

# THE ST. MICHAEL'S LEAGUE

Issue 17

CWLstmichlon@gmail.com

August 2023

## Message From Our President Dorothy Solomon



Each issue of St. Michael's League tells us something about who we are as Catholic women and especially how we as CWL members have committed ourselves to live gospel values in concrete ways. In

past issues I wrote about the need to set time apart to rest and reset our priorities: that is direct from Jesus, Mark 6:31. We focus a great deal on faith, service and social justice. All of scripture, Catholic teaching and tradition offer the same directives - how to be Catholic and live it. I have written a summary of the various committees within the structure of CWL and how each of us belongs and contributes in some manner as we are able. The primary themes also include belonging and combatting loneliness.

Why belong? We are strengthened in our faith journey. It creates a sense of purpose. It offers support to live Christian values. Our voice will be heard. It creates empathy for the CWL causes we promote and offers a means to address these concerns. It is a network of like-minded women. The fellowship is an opportunity to share and listen to stories and goals of the CWL. We learn how others are attempting to intersect the common secular life with the sacred as Catholic Christians.

Mark your calendar please: On Saturday, August 26 we will participate in an interactive retreat/workshop to examine the three foundational pillars of Faith, Service and Social Justice. There is no cost to attend and you are encouraged to bring a friend. From 9:00 am – 11:30 am, in fifteen-minute intervals, we will pray, brainstorm our understanding of the terms, and listen to a presentation on faith – hearts in prayer. There will be time for personal reflection and retreat. Then a presentation on service – hands that share; then once again personal time. A third presentation on social justice – minds that dare, will take the same format. By 10:45 we will join together in summarizing what we have heard, thought and experienced. Next,

we will address prime areas that we as St. Michael's CWL should devote our energy to. Our closing will include an opportunity to create prayers that we will share. It is interactive because everyone has a voice, if even with one other person or at the table with other members. There will be a few chances to assist with a brief demonstration, not strenuous and no prior experience required because sometimes a demonstration says more than words alone. Watch for more detailed information to follow shortly. Refreshments will be provided and I would like to have an idea if you plan to attend so I can prepare enough resources.

We are at issue 17 of the St. Michael's League newsletter and we are always looking for contributors. You may write an article, offer a topic, suggest a member to be introduced in our feature member section, or even yourself. We would like to hear from you. What makes you proud to be a CWL member? What should CWL promote or emphasize? What is the greatest change, challenge or opportunity facing CWL? What would you like to see CWL do differently? What does the future of CWL look like to you? No idea is too small. We can only grow by listening to one another.

**CATHOLIC**  
and **LIVING IT!**

## Prayer Intentions

We have offered specific prayer intentions for each month and we are asking not only each of our members but also all the members of St. Michael's community, to bring these intentions to the Lord. Let us continue to lift one another up in prayer.

**August:** For elected officials who are asked to make decisions that support the sanctity of life.

**September:** For those who are experiencing loneliness, in particular the elderly.

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## From Our Spiritual Advisor Fr. Felix Odobi



I have been asked by our Pastor, Fr. Daniel Bombardier, to serve as the Spiritual Advisor to the CWL in our Catholic Family of Parishes. I accept this responsibility with a deep sense of respect and humility. I

look forward to working with you all, sharing our common stories as human beings, finding ways to spread the good news of God's kingdom, and conceptualizing how we can affect our environment positively.

My name is Fr. Felix Odobi, C.S.Sp. I was born and brought up in Nigeria. I come from a family of ten and I am the fourth child. I began nurturing the desire to become a priest when I was eight years old and am thankful to my mother who exposed me and my siblings to Catholic teachings, faith and spirituality.

I joined the Congregation of the Holy Spirit - an international Religious Congregation founded in France over 300 years ago - in 2003. After my Philosophical and Theological studies, I was ordained a Catholic priest on July 12, 2014.

My assignments after my ordination include:

- Associate Pastor, St Peter's Catholic Church, Jiwa, Abuja, Nigeria, September 2014 to August 2016
- Provincial Secretary, August 2014 to September 2016
- Registrar, Spiritan International School of Theology, October 2016 to July 2019

I came to Canada in November 2019 for further studies. I studied at Saint Paul University, Ottawa, and graduated with a master's degree in Conflict Studies. I joined the Diocese of London in 2022 and served as the Associate Pastor at the Windsor-Lake St Clair Catholic Family of Parishes from May 2022 to June 2023. I joined the London North Central Catholic Family of Parishes on July 3, 2023, to serve as an Associate Pastor.

