



Advent Communicator



Hope, Faith & Love



The Catholic Women's League of Canada BC & Yukon Provincial Council Newsletter

National Theme
Care for our Common Home

Provincial Theme
Witnessing to the Truth

Advent
Issue Number 42

"Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus" Luke 1:30

This publication is published twice a year and we welcome submissions from parish councils, diocesan councils, provincial council members and spiritual advisors. Articles may be submitted to: comm@bcyukoncwl.com and will be published on the BC & Yukon provincial website www.bcyukoncwl.com or by request to: info@bcyukoncwl.com

This publication is not intended to replace communiques or reports, but is to share our events, success stories and milestones, with our members and Councils throughout British Columbia and the Yukon Territory.

The deadline to submit articles for the Easter Issue Number 43 is March 8, 2021

*"This is the day the Lord has made
Let us Rejoice and be glad"*

Start gathering your news submissions now

Table of Contents

Title	Page
Message from the Provincial President	4
Conjunction of Jupiter & Saturn, Fr. David	5
2020's Papal Honour Roll	6
Greetings from the Victoria Diocesan President	7
What is Truth – A Reflection on <i>Fratelli Tutti</i> , Christa Grillmair	8
Reflection on Pope Francis' encyclical, Laura Esposito	9
Reflection from on Paragraph 230 <i>Fratelli Tutti</i> , Sharon Geiger	11
What are we doing to fill ourselves up?	13
Christmas Greetings to Me, from my friend in Ontario	15
Happenings from around the Province	16
Christmas Bedtime Story	24
Some Favourite Recipes from Kitchens around the Province	26
In closing	36

Message from the Provincial President

Advent 2020

My dear members of the Catholic Women's League of BC & Yukon, it gives me great pleasure to write to you today via the Communicator.

As I look back on my third year of office as president it has been such an unprecedented year for all of us, the whole world. Who could have known that our in-person meeting in March would have been the last one for this year? However, thanks to our virtual meetings/teleconferences we did "see" each other and were able to discuss/adapt our expectations and plans, considering new information and restrictions from national office and our Provincial Health Authority.

I am proud of all executive members (all serving in their third year as well) in how you have kept in touch with your membership in exceptional ways; be it by phone, letters, notes, or virtual meetings. This contact is so important, as human beings our need for each other is more evident in this pandemic.

I have attended many webinars that ordinarily I would not have been able to attend because of travel, time and cost. Many dioceses and Christian organizations are offering speakers and seminars online and I am thankful for that.

At our recent Advent Retreat, ably coordinated by Catherine L'Heureux and Father David John, we were able to reflect on Pope Francis' latest encyclical "Fratelli Tutti". Pope Francis quotes Saint Francis to give the start point for the encyclical; he selects a quote from St. Francis where he talks of a love that transcends the barriers of geography and distance and declares blessed all those who love their brother "as much when he is far away from him as when he is with him."

My appreciation goes out to Bishop Jensen, Christa Grillmair, Sharon Geiger, and Laura Esposito for sharing their personal thoughts on paragraphs from "Fratelli Tutti" that have touched them. For those that have not read the encyclical, I encourage you to do so, especially at this time of Advent. It was so appropriate to close our retreat with "*An Advent Reflection*" presented by Sylvia Jurys and Debbie Cloutier, taken from our national website, composed by Margaret Ann Jacobs who is now our National Past President.

As we journey through the season of Advent to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child, I thank God for all the blessings we have received and are receiving every day. May we always search for the truth and be his witnesses, embracing our provincial theme: "Witnessing to the Truth".

In his homily of the 1st Sunday of Advent Pope Francis stated:

"Having to be watchful, however, means it is now night. Yes, we are not living in broad daylight, but awaiting the dawn, amid darkness and weariness. The light of day will come when we shall be with the Lord. Let us not lose heart: the light of day will come, the shadows of night will be dispelled, and the Lord, who died for us on the cross, will arise to be our judge. Being watchful in expectation of his coming means not letting ourselves be overcome by discouragement. It is to live in hope."

Gisela Montague

Conjunction of Jupiter & Saturn

(Fr. David John, Spiritual Advisor)

***Matthew 2:2 Where is the child born king of the Jews?
For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him.”***

We do not know what astrological event the Magi saw that brought them to Bethlehem and the baby Jesus. Some have speculated that it was the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, or at least this might have been part of what the Magi saw.

In astrological terms, a ‘conjunction’ is when two objects in the sky appear to meet, that is, they appear in the same bit of the sky. After the sun and the moon, the two largest ‘stars’ in our sky are actually the planets Jupiter and Saturn. On occasions Jupiter and Saturn appear in exactly the same spot in the sky so look like they are just one star, but a very bright one. It has been calculated that this happened three times around 6 BC so, among others, Johannes Kepler as early as 1603 speculated that this might have been the astrological event that the Magi observed.

This conjunction occurs on average every twenty years or so, but there are years when the alignment is closer than others. Also, this conjunction often occurs when the two planets appear to be very close to the sun, so cannot be seen particularly well with the naked eye as they are only visible against a relatively bright sky. But this year, on Monday 21st December, the conjunction will occur, and it is the closest visual alignment since 1623. It will not appear particularly high in the sky, but it could be relatively bright.

To see it, as soon as the sky begins to get dark and stars first appear, look to the southwest. The brighter ‘star’ will be Jupiter and the dimmer one will be Saturn. But if you miss the event on the 21st look anyway as the two planets will be quite close for a number of days.

