



# Advent Communicator



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 40

*"Come with me to a quiet place and rest awhile, Mark 6:31*

This publication is published twice a year and we welcome submissions from parish, diocesan, provincial council members, and spiritual advisors. Articles may be submitted to: [comm@bcyukoncwl.com](mailto:comm@bcyukoncwl.com) and will be published on the BC & Yukon provincial website [www.bcyukoncwl.com](http://www.bcyukoncwl.com) or by request to: [info@bcyukoncwl.com](mailto: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 throughout British Columbia and the Yukon Territory.

***The deadline to submit articles for the Easter Issue Number 41 is April 5, 2020***

*"I have seen the Lord"*

***Start gathering your news submissions now***

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## My Christmas Prayer for You

### A Big Plateful of Love

Christmas is on its way and there is nothing we can do about it. Indeed, by the time you read this you might already be suffering from a bit of Christmas-fatigue!

In my experience, some people love Christmas, and some find it more of a struggle. My Mum-in-England fell into the latter category, or at least, she sometimes chose to give the impression that she didn't like Christmas that much.

She would say that it was a time when everyone would eat too much and the burden of providing all this food would fall squarely on the shoulders of the 'Mums' of this world. And indeed, she certainly did work incredibly hard at Christmas, not only with the food but making sure that we had all the trimmings that go with our celebrations on Christmas Day.

Yet I also know that Christmas was a season when Mum got to spend more time with her kids and grandkids, and this was a real joy for her. There was nothing she loved as much as having us all there together. She loved seeing us all, but particularly she loved seeing us together and interacting with one another; I suppose what she loved most was seeing us as a family. And what did she do when we all arrived at her house? Yes, she offered us lots of food, and more than that, food she knew we would really like. And I have to say, the amount of food provided could only be described as "too much"!

I think that intellectually Mum didn't like the concept of excessive consumption; having been brought up in a financially impoverished home meant that she had a very careful, prudent approach to life and extravagance didn't come easily to her. Yet all this giving of food to us at Christmas was for Mum a symbol of her love for us, and her love was something she wanted to give in abundance.

So with all this in mind, my seasonal prayer for you is this: that, in some way, this Christmas you will be able to experience a profusion of love, and through our many and rich traditions of Christmas – *culinary or otherwise* – we will all be able to share a copiously filled plateful of love along with all the trimmings.

Fr. David John  
Spiritual Advisor

## The Passing of Fr. David's Dog, Ranga

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*Ranga, you were a good and loyal companion*

In November my dog, Ranga, became ill and in early December had to be put down. Ranga was a very big part of my life because she went everywhere with me. Twenty-four hours a day she was either with me or waiting in the car. And from her point of view, she expected to be with me whatever I was doing. So much so that she was very involved in many parish events, particularly if they involved food, not to mention a regular visitor to Provincial CWL Executive meetings. She had a great charm.

In early December she had an X-ray that showed she had a number of lumps that were putting pressure on, among other places, her throat. She started to have difficulty breathing as well as eating.

The day after this diagnosis I got a late-night call to the hospital for the death of a newborn baby. This baby, Maria, had multiple problems so clearly wasn't going to be able to live. She was the first child for her parents. It is hard to think of a more difficult situation for a young couple. By chance the lead nurse that night was about halfway through her own pregnancy, so for her and all the medical staff, this was not an emergency from which they could be emotionally detached. While they were superbly professional, you could tell that they were putting more of themselves into this than normal because their hearts were so moved.

At the same time there was a much-loved parishioner who was 96 years old who also was struggling and eventually slipped away very peacefully. She had been involved in the parish all her life and she had been at Mass ten days before she died. She had not only been anointed, but she had talk through with me and with her family what she thought about dying and what she wanted (and didn't want) at her funeral.

So, three 'passings', and each with its own dynamics.

I recount this not to shock or to try to evoke sympathy. I am sure that many in the CWL will be faced by similar pastoral challenges as they show love and care for fellow CWL members and for the wider parish, and indeed, often family life can produce the same sort of contrasting situations. I mention this because for me this was a little window on the end of life, in three very different presentations. Each was unique, and each involved pain to those who were left behind.

Ranga lived her life knowing that she had to fit in with the needs of the parish, and her last week was no exception. And I am sure she was happy with this. It was just that for me the interactions of these three events produced a lot of food for thought. And in the midst of this, while for Ranga her last walk was so normal, for me it was heart wrenching, as was holding dear baby Maria or seeing the loss on the face of the daughter who had just lost her noble mother.

For all of us, CWL member or priest, the point we will need sympathy is when we stop feeling cut-up at these events.

## ***Ode to Her Last Walk***

For her last walk we have come to her favourite place.  
During the summer she would run down here  
and stand waist deep in the river.  
Now the river is mostly frozen, and it offers her no drink.

As we turn back  
I see the two sets of footprints that we made in the snow; mine straight,  
hers going from one side to the other,  
from one smell to another.  
And all these scents were so interesting,  
in such need of investigation.

In this deserted place a truck drives past  
and the driver waves at the person walking their dog.  
Would he have waved if it had been just a person walking?

She is wheezing now but she is not giving up.  
Even at the car she finds just one more thing to smell.

Then, with a bit of help, she is in the car and the door shuts.

Her last walk.

