

Karori Branch CWL Celebrates Jubilee, by Karen Saunders

At the 2013 November meeting the Karori Branch members decided to turn their scheduled Christmas party (Thursday 5 December 2013) into a Jubilee celebration. The Branch was reminded by Margaret France that the Karori Branch was established in 1963 so it was full steam ahead for the next 3 weeks.

I put my hand up to visit the Archives in Hill Street for anything I could find. Visiting 3 times I was very grateful for the support of Sr de Porres and Jocelyn Butcher. As I was browsing through the CWL collection of Minutes and Branch reports (1987 – 2002) old photos and press clippings; I noticed in particular three things:

The first was the fashions of the 1960s. Total Fashion Week! Hats, gloves, handbags, dresses, fur stoles, court shoes; perfection in every way. Not a pair of trousers in sight. The Catholic Women's League was the group to be in and the place to be. Even on the bus trip to Seatoun in 1967 – everyone is perfectly dressed. The second was the devotion and commitment that is still continuing today, of a very loyal group of Karori women. In 1987 Anne Joyce, President of the Wellington Archdiocese, supported on same Committee by Anne McIntyre, Ethne Wyndham-Smith, Cassie Devlin and June Cannons (RIP). Mary Lowe (RIP), Anne Lumb following on in later committees; all either at National, Archdiocese, Regional and Branch level. Working with the World Organisation of Catholic Women's Organisations (WOCWO), National Council of Women; local parish/community involvement, the Mission Projects. The third was that the CWL was never shy at speaking out and/or supporting and promoting some very controversial issues. E.g.

- In 1977 Stratford CWL Conference "Child Care Centres Opposed" The CWL Archdiocese conference came out against Catholic women establishing or assisting with child care centres or child-minding groups.
- 'Wel-Com' April 1987 "Women to seek share in all Church decisions" Remit proposed by president elect Anne Joyce to the Wgton Archdiocese Conference.
- In 1999, the CWL/Wgtn Archdiocese wrote a letter to Hon Nick Smith supporting the bid for continued funding for the He Huarahi Tamariki – school for teenage parents in Porirua – this also supported by Sr Marcellin.
- The 2011 CWL 'At Home' Appeal raised \$10,112 for ECPAT New Zealand (Child Alert – Preventing the sexual exploitation of children).



Candle presented to the Karori CWL by Fr Don Morrison. Candle holder is from Makara Church.

Our Jubilee Party was a tribute to those past and to celebrate the present. The evening started with a Remembrance Prayer, led by Fr Robert Devlin SM, list of deceased CWL Karori members read out; Jubilee messages followed from: Archbishop John Dew, Frs Thomas O'Brien & Peter O'Connell, Br Robert Johnsen SM, & Cecily Wheeler (Former President); Toast to Absent Friends led by Mary-Anne Peetz (Lay Pastoral Leader Wilton); Presentations to previous Presidents: Anne Joyce, Ethne Wyndham-Smith, Anne Lumb, Julia O'Connor and current President Janet Lowe. Janet was presented with an extra gift by Christine Murdoch as it seemed very unfair that Janet should have bought her own present! Entertainment was provided by 2 Rock n Roll dancers and audience participated in the Gay Gordons. Evening continued with: Cutting of the Cake, Christmas sing-along and Fr Seph (PP) concluded the evening with a final prayer and Supper followed.



In Faith and Service.

Photo: 'A Fine Group of Women' (Quote from Fr Thomas O'Brien, in his Jubilee message to the League). Left to right: Lucy Keller, Cassie Devlin, Anne McIntyre, Margaret France and Monica Smith. Background: Vonnie Nunns is poised at the piano to lead the Christmas Sing-along. Vonnie also made the cake.