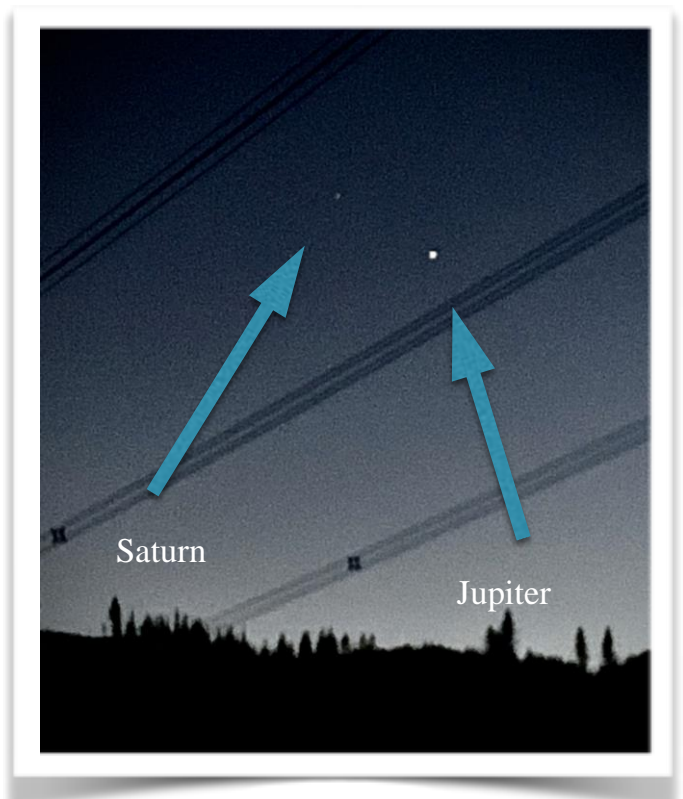
There is a storm coming to southern B.C. on Monday, but I think it would be wonderful to see what possibly the magi saw.

There is no magic in the stars, the wonder is the connectedness with the events we read about in Matthew’s gospel. So, as *you* look up, imagine how the Magi felt as *they* looked up and saw the same ‘star’; let your mind drift and imagine their excitement at the thought that this heralded the birth of a new king, and their wonderment at what this birth would mean. And put a little of this excitement and wonderment away to bring out again on Christmas Day!

I saw the two planets through the powerlines, and this is how they looked at 5:28pm on Thursday 3rd December; Jupiter is clear, but Saturn is very dim.

Merry Christmas to you all.

Fr. David



2020's Papal Honour Roll



There are two types of papal honours, one is the Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice medal, established by Pope Leo XIII in 1888 for distinguished service to the Church by lay people or clergy and the other is the Benemerenti medal, instituted by Pope Gregory XVI in 1832 for members of the military and civilians showing extraordinary courage. (Remember Evelyn's diocesan CWL theme of: Take Courage?) It was extended to those who go to great lengths in service to the Church. Archbishop J. Michael Miller presented the awards at three private ceremonies in October. The last time these awards were given was in 2016.

Among the twenty-one lay people and clergy that received the papal medals we are proud to find our Provincial Past President Evelyn Rigby. She was to receive the Benemerenti ("well deserving") medal at the St. John Paul II centre in Vancouver. But because of the COVID-19 pandemic Evelyn was unable to drive down to Vancouver and had asked me to pick it up for her. Of course, I agreed.



These are Evelyn's achievements that were listed in the BC Catholic, not to mention that she has been and still is a wonderful mentor to me.

"Evelyn Rigby is a Life Member of the Catholic Women's League of Canada. (Good PR for the CWL!) She served as Archdiocesan president of the League from 2007 to 2009 and as BC and Yukon Provincial President from 2016 to 2018.

In her parish of *Church of the Assumption* in Powell River she has been involved in welcoming two refugee families in the past five years, from Syria and the Congo.

She plays an important role in the Catholic Women's League's efforts to influence legislators by advocating for laws and policies based on Catholic social teaching. She has been a tireless defender of the unborn. She personally began the successful lobbying effort to convince the government of Canada to bring back Christian-themed postage stamps at Christmas."

Congratulations Evelyn for being a tireless worker in God's vineyard! We love you.

Gisela Montague
BC & Yukon Provincial Council
President

Greetings from the Victoria Diocesan President

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair ..."

Charles Dickens wrote this in 1859 but it could now be written about 2020. This year started out so hopeful. We held our diocesan spring meeting in Courtenay and the ladies at Christ the King spoiled us with their hospitality. What a lovely meeting it was as Father Alfie led us through a beautiful Lenten reflection, we participated in workshops and spent quality time with our sisters. We talked about our plans for our League's 100th Anniversary and looked forward to seeing each other again in April at the diocesan convention at Lake Cowichan.

When I attended the mid-March provincial executive meeting in Langley, we were somewhat aware that there was a virus. Near the end of the meeting, Bishop Gary called and asked me to cancel the diocesan convention. That's when reality hit, and I realized that this was a very serious issue and I self-isolated for 14 days when I returned home.

Bishop Gary then issued directives for attending Mass and parishes worked hard to establish protocols for sanitizing and contact tracing. All our CWL meetings and most community events were either cancelled or became virtual and words like social distancing, flattening the curve, herd immunity and self-quarantine became common expressions. We were encouraged to wear a mask and keep to our social bubble.

It took a lot to keep motivated. We had to come up with new ways to connect and on May 5th, we had our first Zoom call with our diocesan executive. Since then, the diocesan executive and parish council presidents have been meeting monthly on Zoom and each month more people feel confident to join us. Actually, one of the upsides of this pandemic is that we are now invited into each other's home, albeit virtually, and we are seeing each other more often. At our meetings, Father Alfie provides us with his wisdom, making our meetings spiritually enlightening and we do our best to share information and support each other. Our members keep in touch through newsletters, phone calls and emails and continue to look for ways to keep reaching out. Some have even started their own Zoom meetings.

It is now December and we're ten months into the pandemic and back to even stronger restrictions. Christmas is just around the corner and we can no longer attend church services or meet socially. For some, this is a very sad and lonely time, especially if family is far away. But there is a vaccine on the horizon, and I know that the "winter of despair" will lead to a "spring of hope".

Looking back, I am grateful for our health and for the many people who have adhered to wearing a mask, maintaining their distance and keeping their social circles small. But I am most grateful for you for giving me purpose, support and the encouragement to find new ways to keep going. I am so blessed to call you my sisters.

May Our Lord keep you healthy and safe and may He shine His light on you to guide you through the Christmas season. I look forward to 2021 and the many hugs I hope to collect from all of you. Merry Christmas!

With love and gratitude,

Christa Grillmair
Victoria Diocesan President



What is Truth – A Reflection on *Fratelli Tutti*

When I started reading Pope Francis' latest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* I didn't get much further than Chapter 1, when I read something that struck me:

Number 14 states: "One effective way to weaken historical consciousness, critical thinking, the struggle for justice and the processes of integration is to empty great words of their meaning or to manipulate them."