## ***Ranga***

**Pope Francis recently released his FASTING suggestions for Christians around the world:**

1. Fast from hurting words and say **kind words**.
2. Fast from sadness and be filled with **gratitude**.
3. Fast from anger and be filled with **patience**.
4. Fast from pessimism and be filled with **hope**.
5. Fast from worries and **trust** in God.
6. Fast from complaints and contemplate **simplicity**.
7. Fast from pressures and be **prayerful**.
8. Fast from bitterness and fill your heart with **joy**.
9. Fast from selfishness and be **compassionate** to others.
10. Fast from grudges and be **reconciled**.
11. Fast from words and be silent so you can **listen**.



# Message from the Provincial President

Advent 2019

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 second year of office as president it has been so rewarding to see the national strategic plan come to fruition as it ventures into the implementation year 1 goals. I am so proud that many members of our province have stepped forward to serve and for this I am very grateful.

In August, many of us experienced another great national convention in Calgary. It was very exciting for me to be with my sisters from the national council who are so talented and full of energy and enthusiasm in their respective standing committee work. Fran Lucas brought the delegates to their feet as she filled the room with excitement with as she acknowledged the vision of the league.

Once again in October we gathered for our fall meeting in Kelowna at Seton House of Prayer a property owned by the Diocese that hosts retreats and workshops. The house is nestled in the hills and overlooks Lake Okanagan. It has outdoor Stations of the Cross, an altar where holy Mass is said is said in the summer. Deer roam the grounds oblivious to the humans and chipmunks scurry in and out of crevices chasing each other, we were well entertained!

We experienced beautiful weather and held prayers, recited the Rosary and did the Stations of the Cross outside. including Father David's spiritual presentation, joined by his friendly black Lab called Ranga.

I am grateful that all officers were able to attend, the agenda was full, and participation was lively. Catherine L'Heureux, Spiritual Development Chair always delivers a wonderful program and this year she made us step out of our comfort zone and back to our childhood by colouring the liturgical program booklet. We have some talented artists but some of us not so much!

While there we were reminded of this year's national theme "Care for our Common Home – Water; the retreat house had a boil water advisory, so we were brought to a full awareness of how precious water is. It is amazing what we can do to save water if we put our minds to it.

As journey through 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 new provincial theme: "Witnessing to the Truth".

I wish you and your families a blessed Advent Season and a joyful Christmas.

Gisela Montague  
President, BC & Yukon Provincial Council

A few pictures from our wonderful weekend at Seton House of Prayer, Kelowna



Morning Glory!



BC & Yukon Council Members



Sheila Doherty, Chairperson of Legislation, Diane Nadeau, Kamloops Diocesan President, Catherine L'Heureux, Chairperson of Spiritual Development, Sharon Geiger, President-elect



BC & Yukon Provincial Council Diocesan Presidents and Catherine L'Heureux





Fr. David John, Spiritual Director



Greetings from the Diocese of Victoria Diocesan President

May the light of Christ bring you joy,  
hope and peace this Christmas.

In the weeks before Christmas we tend to live in a “Martha” world full of activities as we do all the things we need to do. We are busy and have little time to reflect on the true reason for the celebration. But we need to. A wise person recently told me that the only thing that is truly mine is time. What I do with it is up to me. He asked me to pick a number. So, I did and those are the minutes I now dedicate to be like Mary and to sit at our Lord’s feet and just listen. I don’t talk; I just sit quietly and listen. I’m amazed at what I hear! I pray that you also take some time to just ‘be’ with our Lord.

May the wonder of His birth fill your heart with joy, and may His light continue to shine within you now and all through the year.

Wishing you and your loved ones, a blessed Christmas.

Christa Grilmair

## Holy Innocents – then and now

As Christians all over the world prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the founder of Christianity, we remember the Mothers of Bethlehem who witnessed the slaughter of their children. King Herod saw them as a threat to his own position and power after he met with Magi who spoke of the imminent birth of a new King in Israel. He ordered the massacre of all boys aged two years and under. Society rightly condemned that barbaric slaughter which took place about 2000 years ago. In today's civilized society such cruelty to innocent children would never be tolerated – or would it?

In this modern age, millions of innocent children have perished through war, starvation, neglect and sexual exploitation. Not content with this destruction of young life, we allow thousands of unborn children to be killed in our hospitals each year.

When we kneel before the Christ Child in the manger this Christmas, let us remember the Holy Innocents and pray for women who are thinking of having an abortion, that they may change their minds and rejoice in the gift of a new life.

