

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND TE ROPU WAHINE KATORIKA O AOTEAROA



National Newsletter

November 2018

National President – Susan Dickson

Women Welcoming Change

Today, 19 September, I attended two events to mark 125 Years of Women's Suffrage in New Zealand, both celebrating where we have come from and highlighting just how far we still need to go.

The Christchurch Branch National Council of Women and the Christchurch College of Midwives joined together to host morning tea. Their theme, period poverty, I find difficult to get my head around this whole concept. The thought that girls and women in NZ cannot afford female sanitary products is anathema to me. How can this be in our society? The College of Midwives in Christchurch have really taken on this cause. They had a guest speaker who highlighted the serious concern around girls not attending school or fully participating in activities because they couldn't afford sanitary products. Discussions with their clients showed this to be a real problem, too, for many of the women they work with. The midwives have held several collection drives; one as a roll call at our NCW Branch meeting and have already delivered several large boxes full of donated products to Christchurch secondary schools. They shared some poignant thank-you messages at the suffrage morning tea from girls who had received the products. Their stories of embarrassment and shame brought tears to some of the listeners' eyes.

The guest speaker, Reetah Mitchell, a Christchurch team leader of *Days For Girls New Zealand*. *Days for Girls* is an international network of volunteers who work to provide education, feminine hygiene kits, and awareness and dignity to women in need. The name *Days for Girls* refers to the days lost by girls, in education, days without income, days without leaving the house. Included in the kit are reusable sanitary pads and shields which are made by volunteers.

Action 1: You or your branch could raise awareness and collect products to donate to your local high school. Find out more about *Days for Girls*, email: newzealand@daysforgirls.org, check them out on Facebook, www.facebook.com/Daysforgirls/NZ, visit the NZ website www.daysforgirls.weebly.com. There are links to a *givealittle* page and the international website which



NCW National President, Vanessa Dhiru, the guest speaker at the suffrage morning tea with Susan.

has stories of the serious implications for girls and young women in third world countries. Access patterns and sew reusable pads and shields for the Days for Girls Kits.

Action 2: Talk to your local MP about poverty in New Zealand and how it is impacting negatively on the lives of girls. Ask them what their party intends to do about it. Suggest that feminine hygiene products be free or subsidised. The cost must not be a barrier to girls participating fully in society.

At lunch time I attended a Christchurch City Council and NCW celebration at the National Suffrage Memorial. This is a large bronze consisting of panels which show Kate Shepperd and her main colleagues, illustrations of women going about their daily lives in 1893, and panels which tell the story of the fight for votes for women. The memorial is situated in the central city along the Avon, well worth a visit next time you are in the city. There were speeches by the Vanisa Dhiru the NCW national president, the mayor, local politicians and a friend of the sculptor. All praised the courage and dedication of these wonderful women suffragists but also referred to issues that still face women today.

How would Kate Shepperd feel about Pacifika and Maori women earning around 25% of the average weekly wage of white males in New Zealand? High rates of sexual and domestic violence, the gender pay gap and low rates of pay for women, and the low numbers of women in leadership roles all impact negatively on NZ society?

Votes for women was a major leap forward but there is still a long way to go. Change takes courage. We must have courage and continue to work for a fairer New Zealand.

I wish you all the blessings of Christmas. Nga mihi nui.

Diocesan Presidents

Hamilton – Margaret Brownsey

These last few months since our own Diocesan Conference have been extremely busy. Almost our whole Council attended National Conference so we have everyone coming back to their Regions with the new theme and thinking of ways to implement it.

We are divided into 4 Regions currently but with 5 branch closures in the last four years and 2 more at this time of Annual meetings, one of our challenges as a Council is to revise that. We have investigated the Diocese' Collegial areas but they would not be feasible.



REGIONAL DAYS have been generally well attended and full of variety for members. NORTH had a sewing competition for the best fancy apron competing for the Darragh Cup and that was won by Frankton; entertainment was provided by the choir and music groups from St John's College.

