



National Newsletter

November 2021

TE RÖPŪ WÄHINE KATORIKA O AOTEAROA.

Kia Kaha Courage – Take Heart

Te Ara a Maria –
Mary's Way



National President: Susan Dickson
Cwlanz.nat.president@gmail.com Executive:
National Secretary: Zella McGirr
Cwlanz.nat.secretary@gmail.com National
Treasurer: Kathy Bell
Cwlnz.nat.treasurer@gmail.com
Special Officers:
International Secretary: Colleen McMurchy
National Mission Secretary: Joan Lawn
National Social Issues: Dawn Mullins
Diocesan Presidents:
Auckland: Fleur de Farias
Hamilton: Margaret Brownsey Wellington
Archdiocese: Susan Lloyd
Christchurch: Sylvia Mellish
Dunedin: Anne McRandle
National Board Chaplain: Clare Murphy
RNDM

Dear Members

We are nearing the end of 2021 with only a few more weeks before the start of Advent. A time to reflect on the past year and make preparation for the feast of Christmas.

I imagine many of you share the uncertainties that I have around what Christmas will look like this year. This Christmas, we were expecting all our children and their families to join us here in Methven. It seems most unlikely our Melbourne family will make it and who knows what the travel restrictions in New Zealand will look like.

This is a disappointment for me but, is insignificant when placed alongside the worry and heartache for those families who have lost jobs and food security because of this pandemic. Bruce and I and our family will still have a well-stocked dinner table and plenty of gifts to share.

But what will Christmas be like for hundreds, perhaps thousands in our vulnerable communities?

I challenge each branch to initiate and lead a project in your parish. A project that involves as many people as possible in a response to bring Christmas love to the vulnerable.

Something like getting people to donate a Warehouse, Kmart, Postie, or supermarket voucher. Bundle these up and send them to a Catholic school whose parents you know will be struggling this Christmas. Perhaps in South Auckland, Northland, or in your own city and neighbourhoods.

Another idea I have seen asks people to donate and collect a food item on each day of Advent. A mix of treats and food staples. These can then be dropped off to a foodbank on Christmas eve.

There is a piece in this newsletter from Sylvia Mellish recounting her experiences as a teacher of a DS child. I have heard three different inspiring parents speaking of the challenges and joys of bringing up a DS child. I am looking forward to a great total for our Mission At Home Appeal. It is not too late to send in contributions. We won't be passing the money on until early next year.

Congratulations on a wonderful past year, The Blessings of Christmas to you all, *Susan*



Make a Difference in Afghanistan



After seeing the news item about starving families in Afghanistan selling their children for food, and reading the comments on our Facebook Page, I contacted Julianne Hickey, CEO of Caritas NZ.

Caritas International is active in Afghanistan working with women and children. Caritas NZ plan to send money to Afghanistan before the end of November. This is an opportunity for us to help make a difference.

Go to the Caritas NZ website, <https://caritas.org.nz/> select *donate now*. Individuals and branches can make an online donation via a credit card or internet banking. You might like to

make an appeal at a Sunday Mass. You may be surprised.

Choose *General Funds*, put CWL and Afghanistan in the comments section, or after making the donation email Caritas using the contact us facility and tell them you have donated as a CWL member.

I have been thinking if the Lord knocked at my door, I would open the door to the knock, the Lord would say to me "You called, put the jug on, am I here to stay?" My reply would be "Yes Lord".



Photo taken at our October Archdiocesan Council meeting where the theme was "Flower Power in the 1960's". Our Treasurer Diane Glynan is 'absent' as she is the photographer. Happy to announce that all our Council members had been 'double-vaccinated' at this time. Two significant topics for discussion and *action* were our Reflection Day with facilitator Joy Cowley on Friday, 12th November at Paraparaumu, and our Archdiocesan Conference 16/17th March 2022 in New Plymouth - we have some thought-provoking speakers on the theme "Old Ways Won't Open New Doors" - we are also planning a craft stall for which Council are gathering contributions from our members. We have applied for a grant to pay for a bus to travel from Wellington, picking up members on the way.