It is my personal conviction that with Jesus Christ as the bedrock and cornerstone of one's life, the paradox, contradiction and mystery between life and death, suffering and glory, sickness and health, cross and crown becomes meaningful. I strongly believe that life is grace. It is the grace of God that sustains us when we are faced with the contradictions of life. My understanding of life as grace fills me with peace, joy, and happiness. It helps me to regulate and wrestle against fears and worries. I am hoping that my comprehension of life as grace becomes infectious as I work among you.

### St. Michael's CWL Council 2023 Coming Events Tentative Schedule

**Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>** – CWL Workshop and Retreat, 9:00 – 11:30, John Paul II Room

**Monday, September 11<sup>th</sup>** – Membership Meeting and Welcome Back Social

**Monday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Membership Meeting and Self-Defense Demo

**Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup>** – Fall Regional Day, St. Joseph Parish, Stratford

**October 28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>** – Membership Drive and Coffee Sunday after all Masses

**Monday, November 6<sup>th</sup>** – Membership Meeting and social time

**Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>** - Pie Making

**November 25<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup>** – Annual Festive Fall Bake Sale

**Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Daytime Membership Meeting and Christmas Celebration

**Please check bulletins, website and emails for further details**

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## CWL Mini-Retreat/ Workshop

**Faith, Service, Social Justice**

**St. Michael's, St. John Paul II Room**

**Saturday, August 26**

**9:00 am – 11:30 am**

**RSVP to Dorothy at 519-204-2931 or**

**[dorothysolomon41@gmail.com](mailto:dorothysolomon41@gmail.com)**



## September Welcome Back Social

**Monday, September 11, 7:00 pm**

**St. John Paul II Room**

All women of the parish are invited to the Catholic Women's League Welcome Back Social and General Membership Meeting, to celebrate the start of our fall season. Come and share in special refreshments provided by the CWL executive, play a few rounds of our CWL trivia game and enjoy the opportunity to socialize after the summer break.



## CWL Memberships



**For \$40 per year you get many opportunities to:**

- Develop your faith
- Build new friendships
- Have a voice on current issues at the national level
- Participate in charitable acts
- Contribute to social justice initiatives
- Serve others in our community, particularly those in need
- Learn about what is happening in our community, our diocese, and Canada
- Spend time with like-minded women in our parish
- Have fun while supporting others
- Celebrate women, friendship and our successes

**Membership dues are collected in November of each year. You can pay by e-transfer or drop your envelope in the collection basket at Mass.** (Please note the fee has changed to \$40 since the envelopes were printed.)

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## St. Michael's Funeral Lunches

Connie Cote

The death of a loved one can be a very difficult time for the family and the support around them can mean so much. A dedicated group of CWL members has provided funeral lunches at St. Michael's for over 40 years. A funeral lunch provides an economical opportunity for the bereaved family to be supported by friends and relatives. The food is prepared with love and compassion for those grieving their loved one. The families of the deceased are most appreciative of this support at such a vulnerable time in their lives, and the CWL ladies feel blessed that they can help in this small way. Many friendships are made among the ladies as they work together to prepare the luncheon. It is this shared love and compassion between the volunteers and the bereaved families that has allowed this rewarding tradition to carry on for so many years.

Any successful event requires leaders to get it off the ground and faithful committed people to keep it going. Mary Kay and Ann Vandenbosch are long-time members of the CWL who served as captains of the funeral lunch committee for more than 15 years. It was a labour of love for Mary and Ann, and their husbands helped too. Why did they serve so willingly for so long? In their words, "There was a need, so I did it." They had a good group of ladies who worked alongside them. "It wasn't all work," said both Ann and Mary. "We enjoyed it too and many friendships were made and besides that, it was a fundraiser for the CWL." It was this camaraderie that kept members like Mary and Ann dedicated to serving the bereaved through funeral lunches.

Currently, Marilyn Morgan and Joan Lobsinger are the funeral luncheon captains with approximately 30 volunteers who assist them. When the parish office notifies them of a funeral luncheon request, an email is sent out seeking volunteers. Generally, four volunteers are needed to assist with the preparation of the luncheon, which takes approximately 3 hours. We provide cold meat trays and buns, egg salad sandwiches, as well as veggie, cheese, pickle, fruit, and dessert trays. A second shift of four volunteers is needed for 3 – 4 hours to help with the cleanup. Joan is a true believer in the saying "many hands make light work" so perhaps you may be interested in joining our volunteer list.