They were fantastic.

CENTRAL was our place to celebrate the feast of St Margaret Clitherow and the Mass was beautiful.

Auckland – Colleen Petricevich

It gives me great pleasure to report to you all after one year in the President's chair for our Auckland Diocese.

We have had two branches close down, both on the Shore, Northcote and East Coast Bays. The members have joined in with Takapuna for the meetings, but continue to fundraise in their own parishes for their Mission communities. It has meant more vibrant and interesting meetings for everyone. We must change with the times – this is one way to deal with older members who don't want the burden of office-bearing, and yet still appreciate the social side of the League.

Our Mission Communities have changed too. When our Bishops instigated the formation of the League, many of the missionaries servicing the Pacific were from New Zealand. Things have changed; more and more of the leaders are indigenous people and many have electronic means of keeping in touch. With more local people in charge of these communities, members are finding personal contacts in areas outside the Pacific, such as Thailand and India. This is understandable but we mustn't lose sight of the need in the communities whom we have supported in the past and still need us.

As I conclude I would like to say, "Happy

A lunch was enjoyed by all, followed by the reports which showed the breadth of the work achieved by members in the community.

SOUTH was held at Turangi on the most glorious spring day with the lake like a large mill-pond and the mountains a blessing to behold. Unfortunately, Turangi is a branch that will close through lack of numbers.

EAST was hosted by Gisborne where Monsignor Eggleton, a previous Diocesan Chaplain again celebrated the Mass of St Margaret Clitherow and the Director of Religious Studies at Campion college was an inspiring speaker.

Our Diocesan promotion and Road show is "Ready to Roll" with new brochures, banners and speakers at Masses in an effort to make ourselves known to a greater number of women. The slogan is, "Giving Catholic Women a Voice", and one of the homilies at a regional day quoted CWL as being a prophetic voice already in a secular world.

Wishing all members the blessings of the Nativity Season with a gentle reminder



Many of our members across the Diocese participate in the World Day of Prayer and we share the hosting with other churches in our communities. This generates an understanding of the culture of the targeted country, raises much needed financial

assistance to spread the Christian message of peace and goodwill and helps to welcome any new New Zealanders in our midst. And we get to know the other Christians in our area.

As Catholic Women's League members we belong to WUCWO, a worldwide organisation of Catholic Women. WUCWO will be holding an Assembly in Dakar, Senegal, a beautiful country in West Central Africa, from 15 – 22 October this year. The title is **WUCWO Women, Carriers of "living water" to a world which thirsts for Peace.** There will be workshops by language, where there will be opportunities to exchange experiences, good practices and opinions, as well as speakers. I do hope that every Branch subscribes to "Women's Voice", their magazine which is published three times/yr.

Christmas' to all you wonderful Catholic women who work on and on for the more unfortunate in our midst. May God bless you.

Palmerston North – Pat O'Connor

Faith and Service is our motto and there is nothing more rewarding and satisfying than providing a service for our families, our friends, our parishes and our communities. Service covers many areas and to be able to provide this service funds are needed.

Raising funds plays an important part in our CWL lives and there are many varied ways in which our members do this from their favourites of providing a monthly luncheon bringing together parishioners

who attend First Friday Mass to serving soup and a bun after

Sunday Mass in the winter months. These are not onerous and bring members together all working for the good of their branches. Having raffles and sales tables at monthly

meetings is another income earner as well as a silent auction and raffles sold throughout the parishes in our local area. Hosting a High Tea seems to be the most popular with both Napier and New Plymouth hosting one in late September. New Plymouth's High

Tea was very successful with over 100 family members, friends and parishioners attending. Entertainment was provided by the girls from Sacred Heart College with the usual raffles and sales tables all helping to add to a very healthy profit. It took a lot of hard work but was well worth it with everyone enjoying the afternoon. Inglewood plan to host one next year.