On behalf of all the members of our Archdiocese, I wish all CWLANZ members a holy, happy and peaceful Christmas. If you are lucky enough to be surrounded by family, you are so blessed – thanks be to God. If alone at that time, our Lord will be with you as he always knocks on your door. We will all keep in our prayers the homeless and disadvantaged - after all, it is among this group that Jesus would choose to spend most of his time if he were alive today.

Susan Lloyd, Archdiocesan President

E iti noa ana nā te aroha

A small thing given with love

- Over lockdown I have thought often about this whakatauaāki (proverb) and been so heartened by the many kindnesses of people. Not normally a *Seven Sharp* fan I have delighted in watching it during lockdown to see how people from throughout Aotearoa have engaged in doing little things for others. Some things may appear little but, in many instances have entailed a sacrifice given with love.
- Even though we have been constrained in what we have been able to do lately, as Leaguers we still keep things ticking along. Have you looked at *CWL NZ newsroom* on Facebook where our various Diocesan newsletters, WUCWO panui, and National newsletters appear? Also, CWL Facebook page. It's been wonderful to read about the activities various members and branches are engaging in around the country, especially for Aucklanders who haven't been able to meet or travel for such a long time. Small things done with love. Thanks, Sylvia Mellish, for putting these postings together.



<https://sharemysuper.org.nz/>

- Have you discovered this website yet? I have donated my winter power payment to one of the Charity food banks listed – given with love to those not as fortunate as I. And yes, I still give the Bishop's Caring Foundation and St Vincent de Paul. CWL motto *Faith and Service* involves us serving God and our community with love – we may be getting older and somewhat infirm, but we are still capable of doing small things, like knitting, baking, praying, sewing, selling, donating, comforting, and talking to others. We all contribute what we can. Hang in there CWL members we're pretty wonderful people!
- **Voices** the WUCWO magazine contains various articles about Catholic women from around the world and their contributions to Church and their society *nā te aroha*. In this newsletter you will also read about a small group of CWL ladies from around NZ who are walking 1445kms and gaining \$ sponsors for Hagar NZ. Hagar supports those who have experienced severe trauma as a result of slavery, trafficking, or abuse. Although we may only walk a bit extra each day for the cause what we do is given in love. Kia kaha ngā wāhine toa (champion women).

E iti noa ana nā te aroha
Colleen McMurchy
CWLanz International Officer

The Ashburton CWL celebrated their 80th birthday in

October with a luncheon at The Lake House, Lake Hood, Ashburton. Members dressed in period attire, celebrated with the other branches in our region.

Also, in attendance were the National President Susan and our Diocesan President Sylvia. The two oldest members who are both in their 90's cut the cake.



LOCKDOWN AFTER- EFFECTS

I was among people from all over the Hamilton Diocese when Bishop Steve Lowe introduced his Pastoral Plan at the end of May, for the next 5 years.



The theme for the current year was COMPANIONING with one another, the whole parish and including parish schools. With an incredibly short time the Covid pandemic struck again and demanded of us, we were in LOCKDOWN. This meant masking up, social distancing, no singing but lots of signing and a dispensation from attendance at Sunday Mass.

How could we possibly companion one another?

It has been generous of our priests to celebrate Mass on LIVESTREAM with choices from all round the country, but it is a SOLO mass, attended in front of the TV or a PC.

Without the gathering to celebrate Eucharist, how are we meant to support one another's faith journey?

How can we share the grief of families in our parishes of League branches when a faithful soul has died?

In response to these questions, I have an even greater fear.

Non-attendance at Sunday Mass is becoming a habit for many and will they return? Will all of us come back after lockdown? Or have we become strangers to each other already?

