

The Catholic Women's League of Canada Manitoba Provincial Council Spiritual Development		
February 2022		Communiqué 8
<i>Catholic and Living It!</i>		
TO:	Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils) Diocesan Chairpersons of Spiritual Development	
CC:	Provincial Executive (for information)	
CC:	National Chairperson of Spiritual Development (for information)	
FROM:	Con Marks, Provincial Chairperson of Spiritual Development	
ATT:	CWL Lent Resources, February Newsletter, National Communique #4	

"Lent comes providentially to awaken us, to shake us from our lethargy." Pope Francis

Lent is almost upon us. March 2nd is Ash Wednesday and the start of our Lenten journey. We use this time to pray, fast and give alms. It is a time of solemnity, hopefully drawing us closer to our Lord. We pare down our distractions and usually simplify our lives. Personally, I look forward to Lent. Life becomes quieter and I focus more on reflection...what does God want me to do? Am I listening and really hearing Him? What can I do for others? Sometimes the smallest gesture or deed has the most impact on someone in need. Am I getting myself truly ready spiritually for Easter? I hope so.

Here are some resources that you may find useful while praying during Lent:

- Pray More Retreats <https://praymoreretreat.org/>
- Word on Fire Lenten Reflections by Bishop Robert Barron
<https://dailycatholicgospel.com/lent-reflections-2022>
- Formed Leader Resources <https://leaders.formed.org/lent-2022/>
- Regnum Christi Spirituality Center [Retreat Guides Archive - RC Spirituality](#)
- Busted Halo <https://bustedhalo.com/>

Some of the above resources were also sent out by our national chairperson of Spiritual Development Cathy Bouchard. I am including the CWL Lent Resources she sent us earlier.

I am including a newsletter that was sent to me by Donna Candelaria of St Peter's Council. She has written up a perfect synopsis of our Day of Celebration that was held February 12th via Zoom. We had 63 attendees and received positive evaluations for our speakers. Our theme was "Connected by Sisterhood".

I am also including Cathy Bouchard's national communique #4 as she goes into much detail regarding Pope Francis' call for a world-wide Synod. If you still have an opportunity to attend a synod listening session in your parish, try to do so. "A synod seeks "the sense of the faithful" (in Latin, *sensus fidelium*). During a synod, the people of God are asked to consider what the Holy Spirit is saying through them to the Church." As a facilitator in my parish I can say that people truly care about the church and want things to improve for all.

Until Easter...

PRAY hard and lots...FAST from food and maybe from gossip...GIVE of your time, your talent, your treasure.

"Lent is a time of going very deeply into ourselves... What is it that stands between us and God? Between us and our brothers and sisters? Between us and life, the life of the Spirit? Whatever it is, let us relentlessly tear it out, without a moment's hesitation." Catherine Doherty

CWL Lent Resources 2022

(Remember that we are using readings from Year C)

Online Lenten Retreats

Lenten Mission - Active Hope March 7 - April 8

Come and join us on a 5 week journey this Lent as we deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ. Learn about the Hope, Love, and Faith that drive Chalice's mission, and join in communal prayer with Chalice staff, supporters, and site workers.

About Chalice Events

Chalice Events is the place for Catholic events that will help you grow in faith, meet other people on the same journey, and feel inspired to make the world a better place. Supported by Chalice, a Catholic child sponsorship and international aid organization.

<https://chaliceevents.ca/>

Loyola Press invites you to join an online Lenten retreat called **An Ignatian Prayer Adventure**. This is an adapted version of the Spiritual Exercises based on the longer retreat in *The Ignatian Adventure* by Kevin O'Brien, SJ.

The retreat begins the week of Ash Wednesday and continues through Holy Week and the first week of Easter. We hope that this retreat will provide you with an opportunity for spiritual renewal as you participate in the reflections and exercises.

Use as much or as little of the material as helps you in your personal Ignatian adventure.

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/lent/online-prayers-and-retreats/lent-retreat/>

7 Lenten retreats you can do online

<https://aleteia.org/2021/02/17/7-lenten-retreats-you-can-do-online/>

12 Catholic devotionals to help you pray this Lent

<https://aleteia.org/2021/02/11/12-catholic-devotionals-to-help-you-pray-this-lent/>

PRAYING LENT an Online Ministry of Creighton University

March 2nd - April 13th, 2022

<https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/>

Lent offers us all a very special opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and to deepen our commitment to a way of life, rooted in our baptism. In our busy world, Lent provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon our patterns, to pray more deeply, experience sorrow for what we've done and failed to do, and to be generous to those in need.

We offer resources here to assist our entry into this wonderful season, from our preparing to begin Lent to our preparing to celebrate the holy three days following Lent.

We also offer a Daily Prayer with a link to the readings of the day, a brief meditation, a link to the Daily Reflection for that day and Intercessions from the Liturgy of the Hours.

May Our Lord grant us all the graces we need and desire.

Topics on their website are: Beginning our Lent, Daily Prayers, Lenten Audio Retreats, Deepening our Lent, Lenten Book Groups, Pope Francis Lenten Message for previous years are posted here so we can assume Pope Francis' message for 2022 will also be included. There is a Lenten Online Retreat for each of the 8 weeks from Ash Wednesday Week, when Lent begins, through the Second Week of Easter

CATHOLIC FAMILY LENT

<http://www.catholicfamilyfaith.org/lenten-season-resources.html>

Season of Lent

PRAYER, FASTING, & ALMSGIVING

Lent is the Church's primary penitential season in the liturgical year. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts until the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. The season has six Sundays: the final one, known as Passion (or Palm) Sunday, begins Holy Week. The origin of Lenten observances dates back to the fourth century or earlier. The length of the season reflects the forty days Christ spent praying and fasting in the desert (see Matthew 4: 1-11) and is a time of preparation for the great feast of Easter.

- [Pope Francis message for Lent 2021:](#) Renewing faith, hope and love
- [Vatican News](#)

Christopher West video **What is Lent?** Good short video to begin discussion in your council:

https://youtu.be/2IC_2IzqpU0

Can you share an example of a real feast that you attended?

What is the difference between you preparing the feast and attending a feast?