The word that has been greatly manipulated lately is the word truth. 'Alternate facts' and 'fake news' are expressions we hear daily. Rudy Giuliani, Donald Trump's lawyer said, "truth isn't truth". On an interview on Sixty Minutes, former President Obama said that "we are currently in a time of truth decay – not only do we not have to tell the truth, but the truth doesn't even matter."

In today's social media world, rumors can spread like wildfire and if the content is repeated often and gains many believers, it becomes the truth for them. If truth is not so much a property of thoughts and ideas but more of beliefs and assertions unique to that person, then why are we not spreading our Truth, or Good News?

This brought me to thinking about our provincial CWL theme, *Witnessing to the Truth*. In John 18:38, Pilate asked Jesus "So you are a king? Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" Pilate wasn't the first, or the last, to ask this.

St. Teresa of Avila said: "Truth suffers, but never dies."

The Bible defines truth as being utterly reliable and enduring. The reason is simple: authentic, biblical truth is linked to the dependable, unchanging character of God. You can trust everything He says, He never lies; He always keeps his Word; He is faithful to all his promises.

By this definition, we mean THE truth, something definite not vague. Jesus came to confirm the truth to those who are seeking for the truth. The Bible identifies truth not simply as the absence of lies but as a quality intrinsic to the very nature of God. Jesus not only spoke true words, He was and is, the ultimate expression of truth.

Pope Francis has called us to accept the consequences not only of the truths that are fundamental to our identity as Christians, but also of those truths that summon us to action.

By *Witnessing to the Truth*, we must be not only say that we are a Christian and follow Catholic rituals of prayer and devotion, but we may also have to accept a series of hard truths – truths that may require metanoia, a conversion, or as Pope Francis states, "a change of heart, attitudes, and lifestyles".

This is my challenge as I delve further into *Fratelli Tutti* and keep moving out of my comfort zone – for as Pope Francis says: "Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day." (11)

"Heavenly Father, you are the way, the truth, and the life. Give me wisdom today so that I can make good decisions. Help me to know the truth and share the truth with others. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen."

Christa Grillmair
Victoria Diocesan Council
President

Reflection on Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*

Paragraph 203 Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other's point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns. Based on their identity and experience, others have a contribution to make, and it is desirable that they should articulate their positions for the sake of a more fruitful public debate. When individuals or groups are consistent in their thinking, defend their values and convictions, and develop their arguments, this surely benefits society. Yet, this can only occur to the extent that there is genuine dialogue and openness to others. Indeed, "in a true spirit of dialogue, we grow in our ability to grasp the significance of what others say and do, even if we cannot accept it as our own conviction. In this way, it becomes possible to be frank and open about our beliefs, while continuing to discuss, to seek points of contact, and above all, to work and struggle together" (197) Public discussion, if it truly makes room for everyone and does not manipulate or conceal information, is a constant stimulus to a better grasp of the truth, or at least its more effective expression. It keeps different sectors from becoming complacent and self-centered in their outlook and their limited concerns. Let us not forget that "differences are creative; they create tension and in the resolution of tension lies humanity's progress". (198)

In my opinion - How many misunderstandings occur because we do not truly listen to what others are saying? How often have we been so eager to make our opinion known that we have not truly listened to or understood what others are trying to say? We need to slow down, in this fast-paced world of ours, and truly listen, with our whole mind, heart and soul. After careful contemplation and deliberation, our opinions can be stated respectfully. There will be times when we listen and hear something that we do not agree with. There is tension that comes in differences. How we deal with and resolve the tension creatively and respectfully is what will make or break the situation. When everyone agrees with everything we say, we feel good, but it can also create complacency. It is only when we are challenged to truly think about our beliefs, research our stance and are then ready to defend our opinions that we become so much stronger in our beliefs, better able to express ourselves clearly and defend our position. We need to listen and react as we would want others to listen to and react to us.

There are so many other ways to communicate than merely using words. Our body language speaks so loudly and so clearly – such things as rolling of the eyes (which I have so often spoken about to my students), crossing of the arms, our facial expressions etc. There are many ways to include or exclude others – women, men, people of other religions, people of other races, people of other socio-economic standing? What is our body language portraying to others? Do they feel respected and listened to? Are we showing that we are truly open to what they are saying?

How have our actions shown that we are concerned about and are helping those who cannot help themselves: the unborn, the poor, the elderly, migrants, refugees, immigrants? Have they felt our compassion and received our help? Sometimes, in certain circumstances the help that is needed is known, but not always. Did we ask those we were trying to help what help they would like, or did we impose what we thought they would need?

Authentic social dialogue is not only shown in how we deal with the human race. The animal kingdom and our precious Earth have been crying out to us for decades. Have we listened to the cry of animals as they lose their habitats? Why have so many poachers killed off elephants and the rhinoceros taking only their tusks or horns leaving the rest of the animal where it fell? Now, some subspecies of both these majestic creatures are close to extinction. It has been done in the search of the almighty dollar

and it is indeed big, big business. What have we done to preserve our dwindling rainforests? Why is it that so much that was arable land is now wasteland and desert? How can we reduce our carbon footprint and ensure that the resources we were provided in abundance with, will be here for generations to come?

Yes! We need to have authentic social dialogue on a number of different levels: with other animals and creatures with whom we share our common home; with the resources that are meant to be shared and used wisely, and with each other, especially each other, our brothers and sisters in Christ, whom we are meant to treat as if we are face to face with Christ. Do we truly see Christ in every person we meet? How will you and I ensure that our social dialogue is truly authentic at all these levels?

Laura Esposito
Secretary
BC & Yukon Provincial Council

Reflection from on Paragraph 230

Fratelli Tutti

I chose this paragraph because it really brought things home to me about my family at this time. As it says in the paragraph, families do not always agree on things.

At this time, I have not seen one family who live in Red Deer since September of 2019, two families since Christmas - one family in Calgary and the other in Saskatchewan and have only seen one family who lives in Kamloops twice during the summer and those were short “outside” visits here in Salmon Arm.