I think we will need all the graces through the Holy Spirit to restore parish communities, well before we have the ability to begin taking part in the Synod discussions. I am convinced that LOCKDOWN has caused losses from which recovery will be exceptionally difficult, if not impossible.

PRAYER will be essential for the re-building of our beloved church community.

Margaret Brownsey Hamilton President

A New Kind of Branch I am looking for some women to join an online branch that I am planning to setup. It will be based in Methven but because it will be online, a virtual branch, members can come from all over NZ. Do you know someone who may be interested? Perhaps one of those women who support us but because of work can't come to meetings. Time to shoulder tap.



Doing business online: 1445 Hagar Walking Challenge. Twenty-four of us from across NZ joined together to walk the length of the Vietnamese border to raise awareness and funds for the work of Hagar helping the victims of human trafficking across the Vietnam Chinese border. This was organised in a matter of days using email and Facebook. We set up a Facebook Messenger group where we gave ourselves daily updates and encouragement. Between us we have walked over 2500 ks. I am not sure how much money we have raised but at 50c or \$1 a k, it's good money. We have all enjoyed the experience.

This is an organisation being nibble and flexible.

Well done CWL team! Who said we couldn't operate in the online space and make a difference!

Margaret Hodge

Margaret has been Mission Convenor for Rotorua branch for over 50 years since 1969, working with their mission community at Natovi in Fiji. The parish was funded to a great extent from the containers of clothing which Margaret filled and shipped. These were sold for income. The clothing was cleaned, placed in cartons stored in St Michael's parish crypt with the assistance of John Paul College seniors and then made the journey to Tauranga port in the container which had been financed by St Vincent de Paul.

Unfortunately, the cost of the import duty on reaching Fiji has made this effort redundant.

The branch has twice received National Mission project funding as Natovi is prone to hurricane damage. The church and the school dormitories needing repair as recently as 2018.

The branch now is involved in Healthy Homes, an initiative between the Ministry of Health and Primary Health Care workers. Bedding is collected and stored in Margaret's garage prior to distribution. She is a most loyal member with attendance at meetings, Regional Days and Conferences. Her Faith and Service are admirable and an example to all.



SYNOD 2021 – 2023

Pope Francis has announced that there will be a Synod of Bishops in 2023. What is unusual about this synod is a worldwide process of discernment that will lead up to the synod.

We are being invited to take part in this process over the coming weeks before the end of November. Each diocese will have their own way of doing this. We all need to ask the questions and take the opportunity to take part.

We are invited to reflect on ten main themes: The Journeying Companions; Speaking

Out; Responsibility for the Mission; Dialogue in Church and society; Ecumenism; Authority and Participation; Discerning and deciding; and Forming Ourselves in Synodality.

Source the relevant materials from your parish or diocese, join a group, pray, and reflect on the themes and respond to questions. We must take this opportunity to speak out

A Covid 19 Lament AUCKLAND DIOCESE

A lovely quote from Pope Francis is "What would happen to us if God did not always give us the chance to start over again" When we finally come out of this pandemic, we will have the chance to get back into action as women of the League in Auckland with renewed strength and courage. Kia kaha.



Who would have thought at the start of 2021 that by August Auckland would be plunged into a Covid 19 induced strict Lockdown for weeks on end and as I write this report, it still is. Such uncertain times. Week by week we wait to see the outcome of a Monday Cabinet meeting as we sit to watch our TV screens at 4pm to learn our fate. Several League activities have had to be postponed and eventually cancelled. So there have been less branch meetings and there will be no Regional Days this year. September came and

went, and we weren't able to put in place the fun activities we had planned for celebrating the 110 Year Anniversary of WUCWO.

Yet this virus has given me much to be grateful for. Grateful that we were able to hold our Diocesan Conference in April and our Annual Carmelite Mass and luncheon in July. Grateful that later in that month I was able to attend my first National Conference in Rotorua. Grateful that we identified as Amazing Women in our Diocese - Janet Presland, Colleen Petricevich, Eileen Auckram and Colleen Jordan and highlighted them at the Conference. Grateful for my fellow Council members who have adapted to different methods of communication for decision making including our first Zoom meeting as seen in the photo. Grateful that branches have kept in touch with their members through email or phone and they all sent their annual financial dues on time.