Some of the funds raised during the year will go to our Mission At Home Appeal – 'Motor Neurone', as well as buying goods for needy families, for



supplying goods for Foodbank, for purchasing materials to knit and sew for young babies and older members of our communities to keep them warm in their homes as well as supporting our Mission communities and the CWL charities and paying our levies. We play an important part in our churches as Eucharistic Ministers, Lay Readers, Hospital Chaplains, Funeral coordinators and Bereavement supporters. On the social side we host and provide the morning tea after Mass on the first Sunday of each month in "Our Café" namely the church foyer. In our community we help by providing meals and serving them at a weekly community dinner held in the church hall and we also provide afternoon for challenged youth at the YMCA. Members work in Charity shops, deliver Meals on Wheels, support the Food Bank and assist with the Reading in Schools programme. They visit the elderly in their homes and rest homes and are available to transport people to appointments and to get their groceries.

Mission communities benefited by receiving rugby jerseys for a children's rugby team and stationary items for another group as well as monetary donations. Children's knitting has been provided to Romania and blankets for cots bassinets and beds by members as well as knitting booties for a National project.

Best wishes for a very happy and holy Christmas where ever you are and may it be spent with family and friends.

Finally, a quote from Mother Teresa – 'Just do the small things with great love!'

Wellington – Christine Paterson

REFLECTIONS FOR ADVENT

Short reflections
foreach day of Advent as we
all prepare for

THE FEAST OF CHRISTMAS

Dec 1, John 1: 1-5

Dec 2, Isaiah 9: 2-7

Dec 3, Isaiah 11: 1-10

Dec 15, Luke 2: 8-12

Dec 16, Luke 2: 13-14

Dec 17, Luke 2: 15-18

Dec 4, Jeremiah 33: 14-16

Dec 5, Luke 1: 5-10

Dec 6, Luke 1: 11-17

Dec 7, Luke 1: 18-25

Dec 8, Luke 1: 26-38

Dec 9, Matthew 1: 18-21

Dec 10, Matthew 1: 22-26

Dec 11, Luke 1: 39-45

Dec 12, Luke 1: 46-56

Dec 13, Luke 2: 1-5

Dec 14, Luke 2: 6-7



Dec 18, Luke 2: 19-20
Dec 19, Micah 5: 2-5
Dec 20, Matthew 2: 1-2
Dec 21, Matthew 2: 3-6
Dec 22, Matthew 2: 7-8
Dec 23, Matthew 2: 9-12
Dec 24, John 1: 1-14

*May each time of Advent
reflection bring you blessings of
peace and goodwill for
Christmas and always.*

Christchurch – Val Langley

WOMEN WELCOMING CHANGE.

Our new theme for the next two years will, I am sure, challenge us. As Past President Kay said, members have been asking for change. It is a very different Theme and one I am sure is going to challenge us in many ways. At our last Council meeting I asked where would the Catholic Women's League be in 5 years? One thing that came through quite clearly was the question, 'Are we still relevant today?'

"Who wants Change?"

With membership falling and Branches closing, isn't that a sign we need to look at ourselves, think outside the square. I think most people reading this will immediately say, 'Yes we are still relevant'.

I am going to include one of my Regional Representative's report she gave at her Region's Annual General Meeting. Very relevant and worth sharing.

1. Recently I heard a quote from Jack Welch - Chairman and C.E.O of General Electric. Jack says, "When the rate of change outside an organisation becomes greater than the change within the organisation, it becomes irrelevant. The end is near."

We are all women of Faith. We are all women of action. And we are all women who live by the Gospel values.

Dunedin – Tui Pasco

Greetings from the South. The Dunedin Diocese of Catholic Women's League is alive and well despite losing two branches during

Our new Theme challenges us to do more than this. Our new Theme challenges us to also be Women Welcoming Change. It also challenges us to welcome change; not just change or to just tolerate change; but to actually WELCOME change. What is the meaning of the verb 'welcome'? - to receive, meet, embrace, to receive with open arms, to roll out the red carpet.