This is hard not seeing them, especially the grandchildren. On the upside we have all been in contact on WhatsApp messenger. They share pictures and videos as well as their frustrations. We have also talked on the phone. They may not always agree with each other or their parents, but I am sure proud of how they talk things out and make decisions. They listen to each other and help each other out where needed e.g. My son in Calgary found some kids masks for those in Red Deer and Carnduff. They have become closer because they are in contact with each other more now than when they would be able to visit. When they would visit the cousins love to be with each other?

In the paragraph the joys and sorrows of each family member are felt by all. Each one of them all takes on leadership roles in their families and the extended family. I know that right now, the grandchildren miss their grandparents a whole lot. We love them all very much unconditionally even when there are trials and tribulations and we have had many. I have had to learn let go and let God and that has not been easy. Prayer has been my strength.

I think about my parish family, and how well they are doing particularly at this time. I know they are finding it hard not being able to see each other and not knowing what to do. Parish families need God’s gift of hope among them.

Each member of our parish communities are children of God and they are brothers and sisters just like in an ordinary family. There needs to be deep listening and discernment about what to do. Everyone needs to do their part.

There needs to be service, reconciliation and forgiveness. To do this, members need to pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance on how to be there for each other. Members need to love unconditionally as well.

This takes us to our neighbours and our political opponents. If only we would be like our families and be filled with love and joy. We could be friendly to one another, forgive one another, enjoy peace and be happy with what we have and happy for what our neighbours have and not desire their fruitfulness. Wouldn’t it be great if there was so much love, peace would prevail?

Wouldn’t it be great if we could put aside our differences and build up the common good, have respect for each other and have social friendships?

During this current time, we need to be very caring and respectful of each other and show our love to all those around us in whatever way we can.

We need to pray to the Holy Spirit to give us the wisdom and understanding so that we can love all those around us no matter the situation.

Sharon Geiger
BC & Yukon Provincial Council
President-Elect and Organization

What are we doing to fill ourselves up?

What do we define as the hole in our life? In Mathew Kelly's Lenten messages*, he asks us to examine all the material things we feel we need and wonder why they do not fill that "hole" in our lives. He suggests that hole is called a "God Hole" and only God can fill it.

That message is not new we have heard versions of it since we were little children. Do you remember at Christmas how we waited anxiously for the Sears or Eaton's catalog, cutting out all the things we felt would fulfill our dreams? Our parents always reminding us about the "real meaning of Christmas" to give rather than receive. We listened but we still hoped on Christmas day all those gifts would somehow be there.

Nothing has changed except now days those things have gotten more expensive. Cars, houses, electronic devices all the devil's tools to tempt us. And **tempt** is the action word. The Devil always gives us the most compelling temptations. Ones we are most often unable to resist.

Food, Power and Eternity. These are the idols of our modern world. We lust for anything that temporarily fills that sad empty space. If I could only get that salary increase, or that new job title or that wonderful new car I would be so happy. These are empty wishes believe me. Once you have the salary increase you pay more taxes, once the promotion comes through you spend more time at work and less with your family. The car gets dented in a parking lot the first time you drive it. Poof the image of the perfect answer disappears but the hole remains.

But how do we avoid those worldly temptations that seem to be everywhere all the time. Are we looking seriously at how we can really fill that emptiness? If you are like me, a long-time shopaholic, this has been a lifelong battle.

When we feel the most lost is the time, we try even harder to fill that empty hole. My favourite saying "When the going gets tough the tough go shopping" was a mantra during my troubled early years. My closet has become a metaphor for my life. Each day I open that door and try to find what I am looking for all that "stuff" looms scary and overwhelming. I know this is an ongoing challenge because I have gone through this exercise many times in my long life always with the same results. After the clutter is removed there is peace and order and I know where my things are. This lasts until the next Sale and little by little I start filling the hangers and drawers again. We do the same with possessions of all kinds. Grandma's favourite tablecloth sets of china and crystal, beautiful items kept locked away for a once-a-year holiday dinner.

Purging things from our life seems to be brought on sometimes by momentous changes; moving and downsizing, death of a loved one, financial challenges something that pushes us in a new direction. To see what a big business this purging of clutter is just go onto Etsy, Craigslist and dozens of other re-sale websites dedicated to the recycling other excesses.

Sometimes things happen in our lives that wake us abruptly. 10 years ago, I had a major fall that left me crippled and unable to walk. For the six months, I sat in a wheelchair I asked God, if it is your will, I wanted to be able to walk again, without crutches, canes or walkers.

I found out God has a sense of humour. He knew I loved shoes. In fact, I had a beautiful collection of designer shoes that would have made Imelda Marcos proud. But after that accident I was told by the

Doctor I would walk again but the lovely shoes had to go! No more high heels and fancy boots. I went from shoe fashionista to fitted orthotic shoes and a leg brace that to this day have allowed me to function

in a new way without the vanity, I use to embrace. God granted me my prayer, but he also showed me how unnecessary all those shoes were and how necessary it was to change my priorities. That urge us to stuff ourselves with food, goods and worldly treasures has produced a secular society so far from God it is frightening.

Are we purging things from our souls and minds that clutter? Are we placing the same value on our heavenly treasure as we do all the things we store in lockers, sheds and basements? If we can answer Yes, we are along way to filling that empty hole.



Blessings
Sandi Digras
Ascension Parish Parksville

Christmas Greetings to me, from my friend in Ontario

T'was 2 weeks before Christmas, and all through the town,
people wore masks, that covered their frown.
The frown had begun way back in the spring
when a global pandemic changed everything.

They called it corona, but unlike the beer,
It didn't bring good times; it didn't bring cheer.
Airplanes were grounded, travel was banned.
Borders were closed across air, sea, and land.

As the world entered lockdown to flatten the curve,
the economy halted, and folks lost their nerve.
From March to July, we rode the first wave,
people stayed home, they tried to behave.

When summer emerged the lockdown was lifted,
but away from caution, many folks drifted.
Now it's December and cases are spiking,
wave two has arrived, much to our disliking.

It's true that this year has had sadness a-plenty,
we'll never forget the year 2020.
And just 'round the corner - The holiday season,
but why be merry? Is there even one reason?