Margaret Beardon

## A Gift List Anyone Can Afford

1. The Gift of Listening: Psychologists tell us that one of the greatest things we can do for another is to listen. Why not give this valuable gift to those people on your list who live alone and have no one to talk to? This means you must really listen. No interrupting, no daydreaming, no walking away, no planning your response. Just Listen!
2. The Gift of Signs of Affection: Take the time to give your loved one's signs of affection. Be generous with your hugs, your kisses, your gentle squeezing of the hand, your pats on the back. Let these tiny actions demonstrate the great love you have inside you.
3. The Gift of a Note: Write notes to your loved ones. They can be as simple as "I love you" or as creative as a sonnet. Put your notes where they will surprise those special people, in his lunch, in her purse, among his socks, on her pantry shelf. Though the notes may be a surprise, the message will not.
4. The Gift of Laughter: Everyone loves to laugh. Give those you love this gift. Just cut out a cartoon, clip a joke, copy a riddle, save a clever article. Your gift will say: "I love to laugh with you".
5. The Gift of a Game: Most people have at least one game they like to play, whether it be tennis or golf, poker, chess or checkers. Offer to play your loved one's favourite game with him or her. Even if you lose, you'll be a winner, because together you will have shared an experience.
6. The Gift of Doing a Favour: Do favours for those special people on your list. Help with the dishes, type up that letter, clean out the basement, mow the lawn, run to the store. This gift made more valuable when it anticipates a request rather than when it responds to one.
7. The Gift of Cheerful Disposition: Try to be cheerful around those you love. That means no complaining, no feeling sorry for yourself, no nasty comments, no screaming, no pessimistic predictions. Your gift of cheerfulness will be a precious gift for everyone – including yourself.
8. The Gift of Being Left Alone: There are times in our lives when we want nothing better than to be left alone. Become more sensitive to those times in other's lives. Then respond generously by giving them the gift of solitude, of privacy, of "do not disturb", or being left alone.
9. The Gift of Compliment: Pay your loved one's compliments. A simple "You look good in blue" or "I like your hair that way" or "Good supper, Honey" can be of immense value to people who may feel they are being taken for granted.

10. The Gift of Prayer: Let's not forget one of the most immaterial yet valuable gifts we can give: the gift of prayer. Pray for those people on your Christmas shopping list and let them know that you pray for them. Praying for someone is another way of saying "You are so special to me that I often talk to God about you".

Blanca Stead  
BC & Yukon Provincial Council  
Chairperson of Community Life



## **Rough Day?**

The day starts when you hit the snooze button once too often. Then you discover that you forgot to set up your automatic coffee maker last night.... And so it goes. You are having a “Rough Day”. But, does the day have to continue that way? Not necessarily. Maybe God is polishing you.

If you have ever refinished furniture—or if you know someone who does—you’ll know that the wood needs to be sanded down using gradually finer levels of sandpaper. Once the wood has been smoothed perfectly, the wax is applied with superfine steel wool and hand-rubbed to get that lovely sheen.

Similarly, when diamonds come out of the mine, they look like gray rocks. After skilled workers cut and polish them, the gorgeous, sparkly gems emerge for us to enjoy.

I try to remind myself of this polishing when I hit a rough patch. When I think of the problem as a challenge to be better, my perception of the day changes. I know that God is sanding me down. He is not going to give me a challenge without giving me a way to meet it. And by trusting that He will help me deal with what comes my way, I know I will learn and grow.

And guess what? My rough mornings rarely become horrible bad days. They will be busy days, or challenging days. However, at the end of those days, I know that I have lived a full day—with God’s help.

I am still getting polished!

God bless you all,  
Suzanne Eng

## A Senior Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas at Rock-Away Rest,  
And all of us seniors were looking our best.  
Our glasses, how sparkly, our wrinkles, how merry;  
Our punch bowl held prune juice plus three drops of sherry.  
A bed sock was taped to each walker; in hope  
That Santa would bring us soft candy and soap.  
We surely were lucky to be there with friends,  
Secure in this residence and in our Depends.  
Our grandkids had sent us some Christmassy crafts,  
Like angels in snow suits and penguins on rafts.  
The dental assistant had borrowed our teeth,  
And from them she'd crafted a holiday wreath.  
The bedpans, so shiny, all stood in a row,  
Reflecting our candles magnificent glow.  
Our supper so festive -- the joy wouldn't stop --  
Was creamy warm oatmeal with sprinkles on top.  
Our salad was Jell-O, so jiggly and great,  
Then puree of fruitcake was spooned on each plate.  
The social director then had us play games,  
Like "Where Are You Living?" And "What Are Your Names?"  
Old Grandfather Looper was feeling his oats,  
Proclaiming that reindeer were nothing but goats.  
Our resident wanderer was tied to her chair,  
In hopes that at bedtime she still would be there.  
Security lights on the new fallen snow  
Made outdoors seem noon to the old folks below.  
Then out on the porch there arose quite a clatter  
But we are so deaf that it just didn't matter.  
A strange little fellow flew in through the door,  
Then tripped on the sill and fell flat on the floor.  
'Twas just our director, all toggled out in red.  
He jiggled and chuckled and patted each head.  
We knew from the way that he strutted and jived  
Our social security checks had arrived.  
We sang -- how we sang -- in our monotone croak,  
Till the clock tinkled out its soft eight-p.m. stroke.  
And soon we were snuggling deep in our beds.  
While nurses distributed nocturnal meds.  
And so ends our Christmas at Rock-Away Rest.  
B 'fore long you'll be with us, we wish you the best.

*~Author Unknown*

## ***Happenings around the Province***

### **Advent Wreath Artists at Salmon Arm**

St. Joseph's parish in Salmon Arm has been making advent wreaths for over 20 years. The wreath making began with Faith Formation for Children and expanded to the parish.

The morning begins with a few women of the parish preparing the tables with all the greenery that was provided. In the evening the children along with their families and other members of the parish come and make the lovely wreaths.

The wreaths are blessed (this year by Father Dale) when they were completed and afterwards everyone enjoyed refreshments.

It is a wonderful parish community building activity especially involving the young and the young at heart.