Lenten Videos

[What are the Faith Practices of Lent? Bishop Barron Explains](#) (Word on Fire)

[Ash Wednesday & Lent in Two Minutes \(Busted Halo\)](#) Looking for a quick way to explain Ash Wednesday to your friends? Look no further than Busted Halo's® two-minute video that describes the day which begins the season of Lent, and why Catholics and many Christians receive ashes on their foreheads. You can download this video from the website.

Lenten Resources for Adults

[Forty Lenten Ideas](#) (Janet Schaeffler, OP) Lent approaches each year, our minds turn to, "what will we do; what will we give up?" Instead of giving up, why not put something in ... something that will take hold and stay with us for the rest of our lives – since Lent is about change/conversion. Remember

that real penance is to live life well: to be the mercy and peace of God toward others. Perhaps one or two of these ideas will be helpful. *I would use this for a discussion at a CWL Parish Council Meeting.*
[Lenten Reflections from Fr. Robert Barron](#) (Word on Fire) Fr. Barron sends daily Lenten reflections right to your inbox.

[Catholic Social Teaching Stations of the Cross](#) (CRS) Short video reflections that help us recognize Christ still walking to Calvary in the lives of so many of our brothers and sisters

REGNUM CHRISTI Spirituality Centre https://rcspirituality.org/retreat_guide/

Lenten Retreats:

Create a free online account for access to their materials:

Retreat materials are grouped by theme. Each retreat has a leader's and participant's booklets as well as short videos to introduce each of the three sections.

Topics:

THE FAITHFUL STEWARD: A LENTEN RETREAT GUIDE ON ST. JOSEPH

LIVING WATER: A LENTEN RETREAT GUIDE ON CHRIST'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

TEACHER AND LORD: A LENTEN RETREAT GUIDE ON THE LAST SUPPER

FATHER OF MERCIES: A LENTEN RETREAT GUIDE ON THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

THE WIDOW'S MIGHT: A RETREAT GUIDE FOR LENT

TROUBLE WITH TRUST: A RETREAT GUIDE FOR LENT

THE COLORS OF THE CROSS: A RETREAT GUIDE FOR LENT

The format for the retreats is 3 parts, first a meditation that will explore what this encounter reveals about Jesus himself. ☞ The Second Meditation will explore what it reveals about us. ☞ And the Conference will get practical by application to our own lives.

Besides Lenten retreats, there are also retreat guides for many other themes and liturgical seasons.

FORMED: <https://leaders.formed.org/lent-2022/>

This Lent Formed has Parish-wide studies, recommendations for kids, a 30-minute spiritual pilgrimage, and more!

A Parish-Wide Study is meant to help Catholics **build holy habits** and **become proactive in their own faith formation** as individuals and families. By encouraging parishioners to take part in a parish-wide study, you empower the individuals and families to begin building these holy habits and learning their faith on a regular basis on FORMED.

Keys to an effective parish-wide study are:

1. Pastor's involvement and personal invitation
2. On-going reminders in the bulletin, announcements, and through personal invitations
3. Delving into the study in homilies to help the parish learn as one

Into His Likeness – New Series with Dr. Edward Sri!

Into His Likeness is a six-part video series by Dr. Edward Sri, a renowned Catholic teacher, author, and speaker. This series is about how to grow as a disciple and truly grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ. In the ancient disciple-rabbi relationship, the disciple would follow the rabbi so closely that he

would be covered in the dust kicked up from his rabbi's feet. Thousands of years later, though we walk on roads of pavement and not dust, we are still called to be disciples—to follow our Rabbi, Jesus Christ, so closely that we are covered with his life, changed, and made new.

Forgiven: The Transforming Power of Confession, explores the grace and healing offered in Confession and shows how this sacrament of mercy reveals the depth and bounty of God's love. By looking at God's revelation of his mercy in Scripture and making a step-by-step examination of the Rite itself, *Forgiven* communicates God's invitation to each one of us to come experience his indescribable love in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This reflection can be used a 3 night mission in your parish.

Tears of Christ, audio meditations for Lent

This Lent, your parishioners can enjoy St. John Henry Newman's Lenten sermons through audio recordings. "Jesus wept, not merely from the deep thoughts of his understanding but from spontaneous tenderness, from the goodness and mercy, the encompassing loving-kindness and exuberant affection of the Son of God for his own work, the race of man."

This precious insight takes us to the heart of the interior life of St. John Henry Newman (1801–1890), from the treasures of which these meditations are offered as a Lenten devotional aid. Drawn chiefly from his sermons and gently modernized, these meditations offer a share in the fruit of his contemplation, that we might better enjoy with him the "one thing which is all in all to us," which is "to live in Christ's presence, to hear his voice, to see his countenance."

Triduum: A Spiritual Pilgrimage is a beautiful, 30-minute contemplative documentary that cinematically walks through the locations of the Holy Week story, re-presenting the most important days of human history. Immersed in the real and sacred places of the Holy Land, the pilgrim faithful are brought tangibly nearer to the story, the landscape, and the reality of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. *Triduum* draws Catholics and those with open hearts and minds to experience a deeper understanding of these events and places, and offers rich meditations for the pilgrimage of daily life. Now more than ever, as more people are confined to their homes, to journey along this spiritual pilgrimage is to be drawn more deeply into the life and love of God.

The Catholic Women's League of Canada Manitoba Provincial Council Spiritual Development		
November 2021		Communiqué 7
<i>Care for Our Common Home</i>		
TO: Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils) Diocesan Chairpersons of Spiritual Development CC: Provincial Executive (for information) CC: National Chairperson of Spiritual Development (for information) FROM: Con Marks, Provincial Chairperson of Spiritual Development ATT: A Home for All: 2021 of Creation, Pope Francis opens synod, A Closer Look At Synodality And Its Promise For A More Inclusive Church		

“The future starts today, not tomorrow.” *St. John Paul the Great*

November has arrived. We have put away our gardening tools, prepared the house for frosty weather, activity has changed from physical to a more inward focus. It has become a time for deeper reflection and soon a new liturgical year will start on November 28th.

It is also time to reflect on what your council has done this past year and enter your activities into the annual spiritual development report. Not all councils were able to meet; either in person or via zoom or other electronic platform and this is okay. Do report what you were able to accomplish, even if it wasn't formally done in a meeting but a simple reaching out to your sisters in the League.