To decorate the house and put up the tree,
who will see it, no one but me?
But outside my window, the snow gently falls,
(!) and I think to myself, let's deck the halls!

So, I gather the ribbon, the garland, and bows,
as I play those old carols, my happiness grows.
Christmas is not canceled, and neither is hope.
If we lean on each other, I know we can cope...

Merry Christmas!

Sylvia Jurys
Chairperson of Communications

Happenings from around the Province

Greeting and News from Christ the King Council Kitimat, B.C. “Keeping Positive & Busy”

And what a year it has been!

Since the March ‘lock down’ we have all been adjusting to so many changes throughout these last 10 months... it is hard to know whether one is coming or going.

And, I must admit, it has not been easy up here in the north, as our summer was ‘dreadful’ (for lack of a better word) and our fall and winter months brought lots of rain and cold, let alone the short, dark days...

But we are not complaining!

Each day, we make that mental list of all the blessing in our lives. So, what have we done here in Kitimat to keep the League going and to remain positive?? We promoted the League in a big way and were able to get 18 new members for 2020! That brings our total to 106 members!

Our goal was to get 100 members to celebrate the League’s 100th Anniversary. In the summer we very carefully planned a ‘social distancing dinner’ (which we had catered) to celebrate the League’s 100th Anniversary where we installed half of our new members. Then, a couple of months later we hosted a ‘Tea’ with only a few of the executive and installed the rest of the new members.



New Members, Marion Egan and Joanne Strecheniuk

Over the past month, we held an online “Christmas Market” where we were able to sell many new and used donated items from dolls to kitchen and house wares. (We made well over \$2,000.00)

At the end of November, we also put together a beautiful newsletter, which a few of us hand delivered to all our members.

To close off the year, we got together with the Knights of Columbus (one Knight and one CWL) and made homemade Lasagna for sale as a fund raiser. (Who does not want a couple of trays of homemade Lasagnas in their freezer to use over the Christmas Holiday?)



It was a bigger success that we had hoped for. Poor Frank Mauro and Maria Gutknecht did a lot more cooking than they had bargained for.

So, with that ... Kitimat Council wishes all the BC & Yukon Provincial Councils a

Wonderful, Blessed Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Sylvia DeSousa
Prince George Diocesan Council
President

Chocolates Anyone?



Sharon Geiger and Fr. Dale

A Year to Remember ...

It has been a challenging year. When COVID-19 hit and shut everything down, our Catholic Women's League Council here in Salmon Arm were in the process of finalizing our plans for our Diocesan Convention to be held here in St. Joseph's Parish. So, when everything came to a screeching halt, things for the convention were forgotten, including our famous chocolate making project. What was to be done with all that chocolate?!

With our major fundraisers cancelled, and Christmas around the corner - it was decided – make the chocolates, sell the chocolates! One member made all the chocolates, another made her recycled Christmas card boxes, orders were taken by another, and with advertising via poster, email and church bulletin, the final person organized payment and pick up as per COVID-19 protocols.

We may not be physically close, but we can still operate as a team. **Within a day and a half, all chocolates were sold!** Now this was not to make a lot of money, **the purpose was to give notice to our Parish family that the Catholic Women's League is still here** – working, serving and praying for God and Canada.

Did somebody say, Lead us not into temptation?

Linda Faust and Terry Mae Sinclair

Circle of Love – How we affirm it in Kamloops!



At the Kamloops Diocesan Fall meeting on October 24, held in Merritt BC, **Dorothy Hruby** received our diocesan executive 'Affirmation Award'.

This beautiful Circle of Love angel figurine was first presented in 2004 to Lorrilee Jordan. The award is passed on at each general meeting from one member of the diocesan executive to another who has personally inspired them. This includes all past presidents, Life members and parish presidents. Therefore, each recipient is the next presenter of the award, thus perpetuating the circle.

Dorothy, the past president of the Kamloops Diocesan council, was honoured to receive this award from Sonya Barrett, our current Christian Family Life Chair.

In her letter, Sonya thanked Dorothy for encouraging her to join the CWL, supporting and mentoring her as she became an active involved member taking on various leadership roles.

Sonya says Dorothy continues to be an inspiration and special friend.

*This is the second time that Dorothy has received this award! * Congratulations Dorothy!

Submitted by:
Terry-Mae Sinclair,
Kamloops Diocesan Council
Chairperson of Communications

Zoom Meetings are fun during COVID!

This screen shot is one of our Kamloops Diocesan 'zoom' meetings and while it is great to 'see' everyone this way – we all agreed that the camera did us no favours!



At this meeting we said 'Thanks and God Bless to Fr. Andrew L'Heureux, our outgoing spiritual advisor. The picture above is an image on the hoodie we gave Fr. Andrew which incorporates our Diocesan Theme and Fr. Andrew's connection with his phone and God. Had we done this at an in-person meeting – a skit would have accompanied the gift, along with many hugs! However, these times help us appreciate the blessings we have and the ability to share through technology.

Happy Blessed Advent and a Very Merry Christmas to all – may the Joy of the Season fill every heart!

Terry Mae Sinclair,
Kamloops Diocesan Council
Chairperson of Communications

News from St. Patrick's Maple Ridge Council



Every Saturday, about a dozen of our members gather by Zoom to say the Rosary. On October 3 we met on the parish lawn and had a physically distanced picnic after saying the Rosary. Our president, Joanne Prawdzik, also presented service pins to Margaret Herod for 50 years, Suzanne Eng for 25 years and Anna Pacella for 15 years of service to the league.

Father Mathew To, our Spiritual Advisor, stopped by and commended us for our adherence to social distancing and mask-wearing rules. He says the Knights of Columbus are not as obedient!

After the pin ceremony, we took a group photo in front of Our Lady's Grotto of all of us with our masks and our Convention shawls.

We are hoping to hold a similar picnic in January (weather permitting) for our in-person AGM.

Suzanne Eng
BC & Yukon Provincial Council
Treasurer

Kamloops Diocesan Fall “*Social Distance*” Meeting



On October 24, our Kamloops Diocesan fall meeting was hosted by Sacred Heart CWL council in Merritt BC members were blessed to attend Mass prior to the meeting.