Respectfully submitted

Sharon Geiger

## Summer Retreat at Westminster Abbey



In mid-summer 15 members of our council attended a retreat at Westminster Abbey. The retreat master was Father Pierre Leblond, a retired Dominican currently residing at St Anthony of Padua parish. We are so grateful for his generosity in sharing his life and teaching, he led a weekend of growth and healing. The food prepared by the monks was wonderful, showing us that love really does come from the kitchen. Fr Mark and the host monks and postulants were so gracious in serving us, we were truly blessed. We were able to join the monks in the church for the chanting of the liturgy of the hours and it was heavenly. Susan, our lovely leader, organized a pro-life rosary which providentially followed some pro-life sharing, it was beautiful to feel God walking with us.

Janine Huntley  
Vancouver Diocese  
Holy Spirit Council  
Chairperson of Communications

## 2019 'Country General Store' Bazaar & Tea at St. Joseph's Parish, Salmon Arm

Youth joined in on the fun and did an excellent job serving!



The three-hour bazaar raised over \$4400 (profit) which included a great raffle – tickets were **'sold out'** prior to Bazaar draw date!

The CWL ladies sold tickets on weekends at local Malls, priced at \$2.00/ 3 tickets, made them easy to sell to parishioners and the public.

1<sup>st</sup> Prize: Beautiful handmade Queen size Quilt, Wendy Piccini was the lucky winner!)



2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: Handcrafted Cedar Chest

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: Induction Single Burner Cook Top

4<sup>th</sup> Prize: \$50 Askew's (Grocery) Gift Card

Tea Service tickets were \$5.00 /person – included tea/coffee/delicate fancy sandwiches and delectable desserts!

Bazaar tables included baking, preserves, produce, plants/bulbs, frozen pies to bake, Eclectic Wonders, and Lucky 7 – seven baskets – wine baskets, baby basket, bath/spa, coffee/tea/chocolate, children games basket.



Michelle Hiscock and Virginia Pukas were thrilled with their prizes at the “lucky 7”

Submitted by

Terry-Mae Sinclair  
Chairperson of Communications  
Kamloops Diocese



## **The Kamloops CWL Diocesan Fall Meeting held on October 26 at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Shrine in Cache Creek.**

Everyone is excited and very busy planning future events happening in our diocese and province. The 2020 Kamloops Diocesan Convention May 7,8 & 9<sup>th</sup> will be held at St. Joseph's in Salmon Arm on May 7 – 7 and will be hosting the BC & Yukon Provincial convention in Vernon in Vernon and is also co-hosting the 2022 NATIONAL Convention in Kelowna!

Strategic planning presentations have been held in several parishes – with a plan for every parish council to have the opportunity to see the updated power point and video's, 'Future of the League – Year One', within in the next few months. Feedback has been positive, and members are excited for our future! As we should be – Yes and Yes!

We are looking forward to our next Diocesan meeting in March 2020, which will be combined with a 'Women's Retreat' open to all members and non-members. Spiritual nourishment is one of the desires for many women, and as one of the League's core values, FAITH, we need to provide opportunities for women to come and be fed the healing, comforting, loving words of our Father, God.



**Pictured:** Members of the Kamloops Diocese at their Fall Meeting, October 26,2019 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Shrine, Cache Creek. Diocesan President, Diane Nadeau – middle front row with her executive; Provincial President Elect, Sharon Geiger, at the far right at the front row.

Submitted by

Terry-Mae Sinclair

# Kamloops Diocese Future of the League Presentations

Kamloops Diocesan Council executive have conducted several presentations on the

**‘Future of the League – Year One’** at councils within its diocese:

September 10<sup>th</sup> Lower North Thompson, presented by Kathy Dahl, Linda Casey

September 17<sup>th</sup> Held at Our Lady of the Valley OLOV Coldstream and Co-hosted with St. James, Vernon presented by Terry-Mae Sinclair, Gail Kopp

October 1<sup>st</sup> Sacred Heart Cathedral, Kamloops, presented by Terry-Mae Sinclair, Diane Nadeau, Kathy Dahl

October 19<sup>th</sup> Holy Family & Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Kamloops, presented by T M Sinclair, Diane Nadeau, Jeanette Melnychuk



November 12<sup>th</sup> St. John Vianney, Kamloops presented by Kathy Dahl, Leslie Boettger

November 16<sup>th</sup> St. Joseph's Salmon Arm – presented by T M Sinclair, Kathy Dahl

November 16<sup>th</sup> Sacred Heart, Williams Lake presented by Lynne Langley, Christine Mason, Carol Taphorn

November 20<sup>th</sup> Sacred Heart, Lumby – presented by T M Sinclair, Gail Kopp





November 20<sup>th</sup> Future of the League – presentation Sacred Heart, Lumby

November 30<sup>th</sup>, St. Ann's, Quesnel, presented by - Christine Mason, Carol Taphorn, Lynne Langley

Terry-Mae Sinclair

## Mom's and Babies Afternoon Tea

St. Joseph's CWL in Salmon Arm hosted for the very first time a **'Mom's and Babies'** afternoon tea to celebrate the mom's who had babies in the last year or so.

There were several adopted grandma's there to help with the celebration as well as our new priest, Father Dale Normandeau, who joined in the fun too!

Although not all ten (10) mom's invited could attend, the young mom's in attendance were very appreciative and surprised as they all received a spa gift certificate towards a manicure or pedicure.

