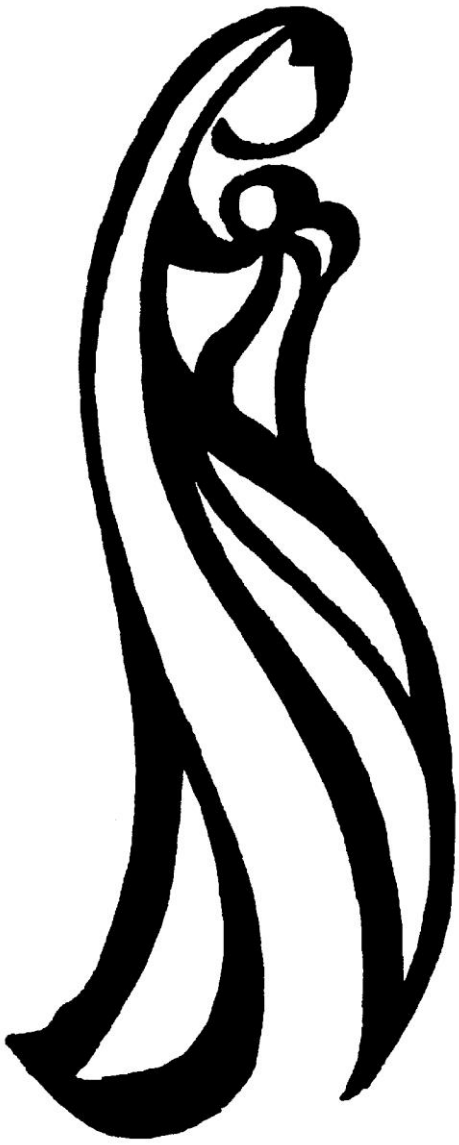

CWL Prays

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
C-702 Scotland Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3M 1X5
Telephone: (204) 927-2310 Facsimile: (204) 927-2321

Introduction

When we come together to pray as women of faith, we look for words of bonding, of inspiration, of support, of praise – words that can convey our needs, our thoughts and our feelings to our Father in heaven.

This handbook, prepared for councils across Canada, is intended to be resource material for the enhancement of spiritual programs at regular meetings, conventions or special CWL functions.

These prayer services have been put together from many excellent programs for different occasions. They may be reproduced for your use in their entirety or you may choose to use just a portion of the service. If this handbook inspires you or your council to put together your own prayer services, we encourage you to share your ideas with other councils.

Our sincere appreciation goes to those councils that contributed services or prayers. By their sharing, they have blessed us and will themselves be blessed as we use their gift of prayer.

Helen Turner
National Spiritual Development Chairperson
1990-1992

With ecclesiastical approbation of
†James H. MacDonald
National Spiritual Advisor
(1992)

* Please note that many other resources are available, including the Programs page of the CWL website.

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You Did Not Choose Me, I Chose You

Opening Prayer: Life-giving God, You call us to be Your daughters and sons. You call us to Your service. You have a special plan for each of us. Help us to be generous and joyful, loving and caring, and to be open to You in the people and events of our lives. We ask this in the name of Your Son Jesus, in union with Your Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Scripture Readings: God speaks to us. He says:

1. Isaiah 43:1 "I have called you by name. You are Mine."
2. Isaiah 42:6 "I, the Lord, have called you and given you power to see that justice is done on earth."
3. John 15:16 "You did not choose Me. I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures."
4. John 20:21 "As the Father sent Me, so I send you."

General Intentions

Introduction: Our God is a God of love and compassion. He hears our prayers and answers all our needs. Let us pray to Him in confidence.

For all leaders in the church, that they may truly reflect Your love and compassion. **Response: Heavenly Maker, we ask You.**

For all League members and all their spiritual advisors, that they may be bearers of Your Good News. ***R***

For victims of abuse, violence and stress, that they may receive support and help from those around them. ***R***

For the sick and suffering, that they may be given strength and healing. ***R***

For all those who seek You, Lord, that they may once again find You and rejoice in Your love. ***R***

For families in crisis, that they may once again find peace, love and harmony. ***R***

Leader: Ever powerful God, You sent us Your Son to be our light. Send us Your Spirit that we may ever live in Your path. We ask this in Jesus' name.

All: Amen

Dorice Marcil
Newfoundland and Labrador

God Created Earth and Heaven

Reflection: Genesis 1:20-31

Response: O Lord, help us care for Your creation.