I am attaching a copy of “A Home for All: 2021 Season of Creation” the Cathy Bouchard sent me. It is from jesuitforum.ca/resources Please feel free to forward to members of your council or use as prayer services that Cathy had suggested. It would be great to use as an individual meditation.

Lastly, Sister Susan Scott Edmonton Diocesan Vice President/Spiritual Development Chair included the following in her communique to her members:

“Pope Francis’s opened a two-year synodical process entitled **“For a Synod Church: Communion, Participation and Mission”** on October 10, 2021. Attachment to this email is an article written by Christopher White, National Catholic Register (NCR), provides a background to the intent of the Synod and the second attachment is a perspective of the synod written by Hosffman Ospino, NCR entitled *“A Closer Look at the Synodality and its Promise for a More Inclusive Church”*. This article may provide a radical view of the intent of the Synod. I mean "radical" in the biblical sense which means to change at its roots, to

create a fundamental shift. The Synod deserves our ongoing attention and prayers. Personally, I can't wait to hear what Archbishop Smith has planned to invite parishioners across our diocese to participate in the "listening" phase of the three-year process. Please pray any of your favourite prayers to the Holy Spirit to accompany all of us as we journey together in this process."

I have included her two attachments "Pope Francis opens synod" and "A Closer Look At Synodality And Its Promise For A More Inclusive Church" for explanation. The Winnipeg Archdiocese underwent a synodal process a number of years ago under the guidance of Archbishop Richard Gagnon and we have been reaping the benefits of change since.

Important dates (list modified from the one sent by Cathy Bouchard, national SD chairperson):

November 28	First Day of Advent – First day of new Liturgical Calendar, Year C, focus on the Gospel of Luke
December 12	Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas
December 25	Christmas Day
December 26	Feast of the Holy Family

2022

January 1	The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God
January 2	Epiphany of the Lord
January 9	Baptism of the Lord
March 2	Ash Wednesday
March 2 – April 14	Lent
April 14 – April 17	Sundown Holy Thursday to the Easter Vigil - Triduum
April 26	The Catholic Women's League of Canada - Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel
May 1- 7	The Catholic Women's League of Canada - 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care 2021
August 13 – 18	The Catholic Women's League of Canada - 102nd Annual National Convention, Kelowna, BC

Canada Liturgical Calendar <https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-2022-1.pdf>

Pope Francis opens synod, encouraging church to master the 'art of encounter'

Christopher White is the Vatican correspondent for NCR.

ROME — Pope Francis on Oct. 10 officially launched the Vatican's high-stakes, two-year synod process in an opening Mass where he urged the global Catholic Church to master the "art of encounter."

"Everything changes once we are capable of genuine encounters with [Jesus] and with one another, without formalism or pretense, but simply as we are," said Francis in a homily in St. Peter's Basilica.

The Synod of Bishops, which emerged out of the Second Vatican Council, was designed in part to provide a mechanism for global church leaders to come to Rome to confront certain challenges in church life. Now its newly retooled model adds another component that begins with a listening stage with local churches at the diocesan level.

In inaugurating the new process, the pope said the Christian community must reflect the "style of God, who travels the paths of history and shares in the life of humanity."

This is a "time to look others in the eye and listen to what they have to say, to build rapport, to be sensitive to the questions of our sisters and brothers," Francis said.

While some world leaders have garnered mass appeal by promoting "the art of the deal," the pope implied that synodality is the very opposite of transactional relationships.

The "art of encounter," said Francis, is marked by listening and seeking to understand the other.

"Every encounter, as we know, calls for openness, courage and a willingness to let ourselves be challenged by the presence and the stories of others," the pope said.

After decades of continued financial and sexual scandals plaguing the church, Francis is betting that the synodal process — that of a participatory, listening church — will invite a fuller involvement of all its members and help purge its abuse of power.

Despite the church's vertical, hierarchical structure, Francis insisted Oct. 10 that the synod "listen to the questions, concerns and hopes of every church, people and nation."

"Let us ask: in the church, are we good at listening? How good is the hearing of our heart?" Francis asked. "Do we allow people to express themselves, to walk in faith even though they have had difficulties in life, and to be part of the life of the community without being hindered, rejected or judged?"

"Let us not soundproof our hearts," the pope implored.

One day earlier, on Oct. 9, Francis spoke to delegates from around the world in the Vatican's synod hall, telling them that this two year process — which will conclude in Rome in October 2023 — must include all of the church's members, especially those frequently marginalized.

"We must acknowledge the frustration and impatience felt by many pastoral workers, members of diocesan and parish consultative bodies and women, who frequently remain on the fringes," he said. "Enabling everyone to participate is an essential ecclesial duty."

In a room filled with men who are sometimes referred to as "princes of the church," the pope said the synodal process should be not an occasional experience, but one of structural change, "where all can feel at home and participate."

Delegates also heard firsthand testimonials Oct. 9 from international participants, including Dominique Yon of South Africa, who said the synod must include "those on the periphery, like those who are persecuted or oppressed due to their age, religion, color or gender."

In a prerecorded video, Dominican Sr. Donna Ciangio, chancellor of the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey, said the listening process must also include people who have left the Catholic faith.

Jesuit Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, who is Archbishop of Luxembourg and will serve as the synod's relator general, said that listening "is a passage from a 'me' to a 'we.'"

As relator general, Hollerich will be tasked with drafting many of the synod's working documents.

"I must confess that I have no idea yet what kind of working instrument I will be writing," he said Oct. 9. "The pages are blank; it is up to you to fill them. The only thing I can say is that I will not do it alone. A work tool on synodality can only come from teamwork."

Over the next two years, many of the church's hot-button topics, such as priestly celibacy, the role of women and outreach to LGBTQ persons, are likely to emerge as wedge issues in the synodal process.

Francis told delegates not to be afraid to ask questions and to engage in honest, respectful dialogue, while also warning that the synod is not a parliamentary or political process.

"There is no need to create another church, but to create a different church," said Francis, drawing on the words of the influential Dominican theologian Fr. Yves Congar.

"Keep us from becoming a 'museum church,' beautiful but mute, with much past and little future," he pleaded.

More than 3,000 tickets were distributed by the Vatican for the Oct. 10 opening Mass, with representatives on hand from every continent in one of the largest gatherings at the Vatican since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Oct. 17, bishops from around the world have been requested to celebrate a Mass for the opening of the synod in their home dioceses.