One of Joan's CWL friends shared with her the CWL National's website link, [52 Reasons to Talk About the CWL](#). As she read through this list, she came upon the word "Fulfillment." It read, "If you only knew... joining

the Catholic Women's League will help you find fulfillment. This one-stop women's organization focuses on faith, service, and social justice. Become active and involved in your area of interest." Joan likes to be a worker bee, and one way is to provide funeral luncheons. You've heard it said many times, "We are more than just a woman's group who prepare sandwiches for funeral luncheons" and Joan agrees, but providing this service always brings her a great feeling of fulfillment. As mentioned above, if you would like to join our volunteer list, please email Joan at [joanlobsinger@sympatico.ca](mailto:joanlobsinger@sympatico.ca) or phone 519-438-4909. You can learn more about the CWL at <https://www.cwl.ca/whats-your-cwl/>

Once again, it took these committed ladies to step up and keep this important ministry going. Passing on the torch is what has allowed the CWL to keep flourishing for over 100 years.



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## Catholic Women's League Honour Guard

Marilyn Morgan



Our practice of remembering and honouring our deceased members with a Guard of Honour is a sign of respect and appreciation for the years of service and contributions given by the deceased member.

At the time of a member's death, the Catholic Women's League may be invited or requested by the family to form an Honour Guard as part of the funeral liturgy. This invitation or request is usually made by the family to the priest who then informs the CWL.

When an Honour Guard is requested, the League members in our Parish Council are contacted and those participating are asked to be at the church approximately 30 minutes before the funeral liturgy. They are each given a blue CWL sash to wear and a lighted candle to carry as they line up in two rows at the entrance to the church as the body of the deceased is received. Once the greeting prayers have been said by the priest and the opening hymn begins, Honour Guard members process forward behind the Cross Bearer and line up on either side of the centre aisle as the deceased member is brought forward and the family moves to their seats. After everyone has been seated, Honour Guard members move forward, bow towards the holy altar and return by the side aisle to their designated reserved seats at the back of the church.

Following the concluding rite and prayers of commendation, the Honour Guard members, carrying their lighted candles, follow the Cross Bearer and process out to the narthex and again form a line on either side as their deceased member and her family leave the church.

As with our funeral lunch ministry, the families of the deceased are most appreciative of this demonstration

of support and respect at such a difficult time. For CWL members it is a privilege and honour to provide this final tribute to one of our sisters.



## 2023 Dinner Dance a Hit!

Joan Roffey

"That's the way, uh huh, uh huh. I like it, uh huh, uh huh."

And like it I did - a lot - and from the look of those around me, I was not alone! Hosted jointly by St. Michael's Catholic Woman's League and Knights of Columbus the evening of June 24th was filled with food and fun, fun, fun for the 80 people who attended.

The evening began with a lovely dinner catered by The King of Pigs. As the name might suggest, there was pork in the form of ribs along with chicken and the most delicious potatoes I have ever tasted! Following dessert the dancing began. The dance floor was seldom empty with some attendees shaking it all night long! Mingling with the sound of music from every decade and style you could hear the lovely sound of voices talking and laughing and sharing a wonderful evening together. It was truly a night to remember.

In addition to the dinner and dance, there was a silent auction with some fantastic items up for grabs. In the end, \$504 was raised and split between the two hosting groups. More important than the money raised, however, was the friendship and sense of community that was nurtured. I can hardly wait till the next one!

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## Featured Member Maggie McGee

Stephanie McIntyre



Anyone who knows long-time CWL member Maggie McGee will agree that she is a true reflection of our core values of faith, service and social justice.

Maggie grew up on a farm north of here on Nine Mile Road before the family moved into London along with her two brothers and one sister. Maggie's faith journey began when she was baptized at the original St. Michael's church that preceded the current building.

In 1982 Maggie married her husband Dave and together they had three wonderful children – Neil and Bill who both live in Alberta and daughter Leanna here in London. Her family has now expanded to include seven grandchildren. When Maggie's husband was 18 years old, he joined the military, then travelled to Halifax and joined the RCR. During his military career, he achieved many accomplishments as a paratrooper during two years in Lars, Germany and two years in Cyprus. Maggie's husband passed away in May of 1999.