Our hosts ensured COVID protocols were followed with each member bringing a bagged lunch, lots of hand sanitizer and maintaining social distance throughout, it was all worth it to ‘see’ everyone in person!

Although we were a small group, (*12 just like the apostles*) we were passionate and on fire as we shared news from councils and updates on the National Strategic Plan - including the new Welcome Program! Notice our ‘angel arms’ in the picture (*showing social distancing*) and the lovely Pashmina scarf's.

The pashminas are a beautiful gift idea and a great way to support our fundraiser for the National Convention to be held in Kelowna BC in 2022! Our Diocesan President, Diane Nadeau, took the photo - but there she is in the picture (*bottom right corner*) - oh technology!

Terry Mae Sinclair
Kamloops Diocesan Council
Chairperson of Communications

“A Step at a Time” on Vancouver Island!



Members from Sacred Heart and St. Joseph's Councils in Victoria

The process of honouring and celebrating 100 years of the presence of the National Catholic Women's League by planting a tree, progressed for the Sacred Heart Catholic Women's League Council a step at a time.

By the third expression of intention at three different meetings, the members, on September 5, approved the funding of the planting of a centenary tree. Members are willing to take care of the tree, by keeping it pruned and fertilized. The next debate was about the kind of tree; it was a difficult choice, given how many beautiful trees that there are to choose from.

What kind of tree? How? Where? A reading of the day from Matthew spoke of the man who climbed a fig tree in order to be able to just see Jesus. We rethought our choice of an apple tree, and the consensus was for a fig tree – although it would require fencing around it to protect it from the deer. On October 3, we celebrated the blessing of the fig tree at Mass, with our sisters from Saint Joseph's CWL Council.

The next step is the planting. Our parishioners will generously fund the clearing of an area overrun by invasive plant species. Our Centenary tree could become part of the parish plans for an outdoor *Stations of the Cross*. Our President, Miriam Podmoroff, nurtures our choice until it can be planted.

The centenary fig tree will add to the natural beauty of the parish grounds. We will also be honoring our members throughout the years of our presence in the parish since December 5, 1940.

Kathy Weswick
BC & Yukon Council
Chairperson of Education & Health

Christmas Bedtime Story

What the Dog said before Christmas by Gerry Heyward

Mattie sat at a table with her Grandma. Both were enjoying a glass of milk and a snack. "Grandma" Mattie said, "Do you know any Christmas stories? You, know; the first Christmas?" Grandma thought for a moment and then said, "You know animals get to talk on Christmas eve, don't you? At least, that's the legend. I don't know if it's true or not but that's how the story goes. "That's silly, Grandma! How can animals talk?" "Well,

"Grandma said, "a long time ago, so the story says, when Mary and Joseph were looking for a room to stay in on that first Christmas Eve, everyone told them to go somewhere else. All the rooms were filled up. There was no room at the inn. But. . . Someone told the animals in the barn that Mary and Joseph needed somewhere safe and warm so that baby Jesus could be born. All the animals, the chickens, the sheep, an old horse all agreed that they should invite Mary and Joseph to stay in their home."

"Oh, Grandma, that's not a home. That's a barn!" "Well, yes, that's what we call it but to the animals, that was their home. Anyway, they invited the family to stay with them so that's what Mary and Joseph and later that night, baby Jesus did. That's where the shepherds and angels went to see baby Jesus. So, because that was so nice of the animals to share their home with baby Jesus and his family, the animals were give a special gift: each Christmas eve from midnight to 1:00 in the morning, animals can talk to each other. At least, that's what the legend says." "Oh, Grandma, is that true? Can they really talk?" "Well, I don't really know. I'm usually asleep at that time. But that's how the legend goes." "Grandma, can you stay up and see if they really do talk? I'm supposed to go to sleep when I go to bed." "I'll try Mattie, but I could be asleep then, too."

CHRISTMAS DAY Mattie, her mom and dad and all the family were at Grandma's house for Christmas dinner. Everyone was talking and enjoying being with each other as they waited for dinner to start. "Grandma ", Mattie asked, "did you hear the animals last night? Did they really talk?" "Well, I think I heard something. I can't say for sure if I really heard the dogs talking or if I just dreamed it. It was really late. It was coming up to 1 o'clock and that's when the talking is supposed to end." "What did they say? Did Rosie and Duncan really talk?" "I guess the noise woke me up. They were arguing like crazy. Rosie is a very old dog, you know, and thinks she's in charge of everything.

She was really upset with Duncan about something." WHAT GRANDMA HEARD As I said, I woke up and went into the living room where the dogs were arguing. Rosie was quite angry with Duncan. "Why did you go and open up our Christmas present? Now we won't have a present when the family gets up and opens theirs! And to top it all off, you went ahead and ate your gift!" Rosie snapped. "You told me to. You showed me where our present was, and you told me to reach up and get it off the counter." (Duncan is a really large Labrador who can reach most things in the house.) Rosie was one of those kinds of people or dog that you really can't argue with. They always have an answer. "Yah, but you didn't have to do what I said. If I told you to go out and do something stupid like chase cars, would you do it?" "But you said to get the present and besides, you ate yours, too." "Well, now we have nothing." Duncan thought about that and said, "That's not true. We have each other."

Rosie calmed down to think about and then replied, "Yes, we do. We do have each other. Oh, oh! Look at the clock! It's almost 1 o'clock. I love you, Duncan." "I love you, too, Rosie. Merry Christmas!" "Merry

Christmas to you, too, Duncan “. And as they kissed, the ummmm turned into “woof”. I have to tell you, Mattie, I was crying because that last part was so beautiful.

” WHAT MATTIE SAID “Ahh, Grandma, dogs really don’t talk.” “I told you, Mattie, I wasn’t sure if I really heard that or if I was dreaming. At any rate, that’s the legend. Let’s go into the kitchen and see what’s happening with dinner.” Mattie took her Grandma’s hand and they walked into the kitchen.

Auntie Marilyn was just taking the turkey out of the oven so the two of them went over to stand in the corner out of the way. Mattie realized she was standing on something and looked down and was startled to see chewed up wrapping paper and a few dog biscuit crumbs. She looked up at her Grandmother and gave her a great big smile.