"Let us have a good journey together!" Francis said as he concluded his Oct. 10 homily. "May we be pilgrims in love with the Gospel and open to the surprises of the Spirit."

Christopher White is the Vatican correspondent for NCR.

OPEN SPACE

September 2021, vol. 14, no. 1



Engaging the signs of the times:

**A HOME FOR ALL:
2021 SEASON OF CREATION**

September 2021, vol.14, no.1

A Home for All: 2021 Season of Creation

In this *OpenSpace*, we invite you to reflect on "all our relations" via a meditation on the four traditional elements of earth, water, fire and air. As we explore these relationships please consider:

- How we are intimately connected with all life and the elements. In so doing, take time to experience gratitude for these connections, including our connection to the Creator of all.
- How humans - particularly the wealthiest among us - are currently threatening the integrity of creation, putting countless species at risk of extinction, destroying the artistry of our Creator, and endangering billions of human lives.
- Pathways towards a genuine ecological conversion, including actions to renew and regenerate our home household.

Each section begins with an invitation for you to take time to connect with earth, water, fire, and air using the elemental breaths practice originally taught by the Sufi teacher Hazrat Inayat Khan.

DOWNLOAD

A Closer Look At Synodality And Its Promise For A More Inclusive Church

Hosffman Ospino NCR August 23, 2021

My colleague Rafael Luciani is one of the world's leading experts on the topic of synodality, the experience of "walking together" rooted in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council that Pope Francis has called on the Catholic Church to embrace. Luciani, a native of Venezuela, serves as a theological expert for the regional Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) and the Confederation of Latin American Religious (CLAR).

He is also one of three Latin American theologians invited as expert advisers for the theological commission of the secretariat for the next Synod of Bishops. Earlier this year, Francis expanded the upcoming synod: It will begin with a diocesan phase this fall, followed by continental meetings next year, and will conclude with a general assembly at the Vatican in 2023.

Luciani is professor extraordinarius at Boston College and a full professor at the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello in Venezuela.

We spoke earlier this month about synodality, why some Catholics seem reluctant or unwilling to consider this way of being church, and what it means that Xavière Missionary Sr. Nathalie Becquart, his former student, will be the first woman serving as a voting member at a Vatican synod.

Following is our interview, which I translated from Spanish and edited for length and clarity.

Ospino: We hear much about synodality these days. What do you think needs more clarity to understand this topic better?

Luciani: Above all, synodality is a way in which the church is and acts in history. It is not a method of doing things. It is an ecclesial way of proceeding grounded in the ecclesiology of the people of God described in Chapter 2 of *Lumen Gentium*. According to Cardinal Leo Joseph Suenens, the document's architect, this is the key to interpreting the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council. During Francis' pontificate, the reflection on synodality has unfolded as an exercise of deepening the vision of Vatican II.

More than a drive to reform structures, synodality points to communicational dynamics and ways of relating with one another as baptized people. A synodal vision challenges us to transform clericalist practices in which an individual or a group in the church makes decisions without listening and consulting, as if existing beyond the people of God. Synodality demands that we listen and engage in dialogue to establish binding relationships that build church.

"Binding" means "mutual need," as *Lumen Gentium* reminds us. It is more than collecting opinions or running surveys. Synodality is an invitation to foster processes of conversion as we listen to one another and to the larger society while reading the signs of the times together.

What is the novelty in the concept of synodality?

Synodality retrieves a more dynamic and inclusive model of being and acting ecclesially. In the first millennium of the Christian tradition, there were many practices from which we can learn much theologically, liturgically and pastorally.

Think of the synodal practice of St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage: do nothing without the council — of presbyters and deacons — and the consensus of the people. The order is important: take advice from some and build consensus with all as people of God. Consensus presupposes a process of consultation, listening, dialogue and discernment *en conjunto* (collaboratively). During the second millennium, with the Gregorian Reform and the Council of Trent the attention shifted to uniformity and institutionalization (e.g., parishes, seminaries).

As it unfolds, the synodal model today seeks to achieve some *sensus ecclesiae* (to feel with the entire church). It is not about limiting or eliminating the decision-making power of the pope or that of the bishops. In fact, it affirms that and strengthens it, demanding that their decisions emerge from sincere consultation and seeking consensus, since every exercise of authority in the church is to be at the service of the people of God.

Synodality empowers the laity in light of our baptism, acknowledging the need for representation in the various structures and processes of ecclesial discernment. More than a numeric representation, it is about including the diversity of cultures, charisms, gifts and ministries.

What ecclesial transformations can we imagine as a result of synodal discernment?

We must be careful not to reduce synodality to a mechanism to change that which we don't like at a given moment, either through the exercise of traditional authority (e.g., a bishop, the pope) or by consultation (e.g., a synodal assembly). Both options would be expressions of a clericalist model: imposition from above.

Synodality invites us to create and institutionalize ecclesial processes that involve the largest possible number of baptized people and seeks to change mentalities. Pope Francis speaks of "pastoral conversion," echoing the general conferences of the Latin American episcopate in Santo Domingo [Dominican Republic, 1992] and [Aparecida](#) [Brazil, 2007]. This means that the changes must come from the grassroots, from the local churches.

There are dioceses in Europe where the community elect their bishops (e.g., Austria) and laypeople lead parishes ministerially (e.g., Switzerland, Germany). Many parishes in the U.S. are also led ministerially and administratively by lay leaders. The archbishop of Lima, Peru, and the bishops of Venezuela are implementing parish reforms. Few Catholics know about these developments.

Why do you think that some sectors in the church in the United States still see synodality with suspicion?

I think that it has to do largely with how Catholics in the United States received the Second Vatican Council: an incomplete reception with more emphasis on structures, delimitation of ecclesial authority, and more emphasis on worship. In Latin America, the council was received in a more horizontal manner via [Gaudium et Spes](#) (option for the poor), *Lumen Gentium* (church, people of God), and [Dei Verbum](#) (a communal reading of the word of God). This was crystalized in [Medellín](#) [Colombia, 1968], inspiring a *pastoral de conjunto* (more collaborative and inclusive ways of pastoral praxis). Yes, clericalism exists but there is more evidence of a desire to engage in horizontal ecclesial relationships.