The Catholic Women's League has played a major role in Maggie's faith journey, starting when her mother joined the CWL when she converted to the Catholic faith after marrying Maggie's father. Her mother was a member for almost 40 years and served as a Diocesan President in the early 1970's. This inspired Maggie to join the League at the age of 16 at St. Andrew's parish, and starting at the age of 18 she served her first term as a CWL president. Maggie joined the St. Michael's CWL in 1984 and has served as Secretary, Treasurer, and President for two terms, then as Past President. Carrying on the family

tradition, Maggie enrolled her daughter Leanna at age 16 and she remains a member at St. Michael's nine years later.

During her free time, Maggie absolutely loves doing word find puzzles, watching TV and playing card games on the computer as well as on her phone. Recently she joined TOPS (Taking off Pounds Sensibly) and has lost sixty pounds (way to go Maggie.)

Her service in the CWL has deepened Maggie's faith and has enabled her to share her many gifts in other ministries such as being a Lector and a Eucharistic Minister. Our parish is so blessed to have Maggie as a member of our CWL family.

## CWL Support for Parish Vacation Bible Camp

Donna Thompson



The photo includes only a few of the many CWL women from St. Michael's and St. Peter's who took turns helping out with clean-up during lunch breaks throughout the week-long London North Central Catholic Family of Parishes Vacation Bible Camp. Matthew 18:3 said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." The CWL was called upon by Leigh Duckworth, our youth pastoral minister, for a unique task during the week of June 17th – 23rd here at St. Michael's. Leigh's camp focused on a different virtue each day and each lunch commenced with a Prayer of Thanksgiving. We all learned a new child-like way to say Grace, which I haven't tried out on the grandkids quite yet. It was our pleasure to take part!

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## Positive Changes for 2024

Gail Brown

Our CWL meetings will look a little different starting with our new executive in 2024. There will be fewer chairperson reports given at each meeting, but our activities will be as numerous as always, and it is hoped that more members will be called to participate in projects and endeavours.

From 2018 to 2022 the CWL undertook a strategic planning process that provided a 5-year plan to move the league forward as it faces declining membership and a shortage of willing leaders. Through research and consultation with members, it was deemed that the current structure is redundant and it is challenging to fill all positions at each level. As a result, the number of standing committees has been reduced to three to align with our core values of Faith, Service, and Social Justice, and the executive committee has been streamlined to include a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and these 3 Chairpersons. Each Chairperson acts as a convener who coordinates the efforts of her committee. However, each committee is made up of every CWL member who can participate or contribute as they wish. The current standing committees and their activities will now fall under one or more of the three new main committees, depending on the focus of the activity. For example, collecting donations for My Sister's Place would fall under Social Justice rather than the more specific Community Life.

What does this mean for our own Council? For one thing, with only three standing committees, compared to our current seven, there will be fewer reports given at meetings, and reports may be given by any member who has been working on a project, not only the chairperson. In addition, our chairperson elections will be less complicated with only three positions to fill.

It is hoped that this new structure will encourage more individual members to get involved and contribute to the life of the Council, and reduce the burden on the chairpersons. Members can be ad hoc members of subcommittees and work on specific projects without the long-term time commitment of a chairperson. Our traditional dedication to issues like the right to life, homelessness, faith development and charitable giving will continue under the new broader standing committees.

### FAITH

- WAS-Spiritual Development**
- Spiritual Growth of Members
- Study of Catholic Teachings
- Role of Women in the Church
- Lay Ministries
- Ecumenism & Inter-faith endeavours
- WAS-Christian Family Life**
- Sanctity of Life
- Vocations

### SERVICE

- WAS-Spiritual Development**
- Evangelization & Missions Assistance
- WAS-Christian Family Life**
- Marriage and Family
- WAS-Community Life**
- Refugees, Immigration and Citizenship
- Development & Peace
- Developing Countries
- WAS-Education and Health**
- Catholic Education
- Literacy & Continuing Education
- Scholarships & Bursaries
- Wellness & Sickness/Disease
- WAS-Communications**
- Pornography
- WAS - Parish Activities**

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

- WAS-Community life**
- Dignity & Rights of Persons
- Social & Economic Justice
- WAS-Education and health**
- Environment
- Genetics
- WAS-Resolutions**
- Research, Preparation, Implementation and Study of Resolutions and Briefs
- Presentation of Resolutions to the Government
- WAS-Legislation**
- Monitor & Study Legislation
- Preparation of Briefs on Proposed Legislation