Many of them were exchanging contact information and discussing going together for pedicures. It was such a joyful event!

The CWL also provided babysitting for siblings, tasty finger food, desserts, fun games and prizes.

Thanks to our president Linda Faust for this great idea, and the support of her executive and members, this successful and fun event is one that St. Joseph's council hopes to host again and again.



CWL President Linda Faust (dressed in the pretty blue jacket) is pictured just behind Fr. Dale's right shoulder.

Story submitted by  
Terry-Mae Sinclair,

## Not the Oldest, not the Biggest, but definitely the Best Bazaar in the North Okanagan!



For over 70 years, St. James Vernon CWL has been hosting a magnificent bazaar. It is now held the third weekend in November at St. James Parish Centre. Our members work for weeks, and sometimes months, sewing, baking, repairing jewellery, sorting fashion items, and collecting greenery to make wreaths and floral arrangements. Our Knights of Columbus generously set up and take down tables for our event. It always starts with a prayer and blessing from our parish priest and greetings from our diocesan president and the Knights of Columbus Grand Knight.

Some people say, "Why doesn't everyone just donate financially and forget all the work?" I think the bazaar is about so much more than work and money. It builds community, excitement and is a showcase of talent in our parish. Our parish has 3 Masses on Sundays, so I treasure the time I spend at the bazaar simply because you see so many parishioners especially those from care homes. Ladies also come from near and far, so I get to see my sisters in the League from Salmon Arm, Kamloops, Armstrong and places in between.



I am always amazed at the creativity, generosity and talent that is in our parish. Where and when would you see this talent unless the bazaar took place?



Excitement and awe are always present at this event, excitement at seeing how beautifully set up everything is and awe at seeing the incredible creations. The cookie table, one of our biggest money makers is fun to see. Some of the cookies are works of art- so colorful, so artistic, and of course yummy to eat. Another big hit are the Christmas and Advent wreaths and floral arrangements. The fresh greenery, colourful ribbons, candles and accessories really make a lovely Advent/Christmas addition to anyone's home. The craft table is another booth worth seeing and buying from. Everything from homemade cards, aprons, baby clothing and blankets, quilts, doll clothes, slippers, placemats etc. This year we had a vintage Christmas table and a cloth grocery and vegetable bag table. We also market the League by having a membership table. I

think women who don't belong to the League get a positive look at League women in action. Oh, and by the way. The oldest bazaar took place 5000 years ago in Persia and the biggest bazaar in the world is in Tehran, Iran.

Congratulations St. James Catholic Women's League on an outstanding bazaar!

Catherine L'Heureux

Provincial Spiritual Development Chair

Member of St. James Council, Vernon



## In His Vineyard – supporting the Lord’s labourers -

Since the year of our inception in 2005, Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Council in Richmond, BC, has been a busy one. Our members have earned the nickname “party girls” because of our annual cultural evenings, celebrating the richness of our diversity through food, song & dance, and slide shows, while raising funds for Parish, Vocations and Charities (local & international). Our annual contributions of “*blood, sweat and tears*” have allowed us to educate our fellow parishioners and guests about: The Philippines, India, China, USA, Hawaii, Latin America, Our Planet, Africa, Italy, The 50’s, Japan, Greece, Syria and Poland. We have brought exotic places into our Parish Hall and have raised large amounts to benefit church and charities. One event, “Viva Italia”, brought us a new member – an Italian!



over 200.

This year, we changed focus, which was not an easy decision. Called “In His Vineyard – supporting the Lord’s labourers”, we showcased missionary seminarians at Redemptorist Mater Seminary. Through songs, slide shows and personal sharing, we learnt about the life of a seminarian: the journey to the seminary, the lows, the highs, and the chosen path to happiness. Our evening was to support the Lord’s labourers (our missionary seminarians in Vancouver). They were our “stars” who entertained the audience and reached deep into our hearts. The guests, in turn, dug deep into their pockets for the raffle ticket sales and silent auction as well as personal donations. We netted the largest amount ever, thanks to the many generous benefactors, including Global Gourmet Foods who donated a spectacular banquet for

Adding an international flair, some members chose to come in ethnic costumes saved from previous cultural nights. Our only contribution to the entertainment was “Sister Act – Zumba version” which brought the house down! The décor was subtle and classy, kudos to the artistic genes in our midst and our many eager helpers.

On reflection, our members feel immensely blessed to have been able to support the missions in our very small way. We are left feeling humbled, yet spiritually enriched. Whilst we enjoy the comforts and good life of Canada - this wonderful country we call home where freedom is a given - the missionaries’ chosen path of happiness will take them beyond the horizon - to areas where social injustice, poverty, malnutrition, and many other hardships will be the norm. The missionaries will be the defenders of the defenseless. We cannot go into battle with them, but we can be their advocates through our prayer and sacrifice.

With two missionary siblings (a religious sister in Vietnam and a Jesuit in India) I have witnessed their call to holiness and their daily sacrifices. Their dedication to their vocation has been my guiding star – my True North – that has molded me and guided my values and my priorities.

What is your Guiding Star – your True North? Which star do you follow? A poignant question as we approach Advent. Just over 2000 years ago, the Magi were probably studying the stars wondering which Guiding Star to follow.