We should not be surprised that many Catholics in the United States do not understand or simply refuse to embrace a synodal conversion. A clericalist mentality seems to permeate many of the ecclesial structures and pastoral practices. This applies both to the ordained and to lay ecclesial ministers who often act as if they were beyond the rest of the people of God or as corporate agents.

Therefore, a synodal perspective challenges the culture of clericalism and proposes a culture of dialogue and consensus. Synodality is countercultural. To understand synodality, we must return to the text and the spirit of Vatican II.

It is my observation that in many seminaries and faculties of theology the documents of the council receive little attention. How can pastoral leaders and theologians then understand synodality?

When Catholics in the United States follow synodal processes in [Germany](#) and in the [Amazon region](#), for instance, many worry that local churches may engage in discernment processes that lead them to conclusions or decisions that perhaps other local churches may not be ready to consider or embrace.

What do you think of this concern?

The concern echoes a pre-conciliar ecclesiological mentality that treated unity as equivalent to homogeneity. In its document "[Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church](#)" (2018), the International Theological Commission

reminds us that the first level in the exercise of synodal discernment is listening to the local churches and how the faith is expressed in different cultures and contexts.

That is what the conciliar decree [Ad Gentes](#) proposed. Seeking to impose ways of being Catholic that are theologically and culturally homogeneous is akin to arguing in favor of a new colonialism.

The local church is to express the church's universality in terms of what it believes and to affirm its diversity in terms of how that faith is inculturated through differentiated ecclesial forms and practices. Again, it is what *Ad Gentes* called for.

The synodal way challenges ecclesiologies that foster monoculturalism. Francis' 2020 exhortation [Querida Amazonia](#) reminds us that each local church must foster an incarnated ecclesial organization. This is why it is possible to have ministries that respond to the local needs of a culture or a territory, like the Amazon region or certain regions in Asia, that are not necessarily ministries common in North America or in certain communities in Africa.

This is what Jesuit Fr. Karl Rahner had in mind when referring to a "world church": The catholicity of the church becomes life in each local church in light of its particularity.

What role is Rome to play in a synodal church?

Francis has helped us to retrieve the relevance of an ecclesiology of the local churches. Thus, Rome's role is not to impose a homogeneous ecclesial model. The bishop of Rome retains his primacy as bishop of Rome, and as such all bishops and the rest of the Catholic community are called to be in communion with him.

The church is a church of churches. This is the ecclesiological conviction that drives the methodology and process of the synod that will occur between October 2021 and October 2023.

Something new this time is that it will put into practice the first level of synodality. The synod starts with the local churches until the synodal assembly that will be celebrated in Rome in 2023. The meeting will be the convergence of all local churches and an expression of unity with the Bishop of Rome.

You served as Sr. Nathalie Becquart's academic adviser and directed her graduate thesis on the topic of synodality when she studied at Boston College. Now she is undersecretary of the Synod of Bishops, and the first vowed religious woman with a right to vote in such an ecclesial entity. How should we read this appointment?

It is a meaningful appointment, although its major impact is not what many U.S. Catholics and mass media venues often highlight. Many interpret her ability to vote in the Synod of Bishops as an exercise of lay power. That perspective may give the impression that the church is moving toward a model of representative democracy in which a majority — ordained or lay — may impose its will.

That analysis would be simplistic. There are several other lay women and men at the Vatican with juridical power that was traditionally reserved to bishops. To vote in these instances must be understood in a much wider context. Sister Nathalie's appointment is an affirmation of the voice of ecclesial minorities and their representation in ecclesial processes. Only a culture of consensus can guarantee that minorities are recognized and included.

Remember that the Synod of Bishops is a collegial structure (i.e., among the body of bishops) and Sister Nathalie participates and cooperates with this collegial body as a layperson. It is a positive and necessary step, yet the structure of the synod remains collegial. Most likely that structure will not change, and there is no need to expect that.

What we need is a fresher model of being church, imagining and building new structures that reflect a more synodal model and that involve the laity much more in decision-making processes.

That is exactly what the Latin American bishops asked for in Aparecida. Sister Nathalie's presence, her way of being and thinking, her formation and experience, just like those of any other layperson in a similar position, require a new set of rules of engagement in terms of the internal interactions between the ordained and nonordained.

What she brings will enrich the discernment processes and highlight new perspectives bound to influence positively how decisions are made. This development did not happen via canon law but through praxis. It is not institutionalized, yet it set a precedent.

CELAM recently underwent a process of restructuring. Did that process incorporate a synodal vision?

From the time of its creation, the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) has been a collegial organization, an entity through which the conferences of Catholic bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean collaborate. For several decades, the Latin American bishops have cultivated a type of collegiality rooted in an ecclesial culture defined by fraternity, solidarity, communality and affectivity, as Vatican II recommended.

The profoundly pastoral and missionary manner in which the church operates in the region should not surprise anyone. This has allowed more openness to the synodal way, compared to similar bodies of bishops in other parts of the world.

Thanks to this spirit, synodality permeates the practice of collegiality. What is new in the recent restructuring of CELAM is the intentional effort to institutionalize synodal structures.

Among such structures is the creation of the [Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon Region](#) (CEAMA). Although CEAMA is under the oversight of CELAM, it operates as an autonomous structure of synodal character. Its systems of governance involve bishops, other ordained ministers, vowed religious and laity.

There are also representatives of organizations such as CLAR (Latin American religious) and Caritas, and ecclesial networks such as [REPAM](#) (Amazon region) and CLAMOR (immigrants). It is expected that processes of dialogue, discernment and decision-making in CELAM and CEAMA bring to life the potential of the synodal way of being church.

What do you recommend to understand and appreciate more these conversations on synodality?

First of all, humility and openness to listen. We need to overcome fears and prejudices when talking about these topics.

Read more, starting with a more in-depth study of the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Become familiar with the document of the International Theological Commission, "Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church," which has not received sufficient attention, even among theologians. I also recommend taking part in the [XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops](#) (2021-23).

