We were privileged to have Dr. Josephine Lombardi as a keynote speaker. She spoke on the Marian Approaches to Synodality. From the description in the agenda, “Dr. Lombardi names Mary as a ‘synodal way’ and ‘accompanying witness’ to the spirit’s guidance of the synodal process. Marian Approaches to Synodality tells us to listen to her son, to the spirit – essential for discerning topics like formation and the role of women in the church.”

Lastly, we had the Provincial Secretary, Lisa Henry, and Provincial Vice-President, Karen McDonald, lead an interactive workshop on ‘Igniting the League’. They offered information and posed questions for our table discussions which were collected and will be used in the future to assist councils in their work.

Kathleen Niro, Vice-President



National Convention Report

Our own Lisa Henry, past president, was the official photographer for the National Convention. Anna Tremblay, life member, diligently edited the photos to select the best of them. Thank you, ladies!!!! Here are a few:



Flags at the Opening Mass



Colleen Martin, Ontario Provincial President with Betty Colaneri, National President



Father Trevor and Father Jeff



Anna Tremblay, Dorothy Boyer, and ?



Karen McDonald, OPC Vice-President with Father Trevor



Patricia Clizia, President, Cathy McKinney, Past President

Patricia Clizia - President

It was a summer road trip of the best kind, with wonderful travel companions Karen McDonald and Linda Squarzolo, and a full agenda of activities and fun.

The diocese of Sault Ste. Marie was well represented with a total of 10 members in attendance, and 3 spiritual advisors, including diocesan spiritual advisor, Rev. Jeff Shannon, Precious Blood Cathedral, Rev. Ramesh Christy, Our Lady of Hope, Sudbury, and Rev. Trevor Scarfone, St. Gregory, SSM.

It was a wonderful opportunity to attend the meeting of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO). It was educational and thought provoking. Member organizations were introduced including: the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada, the National Council of Catholic Women, Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary.

Dr. Josephine Lombardi delivered a presentation on "Mary, the Model of Synodality" during lunch.

The need for justice for migrant workers was highlighted in a presentation. We learned how poor living and working conditions are daily struggles for migrant workers, and they are unable to change employers due to work permits, with employers often try to take advantage of them. Perhaps this is a resolution topic waiting to be tackled to address the unfair and poor living conditions for migrant workers in Canada.

The liturgical celebrations were prayerful and deeply spiritual with many clergy in attendance. It was a powerful moment to see the long procession of clergy and gathering of so many around the altar for the consecration, with still many more seated in the sanctuary. It is a visible sign of the strong support the clergy provides for the League and our members.

Daily Mass invited us to prayer to begin our day, and offered an opportunity to encounter different bishops and clergy through their presence, prayers and homiletic messages.

The opening Mass was celebrated by His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo, Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto, at St. Paul's Basilica. His Eminence joined in the social that followed Mass, while meeting and interacting with attendees, and posing for a few pictures too.

Closing Mass was held at St. Michael's Basilica, and was deeply moving, not only in the architecture and beauty that surrounded, but in the deep devotion and faith experience through collective prayer. In particular, the veil of incense rising at the consecration was heaven like. An installation of officers was held at this mass.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Gerry Turcotte, delivered a presentation on social justice and mental health. Each delegate received a copy of one of his books with their registration bag. He spoke of the Japanese art of Kintsugi, beauty in the broken, paralleling that with

mental health illness. Our brokenness is like a crack that let the light shine through. We go to God to heal us, recover us and help us live - Isaiah 38:16.

Brother Richard MacPhee, Brothers of the Good Shepherd, shared his personal witness while providing hopeful service to the vulnerable and marginalized in our communities. He explained how places and programs were established to meet specific needs; eg. Mary's House, Martha's Place, Dorothy Day Place and others. Delegate donations were collected to support the Brothers of the Good Shepherd. His departing message was 'never stop loving', in all we do and how we respond. This message 'never stop loving' was echoed by Bishop Wayne Lobsinger in his final homily as national spiritual advisor.

National Officers hosted luncheons for delegates. Life Members were commissioned, including two from Ontario, Cathy McKinney of Sault Ste. Marie and Helena Lessard of Lindsay. There was a memorial service for deceased members. Three workshops were offered in a breakout session format hosted by provincial presidents. An election of officers was held for the 2025 – 2027 term.

The new national president, Betty Colaneri, delivered a presentation to unveil the new national theme, to being in January 2026. "Ignite your passion. Empower His mission."

The 'Pink Ladies' from Ontario made an appearance and the Fonz dropped in for a visit. Elvis joined in the fun and, by all accounts, members love to dance and jive. A fun night was had by all!



The banquet evening was well attended, and included a fun presentation in appreciation to past president Shari Guinta, complete with a short power outage for impact!

Fun times to gather and celebrate, moments of prayer and faith, sisterhood in action! The Ontario provincial photo captures the presence of so many women from across our province, we were well represented indeed!

If you haven't had an opportunity to attend a national convention, plan to join us in Halifax to experience the warm east coast hospitality, and experience the sisterhood that is the League. It's an encounter you'll never forget!

Patricia Clizia, SSM Diocesan President

Coldest Night of the Year

Walk Date: **Saturday, February 28, 2026**

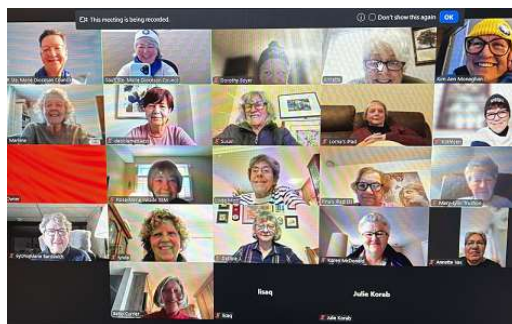
Our SSM Diocesan council is embracing our national focus of "Blessed are the Poor". National council has published a [calendar of activities](#) to encourage CWL councils across Canada to assist those who are struggling in so many ways in our country. In February one of the recommendations is to sponsor participants in the Coldest Night of the Year Event.

