


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)	
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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
<i>Care for Our Common Home</i>		
TO:	Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils) Diocesan Chairpersons of Spiritual Development	
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“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
<i>Care for Our Common Home</i>		
TO:	Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils) Diocesan Chairpersons of Spiritual Development	
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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
<i>Care For Our Common Home</i>		
TO:	Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils) Diocesan Chairpersons of Spiritual Development	
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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.