Reproduced by permission of “Grandma Says Stories”

Gerry Heyward
Victoria Diocesan Council
Chairperson of Communications

Some of our Favourite Recipes from Kitchens around the Province

Almond Tarts

12 Pastry tart shells

Filling:

½ cup	Sugar
1/3 c.	Butter
2	Eggs
2/3 cup	Ground almonds
1 tsp.	Almond flavouring
	Raspberry jelly

Method

- Cream sugar and butter till light and fluffy
- Add eggs, one at a time and beat
- Add ground almonds and flavouring.
- Place a half teaspoon raspberry jelly in each tart shell.
- Fill three quarters full with the almond filling
- Bake 325 degrees for 20 – 30 minutes.

Makes 12 tarts

Enjoy!

Kathy Weswick

Better than Everything Dessert

Make a day ahead or at least 4 hours before serving (use a 9 by 13 glass dish).

1 cup	All purpose flour
½ cup	Margarine
½ cup	Chopped nuts
2 large	Chocolate instant pudding mix
3 cups	Homo Milk
1L	Cool Whip
1 cup	Icing sugar
8 oz.	Cream cheese

Method

- Step #1:** Mix together flour, margarine and nuts. Press into bottom of baking dish and bake 15 minutes at 350 degrees F and cool.
- Step #2:** Blend cream cheese with 1/2 of the Cool Whip. Add icing sugar. Spread on cooled crust.
- Step #3:** Mix together puddings and milk. Let firm and spread on above mixture.
- Step #4:** Spread rest of Cool Whip on top of pudding. Top with chocolate curls and nuts, Store in fridge until ready to serve. This dessert freezes well too.

Enjoy!

Sharon Geiger

Easy Layer Chocolate Coconut Cookies

½ cup	Butter or margarine
1 1/2 cups	Graham cracker crumbs
1 cup (3½oz).	Flaked coconut
1 package (6oz)	Chocolate chips
1 cup	Walnuts
1 can (14oz)	Sweetened condensed milk

Method:

- Preheat oven 375F
- Melt butter in 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking pan
- Layer each of the remaining ingredients over butter (do not mix).
- Bake 25 minutes cool pan on rack. Cut in small squares.

Makes 48.

Enjoy

Sharon Geiger

Chicken Monterey

Makes 4 – 8 servings

- 4 Whole chicken breasts (skinless/boneless) – pounded to ½ inch thick.
(Once pounded down, this will give a smaller eight servings if cut in half, or four large servings if left whole.
Sprinkle with salt and pepper and lightly dust with flour.
- 3 tbsp Butter

Topping

- ½ cup chopped onion
2 cloves garlic (minced)
8 large mushrooms (cut up very small)
2 Tbsp flour
½ tsp celery salt
½ tsp pepper
½ cup chicken stock
½ cup white wine
1 avocado mashed
1 ½ cup grated Monterey Jack cheese, divided into 1 cup and 1/2 cup

Method:

Preheat oven to 350F

- Melt butter and sauté chicken. Remove chicken and put aside.
- Add onion, garlic, and mushrooms to the pan (add more butter if needed) and cook for about 5 minutes.
- Stir in flour, celery salt, chicken stock, wine.
- Cook until thickened (about 4 – 5 minutes)
- Stir in mashed avocado and ½ cup of Monterey cheese.
- Put breasts in 13 x 9 baking dish.
- Put the avocado sauce on top.
- Sprinkle remaining cheese on top.

Bake 10 – 15 minutes.

Serve with rice, salad and vegetable sides of your choice. Wonderful dinner!!

Enjoy!!

Submitted by Laura Esposito

Laura's Minestrone Soup

Minestrone means a big thick soup in Italian. Some people put meat in theirs, but I find this a very filling soup with the two or three types of beans used. My mom used to make many variations of minestrone, depending on what vegetables were fresh in the garden. Having little space for a garden, I buy most of my ingredients. This is the combination like the most. I hope you enjoy it.

Ingredients: (Amounts can vary as with most soups)

1- 2	large onion(s)
1	796 ml can crushed tomatoes
4 cups	or so of water
3	Potatoes (2 whole and 1 cubed)
3	Carrots chopped
3 – 4	Stalks of celery chopped
2	Red or Green peppers or combination
4	Zucchini cut small
2 cans	Green beans
2 cans	Kidney, Romano or Pinto beans (I prefer Pinto and Romano)
Salt	To taste
pepper	To taste
2 – 3 tbsp	Each of dried parsley, basil and oregano
1 bag	Fresh spinach or the same amount of swiss chard or other leaf green, chopped
2 -3	Cloves of garlic (optional)

Method:

In a large pot, put about 2 tbsp of oil or whatever amount will help sauté the onion. Sauté the onion (and the garlic if adding it) and add the can of crushed tomatoes. Add the 4 cups of water to this. This is the base of your soup. Let this boil for about 5 minutes.

Put in the whole potatoes and leave them in the soup until fork tender. Then take them out of the soup and mash them (just on their own), then put aside. (These will act as a thickener later).

Add the other vegetables to the soup in this order: carrots, celery, peppers, diced potato and zucchini. Let this boil for about 5 - 10 minutes or until the vegetables are almost cooked.

Add the three herbs, the salt and pepper to taste.

(With this soup, I do not add salt as the canned beans have it as a preservative and because I love lots of parmesan cheese in it, I need little to no salt)

Add the greens (Spinach or swiss chard) and cook for a short time – 2 – 3 minutes. Add the green beans and canned beans and let them cook up for a short time. (again about 2 – 3 minutes)

Last add the mashed potatoes and let them meld with the rest of the soup for about 3 minutes. Let the soup rest before you serve it with lots of parmesan cheese. Yum! Makes a fairly large pot.

I like this soup better on the 2nd or subsequent days as the flavors seem to meld with each other more.

A great soup to freeze and pull out when you want it.

The amounts are really give-and-take as they are in many soups. Also try different variations of veggies.

I hope you enjoy this.

Buon appetite!