Nita Rodrigues

Chairperson Spiritual Development

Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Council, Richmond, BC



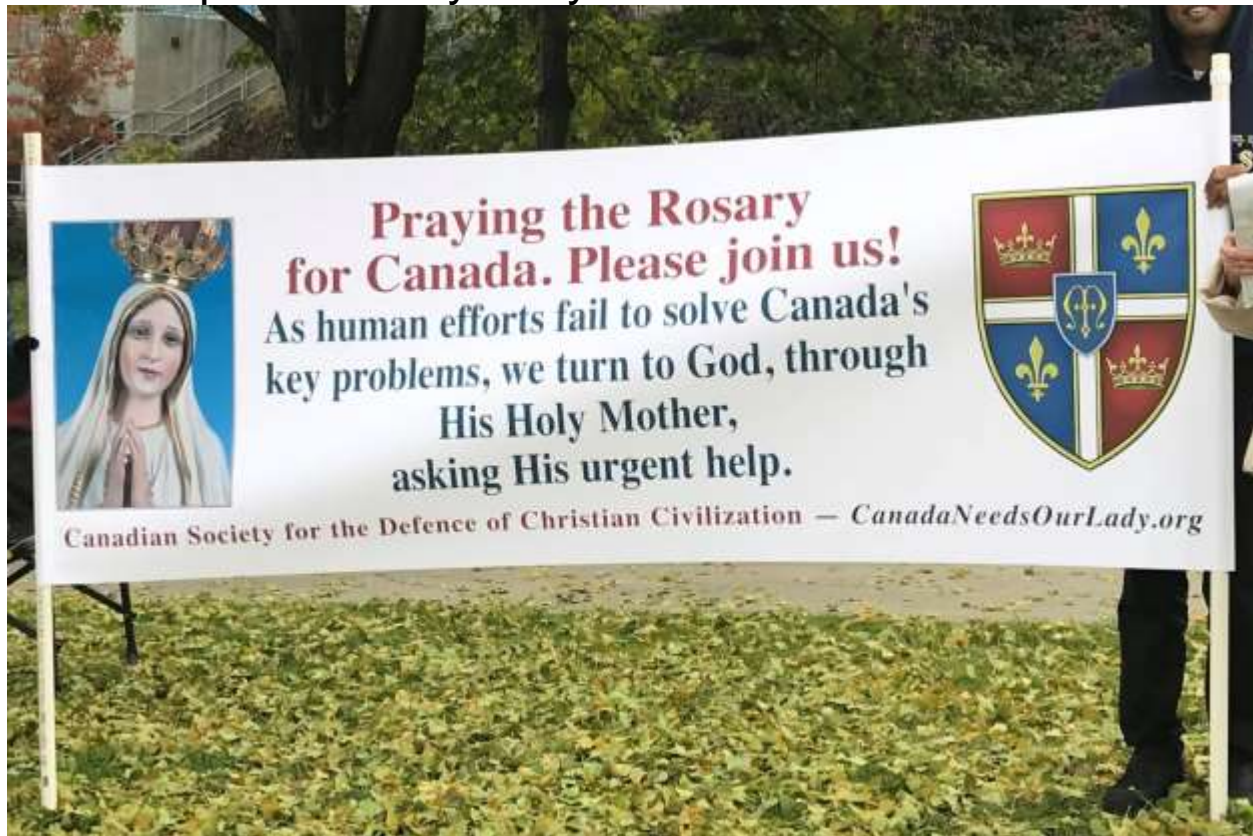
## News from All Saints Coquitlam Council

This spring our council held its annual Mother's Day Tea. Our very efficient volunteers gathered donated china teacups, baked lots of scones, lemon tarts and cookies, and made cucumber sandwiches and other dainties. Eight members of the Knights of Columbus served the ladies tea making our guests feel very posh. It was the 40th anniversary of our neighbourhood Pregnancy Concerns, which was originally started up by Father Clark (he also built our church) so Joy Gove (from Pregnancy Concerns) and an associate were our special guests.



Janine Huntley  
Holy Spirit Council  
Chairperson of Communications

## Public Square Rosary Rally



Sacred Heart Cathedral Catholic Women's League hosted its first ever Rosary Rally to coincide with the national campaign of Canada Need Our Lady to take back the public square. Though many were invited, few attended on the Saturday of the Thanksgiving Weekend. This day is chosen as it is nearest Saturday to the 102nd anniversary of the Miracle of the Sun (October 13, 1917). At noon as busy traffic passed Third and Columbia, Catholics sang Immaculate Mary and *O Sanctissima* and prayed the Angelus, Rosary, Litany of the Blessed Virgin and others for the 2019 Intentions for the Public Square Rosary Crusade which included:

- To show God and His Blessed Mother our love and veneration, we offer this rosary rally as a special public commemoration of the 102nd Year Anniversary of Our Lady's apparitions at Fatima.
- Through the most Holy Rosary, we ask Our Lord and Our Lady for the conversion of Canada so that it may fulfill its historic mission.
- To stop the waves of sacrilege, blasphemy and anti-religious hatred within our society.
- That our national leaders would seek to honour God's Law and pray for the wisdom and knowledge necessary to solve Canada's complex problems.

- For the urgent triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Canada and the world especially as a result of our massive prayers and acts of reparation offered at these 102 anniversary rallies.
- In reparation for the countless sins which are committed daily against the most Sacred Heart of Jesus and the most Immaculate Heart of Mary.
- For the Catholic Church. May Our Lady grant it victory over its enemies, declared and undeclared.