Hosffman Ospino

The Catholic Women's League of Canada Manitoba Provincial Council Spiritual Development		
September 2021		Communiqué 6
<i>Care for Our Common Home</i>		
TO:	Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils) Diocesan Chairpersons of Spiritual Development	
CC:	Provincial Executive (for information)	
CC:	National Chairperson of Spiritual Development (for information)	
FROM:	Con Marks, Provincial Chairperson of Spiritual Development	
ATMT:	National Faith Day Outline, Season of Creation 2021	

*“Remember that nothing is small in the eyes of God. Do all that you do with love.”
St Therese of Lisieux*

September is a month perfect for new beginnings. Since councils have not been able to meet due to pandemic restrictions, many held prayer services using Zoom or FaceBook or other electronic platforms. Spiritual celebrations were also shared electronically, and once churches were able to open albeit in restricted numbers, people started to return to in person celebrations. Some councils have also started meeting again...a few in person, others using zoom. Most importantly we do not need to be any where in particular to continue our prayer life. We can pray alone, with family members or with a few friends who are in our “bubble”, or we can join virtual services that have been offered by your parish, diocesan, provincial and national councils. Or call someone and pray the Rosary together over the phone.

Our new national Chairperson of Spiritual Development Cathy Bouchard pointed out two important dates for all CWL members. They are National Faith Day on September 19 and National Day of Prayer for Catholic Missions on October 1st. She has made a number of suggestions as to how your council may wish to pray together on these days. They are included in her memo that was sent out earlier and I am including as an attachment with this communique.

Other important dates Cathy included are:

2021

September 19

The Catholic Women’s League of Canada -
National Faith Day

September 21

The Catholic Women’s League of Canada -
National Day of Prayer for Christians in the Holy Land

October 1	The Catholic Women's League of Canada - National Day of Prayer for Canadian Home Missions
November 28	First Day of Advent – First day of new Liturgical Calendar, Year C, focus on the Gospel of Luke
December 12	Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas
December 25	Christmas Day
December 26	Feast of the Holy Family

2022

January 1	The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God
January 2	Epiphany of the Lord
January 9	Baptism of the Lord
March 2	Ash Wednesday
March 2 – April 14	Lent
April 14 – April 17	Sundown Holy Thursday to the Easter Vigil - Triduum
April 26	The Catholic Women's League of Canada - Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel
May 1- 7	The Catholic Women's League of Canada - 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care 2021
August 13 – 18	The Catholic Women's League of Canada - 102nd Annual National Convention, Kelowna, BC

Canada Liturgical Calendar <https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-2022-1.pdf>

St Pius X Council of the Catholic Women's League also invites us to join their prayer "Season of Creation 2021" which they shared with Cathy, and I am now sharing with you. You will find it as an attachment.

*"Holiness consists simply in doing God's will and being just what God wants us to be."
St Therese of Lisieux*



SEASON OF CREATION

Season of Creation: September 1 – October 4

The Season of Creation is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment. It is an annual ecumenical season where we pray and act together as a Christian family for our common home.

The Season begins on September 1 and this day is designated as a World Day of Prayer. We invite you to join us in this prayer - St Pius X Council of the Catholic Women's League

Season of Creation 2021 Prayer

Creator of All,

We are grateful that from your communion of love you created our planet to be a
home for all.

By your Holy Wisdom you made the Earth to bring forth a diversity of living beings
that filled the soil, water and air.

Each part of creation praises you in their being, and cares for one another from our
place in the web of life.

With the Psalmist, we sing your praise that in your house “even the sparrow finds a
home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young.”

We remember that you call human beings to keep your garden in ways that honor the
dignity of each creature and conserve their place in the abundance of life on Earth.

But we know that our will to power pushes the planet beyond her limits.

Our consumption is out of harmony and rhythm with Earth's capacity to heal herself.

Habitats are left barren or lost.

Species are lost and systems fail.

Where reefs and burrows, mountaintops and ocean deeps once teemed with life and relationships, wet and dry deserts lie empty, as if uncreated.

Human families are displaced by insecurity and conflict, migrating in search of peace.

Animals flee fires, deforestation and famine, wandering in search of a new place to find a home to lay their young and live.

In this Season of Creation, we pray that the breath of your creative Word would move our hearts, as in the waters of our birth and baptism.

Give us faith to follow Christ to our just place in the beloved community. Enlighten us with the grace to respond to your covenant and call to care for our common home.

In our tilling and keeping, gladden our hearts to know that we participate with your Holy Spirit to renew the face of your Earth, and safeguard a home for all.

In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Logo for Season of Creation 2021



This year's logo for the Season of Creation is Abraham's tent, symbolizing "A home for all". Abraham and Sarah opened their tent as a home for three strangers, who turned out to be God's angels (Genesis 18). By creating a home for all, their act of radical hospitality became a source of great blessing. Abraham's tent is a symbol of our ecumenical call to practice creation care as an act of radical hospitality, safeguarding a place for all creatures, human and more human, in our common home, the household (oikos) of God.

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Manitoba Provincial Council
Spiritual Development**

December 2020



Communiqué 5

Care for Our Common Home

TO:	Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils) Diocesan Chairpersons of Spiritual Development
CC:	Provincial Executive (for information)
CC:	National Chairperson of Spiritual Development (for information)
FROM:	Con Marks, Provincial Chairperson of Spiritual Development

“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

We have begun a new liturgical year with the coming of Advent. It is a time of waiting where we can prepare ourselves for the birth of our Lord who is the Light of our World. Things slow down to allow us breathing space. We can clear our minds and our hearts as we reflect on what is truly important to us. This year especially has been a difficult one due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are not alone as our Provincial Spiritual Advisor Fr. Paul Bringleston stated during his homily this past Sunday. Many people have experienced great adversity before us throughout history and recovered from it. This year has been filled with challenges in everything we do...work, play, shop, and for faith-filled people...pray. Churches have opened and closed, been restricted, have services of all kinds on-line and in general we have been guided by our parish priests, archdiocesan bishops, and our Holy Father Pope Francis.

Our sisters in the League have generously shared on-line retreats, prayers, and prayer services with us. Shari Guinta, National Chairperson of Spiritual Development informed us that national is hosting an Advent Retreat December 5th, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (central time). Here are the details: “Join Fr. Cornelius (Con) O’Mahony, EV, Vicar of Education for the Diocese of Hamilton and Pastor of St. Andrew’s Parish (Oakville) for “This is a Time to Go Slow... a Time to Pause on the Advent Journey in a Time of Uncertainty” Advent retreat.” Registration is required on the national website. Here is the link: <https://cwl.ca/advent-retreat-with-fr-con-omahony-registration-now-open/>

Another link I would like to share is for an Advent Calendar for adults which is on-line from Loyola Press: <https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/advent/calendars/advent-calendar-for-adults/>

Stop what you are doing. Reflect on your spiritual life’s needs. Pray for guidance and inspiration so you may be ready when He arrives. Reach out to someone who does not have

access to on-line programs, who may be house-bound or isolated. My mother is not able to leave her assisted living residence or even her suite except for hallway walks so I phone daily, and we pray the Rosary. She likes it and so do I. It is such a simple thing to do.