Fleur de Farias, Auckland Diocesan President

REPORT FROM DUNEDIN DIOCESAN CATHOLIC WOMEN LEAGUE



Following on from our National Catholic Women League Conference in July 2021 with the posters of CWL women who represent our Catholic Women, this needed to be shared. At short notice a number of branches had presented a profile of women in their area. What a chance to present what our members had presented on the National Stage.

Because of Covid restrictions in the later months we haven't been able to have our larger group gatherings, with other women groups. We have still come together within our branches. What better time to come together as we celebrate 110 years of Active Women who have worked in Faith and Service. An invite was extended to our League members, plus other women to share an afternoon sharing photos, memories (books of recorded events and newspaper

clippings), showing the history to the later members, of what the women before them were involved with, within League. The theme, Coming Together in STYLE. Come, dressed up in stoles, wraps, jewellery, hats, gloves to share an afternoon in STYLE.

One of our member's Kate made a cake from a 100-year-old recipe that was cooked in a skillet. Really Delicious. Part of the afternoon was a glass filled from the raffle I won at National Conference.

One of our member's Stephanie Swann is Dunedin Diocesan Synod Contact. SYNOD 2021-2023. We wish her all the support and prayers. There is more for us as Catholic Women going forward. Journey together.

At this time I would like to wish all CWL member "Christmas Greetings". Looking forward to 2022, working together especially with SYNOD 2021-2022.

Kia Kaha Courage, Take Heart

Anne McRandle,

Dunedin Diocesan Catholic Women League, President.
October 2021

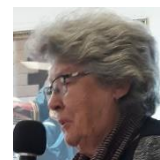
On My Mind Dawn Mullins

Covid 19 has fully invaded our living style to the point we could call it a social engineering activity by default. It is certainly causing confusion and distress. This week in Parliament, (according to the radio broadcast per my car radio) a reference was made to the 1000 days believed needed for a mother and baby to bond. (Great the concept is noted at Govt. level.) There is NZ research supporting the 1000 day-time span for mothers and babies to bond for the wellbeing of children. It is time therefore to take seriously the resources needed to support a pregnant mother-to-be towards a healthy baby and stable family.

On 21/10/21 the "NZ Herald" featured a comment by Susan ST. John, the heading "Why the Government isn't working for families" It is serious reading and presents much for the CWL to comment on. I look forward to a discussion we could have about the subject.

The Pope has called a Synod, information to date is that each diocese is conducting its own discussion group. Just after he was elected, he called for a survey on marriage. It is not known the level of response, but a back number of a Marist Messenger mentioned the survey presented difficult issues and it was put aside. I have given a report and suggestions for the CWL Board to consider at the next meeting but the above is topical now.

Blessings, Dawn Mullins Nat. Soc. Issues Cord



Faith and Service and donating in the time of Covid. There are many options for donating to a myriad of different groups doing wonderful to help the vulnerable in NZ. Google the charity and follow the steps. Our recent Mission at Home Appeals could be a good place to start.

Foodbanks, social housing providers and schools are all under stress.



<https://donate.svdp.org.nz/>



This November, at the **26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26)**, countries will announce their plans to meet the goals of the Paris agreement. Follow the process on <https://laudatosimovement.org/>

The Laudato Si' Movement serves the Catholic family worldwide to turn Pope Francis' Laudato Si' encyclical into action for climate justice by undergoing our own ecological conversion, transforming our lifestyles, and calling for bold public policies together with the wider climate movement.

Our common home and common family are suffering. The climate emergency is causing rising seas, a warmer planet, and more extreme weather. It's devastating the lives of our poorest sisters and brothers. At the same time, biologists estimate that we're driving species to extinction at a rate of 100 to 1,000 times their usual rate. **"We have no such right"** (Laudato Si' 33).