See [www.CanadaNeedsOurLady.org](http://www.CanadaNeedsOurLady.org) for more information.

Plan to hold your own Rosary Rally or join with another group next year.

Kathy Dahl



# Sheila Doherty's Favourite Shortbread Recipe

This was my grandmother's recipe and is a great one.

Only 3 ingredients! I make a batch for my vegetarian friend every year and it is great for vegans as there are no eggs in the recipe.

1 lb	unsalted butter
1 cup	icing sugar
4-4 ½ cups	sifted flour

## Method

Soften the butter, add the icing sugar and mix well.

Add the flour, stirring after each cup.

My mother believed that the flour had to be sifted as it made all the difference in the cookie!

You might only need 4 cups of flour but sometimes I need to add a bit extra.

Form into balls, place on ungreased cookie sheet and flatten with a fork.

Bake at 325\* for 8-10 minutes or until golden brown on the bottom.

Makes about 7 dozen. Enjoy!

Sheila Doherty

## Almond Biscotti

1  $\frac{3}{4}$  Cups all purpose flour  
2 tsp baking powder  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup whole, unblanched almonds  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup butter or margarine, melted  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar  
2 eggs  
2 tsp vanilla  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp almond extract  
1  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp orange zest  
1 egg white, slightly beaten

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  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch slices on the diagonal. Return slices to the cookie sheet, standing them up with space between each slice. Bake another 25 minutes at 325 F until golden & Crunchy.

**VARIATION:** Reduce flour to 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups and add  $\frac{1}{2}$  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*

## **Easy Pretzel Turtles**

Ingredients needed: Mini Pretzels, Roll of Rolos and Pecans (walnuts do work but not as good)

Preheat oven to 250. Arrange the pretzels in a single layer on a parchment lined cookie sheet. Place one Rolo on top of each pretzel. If rolo is at room temperature probably 3 – 4 minutes. They just need to be soft enough to press down the pecan – they will still have their original shape. As soon as you take them out of the oven press a pecan into each rolo. Cool completely before storing in an airtight container. Mmmm good!

Pat Forster, Prince George  
Communications Chair

## **PISTACHIO SQUARES**

1 cup flour  
½ cup margarine  
½ cup fine walnuts (I used pecans chopped fine)

8 oz. Cream cheese (light)  
1 cup icing sugar  
1 cup cool whip (light)

1 instant pudding (pistachio) fat free  
1 instant pudding (vanilla) fat free  
3 cups milk  
1 tbsp. fine coconut

Cool whip (light)

Mix the first layer as a piecrust and press into a 9 x 13 pan. Bake at 350 for 15 minutes. Then cool, mix the second layer and spread over the first layer. Combine and beat the ingredients for the third layer for 2 minutes. Then spread over the second layer. Cover with cool whip for the 4<sup>th</sup> layer. Will keep for a week in the fridge if it lasts that long.

Pat Forster, Prince George  
Communications Chair

**Admirabile Signum or “Enchanting Image”  
An Apostolic Letter from Pope Francis on  
the Meaning and Importance of the Nativity Scene – 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019**  
***A couple of weeks ago Pope Francis travelled to a small mountain town in Italy called Greccio. This is where in the year 1223 Saint Francis of Assisi is believed to have set up the very first crib scene. At the site of this first crèche Pope Francis delivered an ‘apostolic letter’. This runs to over 3,000 words, so below is a much-edited version of what he said. The full text is available on the Vatican.va website under “Admirabile Signum”.***

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The nativity scene is like a living Gospel rising up from the pages of sacred Scripture. With this Letter, I wish to encourage the beautiful family tradition of preparing the nativity scene, but also the custom of setting it up in the workplace, in schools, hospitals, prisons and town squares. As children, we learn from our parents and grandparents to carry on this joyful tradition. It is my hope that this custom will never be lost and that, wherever it has fallen into disuse, it can be rediscovered and revived.

The origin of the Christmas crèche is found above all in certain details of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, as related in the Gospels. The evangelist Luke says simply that Mary “gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn” (2:7). Coming into this world, the Son of God was laid in the place where animals feed. Hay became the first bed of the One who would reveal himself as “the bread come down from heaven” (*John 6:41*).

But let us go back to the origins of the Christmas crèche so familiar to us. We need to imagine ourselves in the little Italian town of Greccio. Saint Francis stopped there, most likely on his way back from Rome late November 1223. Francis had earlier visited the Holy Land, and the caves in Greccio reminded him of the countryside of Bethlehem.

The *Franciscan Sources* describe in detail what then took place in Greccio. Francis asked a local man named John to help him realise his desire “to bring to life the memory of that babe born in Bethlehem, to see as much as possible with my own bodily eyes the discomfort of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, and how, with an ox and an ass standing by, he was laid upon a bed of hay”. At this, his faithful friend went immediately to prepare all that the Saint had asked. On 25<sup>th</sup> December, friars came to Greccio from various parts, together with people from the farmsteads in the area, who brought flowers and torches to light up that holy night. When Francis arrived, he found a manger full of hay, an ox and a donkey. All those present experienced a new and indescribable joy in the presence of the Christmas scene. The priest then solemnly celebrated the Eucharist over the manger, showing the bond between the Incarnation of the Son of God and the Eucharist. At Greccio there were no statues; the nativity scene was enacted and experienced by all who were present. This is how our tradition began: with everyone gathered in joy.