Have a truly blessed Christmas...the Light of the World is coming.

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Manitoba Provincial Council
Spiritual Development**

June 2020



Communiqué 4

Care for Our Common Home

TO:	Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils) Diocesan Chairpersons of Spiritual Development
CC:	Provincial Executive (for information)
CC:	National Chairperson of Spiritual Development (for information)
FROM:	Con Marks, Provincial Chairperson of Spiritual Development

“Nothing great is ever achieved without enduring much.” St. Catherine of Siena

Goodness! So much has happened since February in the world, in our lives and in our spiritual lives. We completed our Lenten journey by fasting from each other’s company and the comforting confines of our churches as we all self-isolated due to the Coronavirus pandemic. We experienced the resurrection of Christ and became an Easter people in our homes rather than in our parishes! This year’s celebration of light was different in so many ways. We were tuned in to our TVs, laptops, PCs and smartphones. Masses were and continue to be live-streamed on YouTube or Facebook. Resource links were made available so we could nurture our souls...prayers were suggested and prayed by masses of people, our Holy Father Pope Francis made requests of his flock to join him in prayer and we did...in the thousands. Messages were shared via emails, phone calls, texting, zoom meetings and FaceTime, etc.

Slowly things are starting to change. The world is opening up and people are eager to leave the confines of their homes. The joy of being able to receive Holy Communion in my home parish and experience the Eucharistic celebration in person was something that I will not take for granted again. Don’t get me wrong...I “attended” Mass on-line almost daily and received spiritual communion which was good. I listened and I have to admit really listened to some of the most enlightening homilies that I have the honour of hearing to date. I think it’s because I was hungry for the guidance I was so used to hearing each time I attended Mass in person.

As all public meetings and events were cancelled, we needed to celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel in our own way. We needed to make May the month of Mary special, again in our own way. Canada was consecrated to Mary, Mother of the Church on May 5th seeking her maternal intercession during the Coronavirus pandemic. A surprise spiritual bouquet was gathered and sent to all our life members in Manitoba in gratitude for their help and support they show us at all times. Thank you to all who were able to contribute their prayers and intentions. They were received with gratitude by the life members!

We are now in ordinary time according to the liturgical calendar during a still most extraordinary time in this world. We’ve experienced a mass shooting in Nova Scotia. The pandemic continues to spread

to other parts of the world and we watch as numbers of cases and deaths continue to rise. Racism has come forward with a vengeance and people are demonstrating world-wide against it. We are asked to pray for reconciliation and an end to the sin of racism.

As all CWL events are cancelled we are unable to gather in support of one another as we usually would, especially at conventions. Summer is almost here and the weather is improving, please continue to pray for an end to the Coronavirus pandemic, for a safe working vaccine, for a safe re-opening of businesses, for an end to racism and remember to be kind to one another. If you can afford it, please continue to support charities and of course your parishes.

The CWL Day of Prayer for Missions is October 1st. More information will be sent out at a later date.

I leave you with a prayer to the Holy Spirit that I find quite timely...

“Spirit of wisdom and understanding, enlighten our minds to perceive the mysteries of the universe in relation to eternity. Spirit of right judgment and courage, guide us and make us firm in our baptismal decision to follow Jesus' way of love. Spirit of knowledge and reverence, help us to see the lasting value of justice and mercy in our everyday dealings with one another. May we respect life as we work to solve problems of family and nation, economy and ecology. Spirit of God, spark our faith, hope and love into new action each day. Fill our lives with wonder and awe in your presence which penetrates all creation. Amen.”

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Manitoba Provincial Council
Spiritual Development**

February 2020



Communiqué 3

Care for Our Common Home

TO: Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils)
Diocesan Chairpersons of Spiritual Development
CC: Provincial Executive (for information)
CC: National Chairperson of Spiritual Development (for information)
FROM: Con Marks, Provincial Chairperson of Spiritual Development

*“Prayer is good when accompanied by fasting, almsgiving, and righteousness. A little with
righteousness is better than much with wrongdoing. It is better to give alms than to treasure up gold.”
Tobit 12:8*

On Ash Wednesday we began our Lenten journey. We have 40 days to prepare ourselves for Easter and Christ’s resurrection. We are encouraged to pray more, fast and give alms to those in need. In order to prepare myself I use “The Year in Our Church from Loyola Press” as one source of information and inspiration.

I found that there are eight ways to pray:

1. Make your abstinence a prayer-in-action.
2. Renew yourself through personal reflective prayer.
3. Pray the Stations of the Cross.
4. Meditate on Holy Scripture with Lectio Divina.
5. Reflect deeper on your liturgical prayer.
6. Join or start a prayer group.
7. Pray with children or as a family.
8. Start a practice of daily prayer that will last after Lent.

We are also encouraged to pray for souls in purgatory. I am including **The Chaplet of the Holy Souls** which can be prayed using the rosary:

1. Sign of the Cross.
2. The Apostle's Creed
3. Our Father (x1)
4. Hail Mary (x3)
5. Glory be (x1)
6. On the large beads, pray: "**O Holy Souls draw the fire of God's Love into my soul, to reveal Jesus crucified in me here on earth, rather than hereafter in Purgatory.**"

7. On the small beads, pray: "**Crucified Lord Jesus, have mercy on the souls in Purgatory.**"
8. When completed all (5) Five decades, pray **Glory be** (x3).

Prayer of Saint Gertrude the Great for the Holy Souls in Purgatory

A prayer which would release many souls from Purgatory each time it is recited.

O Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the Holy souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere - for sinners in the Universal Church, for those in my own home and for those within my family. Amen.