This member has, as many of us have, been concerned about our declining membership but she admits she now has HOPE. Now we are actually TALKING about change.

But HOPE is not a strategy and we have to talk more about Change.

There's a risk factor with change. Changes might not be successful but if the Catholic Women's League is to survive into the future, we must be **'Bold for Change.'**

With all members thinking and working with our new Theme, I feel there is a very positive feel that we will face this challenge.

May I take this opportunity to wish all members a Happy, Holy and Blessed Christmas. To those members who have an empty chair at the table this Christmas our prayers will be with you all.



2018. These branches had reasonable membership but no one ready to take on the executive roles in order to keep the branch functioning. This leads to questioning how

can we change to become more inviting to the ladies in our parishes. Our new theme, “Women Welcoming Change”, challenges us to address this problem. I am sure that we have many members with ideas of how to address this and we all need to be open to suggestions and be ready to share ideas.

In the Diocese we held two regional meetings, one in Gore and one in Oamaru. At both meetings the branch reports were, as always full of information about the meetings and the gatherings held during the year. Then, at Gore, we were entertained



Mission Secretary – Jenny Muschamp

At a recent Regional meeting our speaker was Anthea. She is hands on into recycling and wants to educate people about plastic pollution and sustainability. Her aim is to turn single use plastics into useful, reusable items. She spoke of how with her husband Dan and daughter Vashti they live in a home that, as much as possible, is plastic free. Anthea demonstrated the chipper to us. It can chop up small pieces of plastic that can, with the help of a 3 D printer, turn into new products. She wants to take this process to the next level and is having a bigger chipper made. With this she aims to go to schools and educate students to re-use plastic. Her hopes to work with a wide range of groups, charities, organisations and businesses throughout Christchurch.

This takes me back to how we all grew up without plastic. I remember going to the grocery shop for my Mother and getting small goods wrapped in paper; the cheese was cut with a piece of wire; groceries came in paper bags. Sugar and flour came in big sacks and this went into large bins in the kitchen. My Mum was well known at the school fair for making boys shorts which she lined with the flour bags. My Grandmother would also use these sacks for the Christmas pudding mixture. Every family would get two of these puddings so at least 12 – 14 puddings would be made and, of course, there would be either a 3d or a 6d for us to find. As children we would all be excited to see what we would get. These were cooked in the copper hanging from the copper stick. Grandad

by an inspirational lady who has overcome difficulties in her life and inspires others to assist those less fortunate. At the Oamaru meeting we heard from the son of one of the members. He is a Columban priest who has lived and worked in Korea for many years and he spoke to us about the challenges facing women in today’s society. He challenged us to be open to change and to encourage others to embrace the changes occurring in their lives as their circumstances change. Both of these meetings were well attended and the speakers at both meetings were well received. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all members a Happy and Holy Christmas and may you have a peaceful new Year.

Today and Yesterday

would be up making Christmas puddings but the cooking method has changed. Potatoes were bought in sacks and these were turned into oven cloths. Like me, I’m sure many of you might still have one in your home. At home we had a vegie garden, chickens and fruit trees. This year for a change from putting everything in the freezer I went back to doing some bottling doing tomatoes and blackboy peaches.



As women of today we must embrace change as Kate Sheppard started 125 years ago. Perhaps we could make some changes in our lives and remember that we grew up in an era of a much simpler life. But there are many things I wouldn’t like to go back to. For example baths instead of a shower. Corsets, stockings and suspenders, thank goodness, were replaced

with pantyhose. Though the latter would do well for our posture.

Wishing you all a very Happy and Holy Christmas with family and friends.

**2018 National Mission Project:
to assist the launch of the
Galilee for use in the Solomon
Islands. A Caritas Project.**