Why does the Christmas crèche arouse such wonder and move us so deeply? In Jesus, the Father has given us a brother who comes to seek us out whenever we are confused or lost, a loyal friend ever at our side. He gave us his Son who forgives us and frees us from our sins. In a particular way, from the time of its Franciscan origins, the nativity scene has invited us to “feel” and “touch” the poverty that God’s Son took upon himself in the Incarnation.

I would like now to reflect on the various elements of the nativity scene in order to appreciate their deeper meaning. First, there is the background of a starry sky wrapped in the darkness and silence of night. We can think of all those times in our lives when we have experienced the darkness of night. Yet even then, God does not abandon us, but is there to answer our crucial questions about the meaning of life. Who am I? Where do I come from? Why was I born at this time in history? Why do I love? Why do I suffer? Why will I die? It was to answer these questions that God became man. His closeness brings light where there is darkness and shows the way to those dwelling in the shadow of suffering (*cf. Luke 1:79*).

The landscapes that are part of the nativity scene also deserve some mention. Frequently they include the ruins of ancient houses or buildings. These ruins appear to be inspired by the thirteenth-century *Golden Legend* of the Dominican Jacobus de Varagine, which relates a pagan belief that the Temple of Peace in Rome would collapse when a Virgin gave birth. More than anything, the ruins are the visible sign of fallen humanity, of everything that inevitably falls into ruin, decays and disappoints. This scenic setting tells us that Jesus is newness in the midst of an aging world, that he has come to heal and rebuild, to restore the world and our lives to their original splendour.



It is customary to add many symbolic figures to our nativity scenes. First, the presence of the poor and the lowly in the nativity scene remind us that God became man for the sake of those who feel most in need of his love and who ask him to draw near to them. Jesus, “gentle and humble in heart” (*Matthew 11:29*), was born in poverty and led a simple life in order to teach us to recognise what is essential and to act accordingly. The nativity scene clearly teaches that we cannot let ourselves be fooled by wealth and fleeting promises of happiness. We see Herod’s palace in the background, closed and deaf to the tidings of joy. By being born in a manger, God himself launches the only

true revolution that can give hope and dignity to the disinherited and the outcast: the revolution of love, the revolution of tenderness. From the manger, Jesus proclaims, in a meek yet powerful way, the need for sharing with the poor as the path to a more human and fraternal world in which no one is excluded or marginalised.

Children – but adults too! – often love to add to the nativity scene other figures that have no apparent connection with the Gospel accounts. Yet, each in its own way, these fanciful additions show that in the new world inaugurated by Jesus there is room for whatever is truly human and for all God's creatures. From the shepherd to the blacksmith, from the baker to the musicians, from the women carrying jugs of water to the children at play: all this speaks of the everyday holiness, the joy of doing ordinary things in an extraordinary way, born whenever Jesus shares his divine life with us.

Gradually, we come to the cave, where we find the figures of Mary and Joseph. Mary is a mother who contemplates her child and shows him to every visitor. In her, we see the Mother of God who does not keep her Son only to herself but invites everyone to obey his word and to put it into practice (*cf. John 2:5*). At Mary's side, shown protecting the Child and his Mother, stands Saint Joseph. He is usually depicted with staff in hand or holding up a lamp. Saint Joseph plays an important role in the life of Jesus and Mary. He is the guardian who tirelessly protects his family.

When, at Christmas, we place the statue of the Infant Jesus in the manger, the nativity scene suddenly comes alive. God appears as a child, for us to take into our arms. Beneath weakness and frailty, he conceals his power that creates and transforms all things. It seems impossible, yet it is true: in Jesus, God was a child, and in this way he wished to reveal the greatness of his love: by smiling and opening his arms to all.

The birth of a child awakens joy and wonder; it before us the great mystery of life. Seeing the eyes of a young couple gazing at their new-child, we can understand the feelings of Mary Joseph who, as they looked at the Infant sensed God's presence in their lives.



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Standing before the Christmas crèche, we reminded of the time when we were children, waiting to set it up. These memories make us all the more conscious of the precious gift received from those who passed on the faith to us. At the same time, they remind us of our duty to share this same experience with our children and our grandchildren. It does not matter how the nativity scene is arranged: it can always be the same or it can change from year to year. What matters is that it speaks to our lives. Wherever it is, and whatever form it takes, the Christmas crèche speaks to us of the love of God, the God who became a child in order to make us know how close he is to every man, woman and child, regardless of their condition.

Dear brothers and sisters, like Saint Francis, may we open our hearts to this simple grace, so that from our wonderment a humble prayer may arise: a prayer of thanksgiving to God, who wished to share with us his all, and thus never to leave us alone.

**POPE FRANCIS**

*Greccio, at the Shrine of the Nativity, 1<sup>st</sup> December*

## 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.

As we come to the end of this year and into the second decade of the century may we celebrate the accomplishments of the League's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Catholic Women's League of Canada as it takes a huge step forward into its second 100 years. Let us pray that we all can get together in Montreal in August and celebrate!

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

Sylvia Jurys  
BC & Yukon Provincial Council  
Chairperson of Communications