Down Syndrome children in the school setting

“**Down syndrome** is a genetic disorder that is caused by a chromosomal abnormality that occurs right after birth. Typically, everyone is born with 46 chromosomes. However, individuals with Down syndrome are born with 47 chromosomes. This triggers abnormal changes in the development of the child’s brain and body. Children with Down syndrome have very distinct characteristics. They are generally small-bodied, with a flat face and a tongue that may protrude”.

Children with Down Syndrome are always described by their parents as a special gift. They are beautiful, cheerful, friendly, outgoing, empathetic and most all very loveable. As with any child, parents are the first teachers of these children. It takes a special parent to raise a special child and although all parents believe their children to be special, and they are, in the case of raising a Downes Syndrome child it differs significantly from raising a ‘normal’ child, in the effort required, which can be extremely hard work. The love for the child of course is no different, but the commitment differs considerably.

In order to mainstream a DS child, schools need to develop a special strategy plan. While children with Down Syndrome often have some form of learning disability, this can often mask a wide range of talents and abilities that may not always be recognised. In my experience as a teacher and a principal, inclusive resources and inclusive participation must be provided in order for children to achieve. For instance DS children tend to love music of any kind - playing, singing and listening. This can often be extended so that they meet with measured success in the entertainment world.



John: I have wonderful memories of one of my pupils, John, taking part in our annual music festival. John didn’t come onto the stage until it was time for our item but when he did, he made quite an appearance, with several ‘bows’, greatly appreciated by the audience. John loved to follow the other children, so a careful watch needed to be kept on him at all times. He would have a tendency to run away if faced with too difficult a challenge! I well remember the time he ‘fell in love’ with one of the girls in his class. This became quite awkward as she wasn’t sure whether to be flattered or terrified as he was quite strong and had the ‘burning desire’ to kiss her whenever he saw her. It took several conversations to convince him that this really wasn’t appropriate behaviour.

John, like many DS children had poor auditory memory, hearing and visual weaknesses – he wore quite strong glasses. Sequencing was difficult and his fine motor skills were impaired because of low muscle tone. He had a brief attention span - often to his and our detriment. John loved joining in sports events. Although he was always a little slower than the other children, he always finished the event whether it be a race or whatever. He would give anything a go and the children cheered him on loudly.

Occasionally John’s glasses would get in the way of what he wanted to do and he would throw them away-I think he went through quite a few pairs during his years with us - I don’t actually remember ever seeing them without their being taped up! We even took John with us on camps each year. He was of course accompanied by his ever loving and vigilant mother on these occasions and would often just come for a day if we weren’t too far away. He was included in everything we did and he thrived on it.

John loved anything ‘hands on’. His teacher aide was amazing. He worked with her in all the basic life skills we could think of. He could write simple sentences and his speech improved with a concerted effort from all. He could read books with a reading age of a 7 - 8yr old.

When mainstreaming a DS child, teachers need to optimize their learning potential by finding and providing the right mix of materials and aids that will challenge and maximise their learning process. As visual learners they love ‘hands on’ – besides computers, iPads and iPods which have been a wonderful asset, they need to be exposed to art, musical instruments, modelling and cooking, to name just a few.

There are many challenges when including DS children in the classroom and I have been asked on many occasions if I think children with Down Syndrome should be mainstreamed in our schools. This question cannot be answered with a simple ‘yes’. There are many considerations that have to be taken into consideration. Firstly the commitment of the parents and or caregivers is paramount. Funding and resources must be readily available to the school. Teachers and teacher aides must have the necessary skills and the whole school and school community, as a unit, must be prepared for and accepting of, the many challenges that lie ahead. If all of this is in place, then mainstreaming a child will be a successful and rewarding experience for all concerned.

Sylvia Mellish – CWL Christchurch Diocesan President