If you are looking for a good cause to donate to, we are asked to continue our support of Catholic Missions in Canada (CMIC) per National Chairperson of Spiritual Development Shari Guinta's January communique. "These missions are incredibly necessary and in need of assistance and prayers. I ask you to encourage councils to contribute generously to the national voluntary fund for CMIC. All proceeds received up to June 30, 2020 will be released in Montreal at the annual national convention in August." Please use this link to read her entire communique: <https://cwl.ca/communique-5-spiritual-development/>

May your Lenten journey open your heart more fully to Jesus' saving grace.

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Manitoba Provincial Council
Spiritual Development**

November 2019



Communiqué 2

Care for Our Common Home

TO: Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils)
Diocesan Chairpersons of Spiritual Development
CC: Provincial Executive (for information)
CC: National Chairperson of Spiritual Development (for information)
FROM: Con Marks, Provincial Chairperson of Spiritual Development

Care for Our Common Home includes caring for self. “We care for our hearts, our minds, our souls,” as I stated in my first communique. In the continuum of life we are conceived, born, experience stages of growth and development from childhood to adulthood with our eventual death. As Catholics we believe that we pass from this world into that of our heavenly Father who welcomes us with open arms.

I’ve been experiencing one of life’s milestones...that of dying...of course not my death but the recent passing of my brother. As an ICU nurse I have had lots of exposure to death in its many forms. I’ve experienced my own family deaths and been present for a number of them but my brother’s death bothers me in a much different way. Somewhere along his travels in this earthly life my brother lost his faith. He was baptised, had his first confession and first communion, was confirmed...he even served as an altar boy. So *where* did his faith go?? *When* did his faith go?? I can’t answer that. What concerns me now is what happens to his soul? According to Google “The Catholic conception of the afterlife teaches that after the body dies, the soul is judged, the righteous and free of sin enter Heaven. However, those who die in unrepented mortal sin go to hell.” and “Purgatory, the condition, process, or place of purification or temporary punishment in which, according to medieval Christian and Roman Catholic belief, the souls of those who die in a state of grace are made ready for heaven.”

I believe that God loves us and forgives us because we are weak and prone to making not the wisest of choices at times during our lives. I pray that in the dark when my brother was alone and on the verge of passing he asked God for forgiveness of his transgressions. I hope to see my brother again.

This leads on to care of self. What can we do to nourish our souls? Of course there’s prayer which many find *Lectio Divinia* in particular very helpful. Here is a link to “*Lectio Divina: A Step-by-Step Guide*” by Fr. Dennis Mancuso <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJpT1pLRcKQ>
The Sacrament of Reconciliation can be so up-lifting when you are carrying such awful things in your heart. Celebrating Eucharist every Sunday and truly being present while participating inspires us weekly. Of course you can think of the many things you do in your daily lives which celebrate God

and His goodness...taking care of the vulnerable and unfortunate, sharing your many gifts and talents for the good of others, giving of your most valuable time, simply having patience with others because the line in the grocery store, at the traffic intersection, at the entrance to a football game, etc. is moving slowly. In short, your entire day from sunup to sundown can be about doing for God. I feel that a good deed is more rewarding for me than for the recipient. They may be very grateful for what you did if it was done in front of them (think paying the few dollars they are short for their groceries) or even if they don't see it (donating to charities) but I personally find that I receive so much more...my heart is bursting with love, I feel a lightness in my step...you get the picture.

There are so many ways in way you can enrich your prayer life, bible study, prayer groups, various programs, retreats, adoration. Look around and find something that speaks to you. Make time in your busy day to give to God because He gives us so much more in return.

"We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become."

Clare of Assisi

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Manitoba Provincial Council
Spiritual Development**

August 2019



Communiqué 1

Care For Our Common Home

TO: Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils)
Diocesan Chairpersons of Spiritual Development
CC: Provincial Executive (for information)
CC: National Chairperson of Spiritual Development (for information)
FROM: Con Marks, Provincial Chairperson of Spiritual Development

I love our national theme! When you are caring for your common home, you can encompass so much. We care for our hearts, our minds, our souls, where we live as people of God, how we take care of the gifts He has given us.

Our hearts let us know if what we are doing is a right fit for us. Is it right or is it wrong? If it's right we continue doing what we have been doing but if it's not, if it doesn't make you feel right, we have the opportunity to change this behaviour. As people of God we have the opportunity to wipe the slate (our souls) clean by attending the sacrament of reconciliation and start over on a new path. Doing so helps our hearts, minds and souls. This is an inward focus. No one else can see innermost you but God.

An outward focus would be how we care for others and our world in all its glory. Caring for the poor and the marginalized is of utmost importance. Caring for our world is also a concern. Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* contains words of wisdom that can guide us on the right path if we are unsure. I personally have only looked at bits and pieces of this document. Here is the link: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html I also found a summary of *Laudato Si'* which can be used as a guide if you are searching for something in particular. This link is a summary for bishops: <https://www.catholic.org.au/commission-documents/bishops-commission-for-justice-ecology-and-development/laudato-si/1711-encyclical-summary/file>

At national convention, keynote speaker Sr. Dorothy Ederer, a Grand Rapids Dominican sister and Catholic chaplain at Holy Cross Services, presented "What is our Common Home? We care for our homeland, our homes, our hearts." She kept repeating trust in God. She did and was never let down. She also asked God what she was supposed to do and to guide her. Her life has been a series of tasks put before her and she fulfilled them moving from one to another as she was led. She was very inspirational and moved our hearts by giving us glimpses of her life's journey.

"God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is

always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. *Praise be to him!*" *Laudato Si'* paragraph 245 Pope Francis

I leave you with two prayers from Pope Francis...

A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.

A Christian prayer in union with creation

Father, we praise you with all your creatures.
They came forth from your all-powerful hand;
they are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love.
Praise be to you!

Son of God, Jesus,
through you all things were made.
You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother,
you became part of this earth,
and you gazed upon this world with human eyes.
Today you are alive in every creature

in your risen glory.
Praise be to you!

Holy Spirit, by your light
you guide this world towards the Father's love
and accompany creation as it groans in travail.
You also dwell in our hearts
and you inspire us to do what is good.
Praise be to you!

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love,
teach us to contemplate you
in the beauty of the universe,
for all things speak of you.
Awaken our praise and thankfulness
for every being that you have made.
Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined
to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.
Enlighten those who possess power and money
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,
that they may love the common good, advance the weak,
and care for this world in which we live.
The poor and the earth are crying out.
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.
Praise be to you!
Amen.