

October 30, 2024

October days were filled with CWL in-person or virtual meetings and parish activities. We were ready to tackle work assigned to us or to serve, still energized by recent League modifications. Our Living Faith (to try to live as Jesus lived), remains unchanged in almost 2000 years and is like a large wedge anchor that keeps a ship from drifting away because of strong winds or ocean currents.

In early November, we honor the lives of Saints and remember to pray for the souls of the faithful departed, especially our deceased family and friends. Then, on November 21, we celebrate the liturgical feast of the **Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, followed by the **Feast of Christ the King** on November 24, when “we will celebrate this glorious solemnity by increasing our faith through the mystery it rejoices in, and strengthen our determination to embrace the Kingship of Christ in our life. Through us, His Kingdom will become more present in the world all around us. “

I attended webinars on the **Synod on Synodality** organized by WUCWO, called the Voices and Faces at the Threshold of the Synod. On September 26, the multi-national panelists were predominantly women who were spirited advocates for women's leadership roles in the church. I was happy to see that one of them was Honorary Life Member, WUCWO Board Member for Canada, and Regional Vice President for North America, **Barb Dowding**. She said that “The Church can best support women in their leadership roles by promoting a culture of **active listening, open communication, and ongoing formation**.”

She followed that with, “For the future, members felt it was essential that the Church continues to promote the unique gifts of women, encouraging their participation at all levels, allowing them to take on more decision-making roles within the Church, and remaining open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in these endeavors”. She facilitated an interactive workshop on **Active Listening** (when you not only hear what someone is saying but are also aware of their thoughts and feelings) at the 2024 CWL National Convention in Saskatoon.

Pope Francis in his newly released encyclical, *Dilexit Nos* (He Loved Us), “calls on Catholics worldwide to rediscover the love and compassion found in the heart of Jesus Christ. The encyclical, issued on Oct. 24, **examines the transformative power of Jesus' heart as a font of healing for a divided world**”.

To prepare for the Birth of our Savior, it is suggested that parish councils organize **retreats** for its members but if that is not possible, a retreat by oneself in the quiet spaces of one's home can be just as good. A Christian retreat can be defined most simply “as a definite time (from a few hours to a month), spent away from one's normal life for the purpose of reconnecting, usually in prayer with God”.

Our homes and/or churches will soon look festive with **Advent Wreaths**, and they will remind us that “Christ is alive among us and that we must develop a life of grace, spiritual growth, and hope at Advent time. And, when Christ lives in our hearts, we are filled with His grace”. **“Grace is God’s Holy Spirit in us”**.

*Luke 1:26-28 – In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said,
“Hail, full of **grace**, the Lord is with you!”*