Laura Esposito



Cranberry Almond Biscotti

Ingredients

2 1/4 cups	All-purpose flour
1 cup	White sugar
1 tsp	Baking powder
1/2 tsp	Baking soda
2	Eggs
2	Egg whites
1 tbsp	Vanilla extract or almond extract or a little of both
3/4 cup	Slivered almonds
1 cup	Dried cranberries

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (170 degrees C)
2. Combine dry ingredients in a medium sized mixing bowl. Whisk together eggs, egg whites, and vanilla or almond extract in a separate mixing bowl.
3. Add egg mixture to dry ingredients, mixing just until moist, using an electric mixer on medium speed. Add dry cranberries and almonds; mix thoroughly.
4. On floured surface, divide batter in half and pat each half into a log approximately 14 inches long and 1 1/2 inches thick. Place on a cookie sheet and bake 30 minutes or until firm. Cool on a wire rack about 10 minutes, or until cool enough to handle.
5. Cut biscotti on the diagonal into 1/2-inch slices. Reduce oven temperature to 300 degrees F (150 degrees C). Place cut biscotti upright on a cookie sheet, spacing them about an inch apart and bake for an additional 20 minutes. Let cool and store in a loosely covered container.

One of my favorite Christmas biscotti but I love these year-round with coffee.

Submitted by Laura Esposito

Lemon Raisin Slices

2/3 c.	Soft shortening
2 c.	All-purpose flour
1	Egg
1 tsp.	Baking powder
¼ tsp	Baking soda
¼ tsp	Salt
1 cup	Sugar
½ tsp	Cinnamon
2 tbsp.	Lemon juice
1-1/2 cup	Walnuts, finely chopped
1-1/2 cup	Raisins, chopped
2 tsp.	Grated lemon rind

Method

- Beat shortening, egg, and sugar until fluffy.
- Add lemon juice and beat.
- Sift in dry ingredients and mix until well blended.
- Add walnuts, raisins, and lemon rind, mix well.
- Shape into 2 rolls, 1 and a half inches in diameter
- Wrap in wax paper and chill
- Cut into quarter inch slices and place on lightly greased cookie sheets, (sprinkle with sugar)
- Bake 375 degrees, for 12 – 15 minutes until golden brown

Kathy Weswick

Almond Biscotti

1 ¾	Cups all purpose flour
2 tsp	Baking powder
¾ cup	Whole, unblanched almonds
1/3 cup	Butter or margarine, melted
¾ cup	Sugar
2	Eggs
2 tsp	vanilla
½ tsp	Almond extract
1 ½ tsp	Orange zest
1	Egg white, slightly beaten

Method:

Preheat oven to 350 F.

- In a large bowl, mix flour, baking powder and almonds. Set aside.
- Whisk together the butter, sugar, eggs, vanilla, flavourings and orange zest.
- Whisk liquid mixture into dry ingredients to form a soft, sticky dough.
- Turn dough out onto a lightly floured work surface. Knead lightly 5 or six times.
- Separate the dough into two balls, then roll each ball into a flat log about 12 inches long.
- Place both logs on parchment-lined baking sheet. Brush with egg white.

Bake for 20 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool for 5 minutes. Meanwhile reduce oven heat to 325 F.

On a wooden cutting board, with a sharp knife, cut each log into ¾ inch slices on the diagonal. Return slices to the cookie sheet, standing them up with space between each slice. Bake for another 25 minutes at 325 F until golden & Crunchy.

VARIATION: Reduce flour to 1 ½ cups and add ½ cup cocoa powder. Replace almonds with hazelnuts. Omit almond extract.

This is a family favourite in my house for any time of the year, but especially at Christmas.

Suzanne Eng

Caramel Nut Tart

Sweet Pastry:

12 oz	All-purpose flour
6 oz.	Unsalted butter, cubed
2 tbsp.	Sugar
¼ cup	Ice water

Method:

- Combine flour and sugar.
- Work in cubed butter (you can do this in a food processor (I do!) or use a pastry comb) until it looks like coarse meal.
- Add ¼ cup cold water and mix only until the pastry comes together when squeezed in your hand. Add more water a little at a time until you get the right consistency.
- Form into a flattened ball, wrap with plastic film. Let the pastry rest for 30 minutes.
- Fit the pastry in a 14" fluted pan with a removable bottom, dock with a fork.
- Line with pan parchment paper and fill with dry beans. Chill for 30 minutes.
- Bake the tart shell in 375F convection oven for 15 minutes.
- Remove the dry beans and parchment paper, brush with egg wash (Beat together 1 egg and 2 tbsp water and strain through a fine sieve).
- Turn oven down to 350F
- Return the tart shell to the oven for 5 minutes; bake until lightly browned. Remove from the oven.

Filling:

1 cup	Brown Sugar
½ cup	Honey
½ cup	Unsalted butter

In a large pan, bring the above ingredients to a boil and boil for 2 minutes.

1-1/2 cup	Pecans, coarsely chopped
1-1/2 cup	Walnut halves, coarsely chopped
½ cup	Whipping cream

Add the chopped nuts and the cream to the sugar mixture and boil for 1 minute more.

Pour the nut mixture into the tart shell and bake at 350F for 30 minutes. Cool on a rack to room temperature.

Drizzle the top with dark chocolate if desired – oh what the heck – just do it!

Enjoy!

Sylvia Jurys

In Closing

On behalf of the BC & Yukon Council, we extend our thanks to all the contributors of this issue of the *Communicator* and for your invaluable work and dedication to the Catholic Women's League of Canada.

To be honest, I was worried that during this mentally and physically challenging pandemic that we may be short of news. But as you can see the contents of this issue, albeit after a few nudges, you came through with flying colours. Thank you so much each and everyone of you. Virtual hugs to you all!

With the restrictions imposed with the pandemic, we are lost and lonely without our relatives and friends. I received the following video from a friend and thought of you, and how I miss my sisters in the League. It brought tears to my eyes ... get the tissues out:



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473431.mp4

Hold the ctrl down and click on the arrow with your mouse at the same time, when it opens, click on the arrow and it should begin to play.

As we come to the end of this year and slide cautiously into 2021, we hope and pray that we can celebrate the 101st anniversary, and many more anniversaries of the League, together.

With our good wishes for this Christmas that is full of friendship, joy, peace and love in the presence of the Christ Child.

Sylvia Jurys
Chairperson of Communications