In that light, we have created regional teams for the Coldest Night of the Year and encourage members to join these teams, or create a parish council team, to raise funds for the designated charities in our regions.

Sudbury for The Samaritan Centre: "Sudbury CWL and friends"
North Bay for The Gathering Place: "CWL Sisters of Hope"
Sault Ste. Marie for St. Vincent Place: "Pat's CWL Pals"

Here's how it works:

1. Register on the [Coldest Night of the Year website](#), find your location, join a team and start fundraising for the charity in your region. All of the information you need is found on the site.
2. On Saturday, February 28, 2026, you can join in the 2k or 5k walk (not required), but it is a fun, well-run culmination of all of your efforts. We encourage members to wear CWL scarves, pins or sashes to show our involvement for the CWL.
3. Volunteers are also welcome. The website will also guide you to sign up to volunteer.
4. Registration is free. Toques are given to those that raise a minimum of \$75 for those 0-17 years and \$150 for adults 18+.



On Saturday, January 10, we held a zoom launch for The Coldest Night of the Year. Teams were announced, regional leads explained the process and a demo of the website showed us how to get started. Thanks for everyone that joined in!



New Parish Executives!

We welcome new parish council executives. Thank you to everyone that has opened their hearts and arms to embrace new positions and leadership in the League. Know that our members appreciate and respect your efforts and willingness to serve.

May God bless each new League officer with patience, enlightenment, enthusiasm and love!

Sault Ste. Marie Region:

Our Lady of Good Council: President Susan Brett

Sudbury Region:

St. Andrew the Apostle: President Ali Pierog

St. Bonaventure: President Peggy Burke

St. Patrick: President Cathy Hopper

North Bay Region:

Our Lady of Sorrows: President Lynn Oullette

Pro-Cathedral of the Assumption: President Leah Pierce

St. Peter the Apostle: President Anna Tremblay

An Old Irish Journey Blessing

May the blessing of light be on you, light without and light within.

May the blessed sunshine shine upon you and warm your heart 'til it glows like a great peat fire, so that the stranger may come and warm herself at it, as well as the friend.

And may the light shine out of the eyes of you, like a candle set in the windows of a house, bidding the wanderer to come in out of the storm.

And may the blessing of the rain be on you - the soft sweet rain. May it fall upon your spirit so that all the little flowers may spring up, and shed their sweetness on the air.

And may the blessing of the great rains be on you, may they beat upon your spirit and wash it fair and clean, and leave there many a shining pool where the blue heaven shines, and sometimes a star.

And may the blessings of the earth be on you - the great round earth; may you ever have a kindly greeting for people you pass as you are going along the roads.

And now may the Lord bless you, and bless you kindly.

Parish Council Activities

St. Kevin, Val Therese



A Baby Shower by St. Kevin's CWL with Our Lady of Peace CWL, April 17, 2025

A baby shower was held for a single mother in need. The ladies enjoyed an afternoon of sharing, friendship, games and fun. A light lunch was enjoyed by all.



Painting Stones Workshop

Members of the parish and CWL members were invited to come out and paint stones with inspirational words or phrases. The ladies enjoyed an afternoon of creativity, fun, friendship and purpose. The painted stones were donated to The Elizabeth Centre LTC to provide wishes of love, caring, encouragement, support so that residents would know that they were not forgotten but in our hearts.



Pilgrimage to Martyrs Shrine, Midland for the Jubilee Year 2025

St. Kevin's CWL organized a Day Trip by bus to Martyrs' Shrine with Tiltsdale Bus Lines. The invitation was opened to Parishes in Sudbury and two French Parishes. We had people from 7 parishes join us. We said the Rosary on our way there and enjoyed a beautiful sunny day. We were welcomed by Fr. Ronald Perron who showed us a video, gave us a history of the Shrine and provided use of the confessional. We toured the grounds, followed the stations of the cross, viewed the interior of the shrine and took a group photo. Fr. Perron officiated a bilingual mass in the Chapel for our group. A member of our choir played harmonica and the group sang along on our way home.

Participants expressed an interest in going on another trip in the future to Sainte Marie among the Hurons.

- Mary-Catherine Tremblay, President



North Bay Councils

North Bay Regional Presidents and welcomed members on the Executive Committee. We gathered for a day of learning, caring and sharing around an Orange T-shirt in readiness to honor Indigenous people.

- Annette Dutrisac, North Bay Regional Chair



St. Francis of Assisi, Walford

I was honoured to present two service pins recently. Gail Withers received her 25-year Pin at our October meeting. Pat Shelp was presented with her 35-year Pin at mass on October 18. Of course, Father Ignatius is always ready for a photo op!

- Cheryl Phillips, President



Milestone Anniversary

St. Pius X CWL 60TH Anniversary

A beautiful celebration of St. Pius X CWL 60th anniversary was held on September 13, 2025.



Upcoming Events!

All our councils are constantly busy organizing, preparing and finalizing their upcoming gatherings. Check out our [diocesan website](#) and [facebook](#) to keep updated on all their upcoming events. Let's show our support for each other and plan to join in the activities.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.



Sault Ste. Marie Diocesan Council, Catholic Women's League of Canada