You filled the waters of the earth with graceful creatures, providing food for our bodies and delight for our eyes…. Now their numbers dwindle, their bodies are deformed and poisoned. ***R***

You gave to the air the flashing wings of birds and the beauty of their song…. Now their nesting places are destroyed and their eggs grow fragile from our wastes. ***R***

You covered the earth with every kind of plant and tree, bearing fruit for us, purifying our air and giving rest to our souls…. Now we fear to eat the fruit, the forests are stripped away or slowly poisoned and the barren lands erode. ***R***

You fitted animals to every habitat, all co-existing in perfect balance. Some were food to us, some aided in our labour – each filling its unique place in the chain of life…. Now whole species disappear through thoughtless destruction of habitat or senseless slaughter. ***R***

You made man and woman in Your image and likeness, wishing us to be like You, and You gave all creatures into our stewardship…. We have abused Your stewardship, damaging not only plants and animals, but also turning on one another so that wounded and broken people abound. ***R***

But, You Lord, in Your mercy, open our eyes to our failure and danger. You give us the wisdom and the will to start to mend the broken earth and broken humanity. You help us work in the vineyard of Your beautiful earth to produce the fruit of a renewed nature and a healed people. ***R***

Patricia Sheehan
Toronto Archdiocesan Council

Our Mission

Leader: We give special importance to our Mission Statement which expresses what we stand for and our aim. Let us together read our Mission Statement.

All: "The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service."

Leader: All powerful and loving God who makes us holy through Your Son and empowers us by Your Spirit, grant that our lives may be rooted in Your word so that we may love as You love. We ask this in Jesus' name.

All: Amen

Reading: Matthew 5:1-10

Leader: These words Jesus gave us in the Sermon on the Mount are words that lead us in our Christian mission. Let us pray to Him together.

RS: Happy are the poor in spirit.

LS: Help us to see the gifts You have given us and that, of ourselves, we are nothing.

RS: Happy the gentle.

LS: Help us to be more sensitive to the needs of others.

RS: Happy those who mourn.

LS: Help us to lay our sorrows in Your keeping.

RS: Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right.

LS: May we always seek justice and goodness.

RS: Happy the merciful.

LS: Like You, may we be generous in love, compassion and forgiveness.

RS: Happy the pure in heart.

LS: Let us not work for our gain, but only for Your glory.

RS: Happy the peacemakers.

LS: May we as members of this executive live in harmony and work actively to establish Your peace.

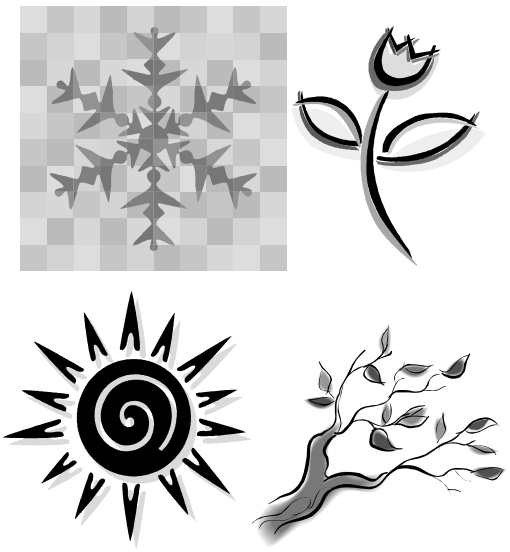
RS: Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right.

Side 2: Lord, give us courage and strength to do what is right.

Leader: God of love, You are the way, the truth and the life. Help us daily to live our lives "rooted in gospel values," that our lives may speak peace to all and that the work of our hands and minds may awaken all lives to a new life in Christ.

All: Amen

Dorice Marcil
Newfoundland and Labrador



Seasonal Prayers

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – January

Theme: Praise God who loves justice.

Opening Prayer

All: Heavenly Father, You loved us from the beginning of time; help us to love others as You love them. Let Your love shine through us so that we might be a light to the world.

Reading: Matthew 5:21-24

Silent Reflection

Psalm 146

Response: Praise the Lord O my soul.

Prayer

All: Come Holy Spirit,
Replace the tensions within us with a holy relaxation;
Replace the turbulence within us with a sacred calm;
Replace the anxiety within us with a quiet confidence;
Replace the fear within us with a strong faith;
Replace the bitterness within us with the sweetness of grace;
Replace the darkness within us with a gentle light;
Replace the coolness within us with a living warmth;
Replace the night within us with the brightness of day.

Father of heaven and earth, hear our prayers and show us the way to peace in the world.

Closing Prayer

All: Lord Jesus, we believe You died on the cross of Calvary to gather sinful alienated humanity into one body of which You are the head. We repent for our share in the sins of violence, slander and prejudice against fellow Christians in other churches. We ask You that in our prayer, our witness and our relationships, we may now be instruments of reconciliation. May we recognize that the power of the cross is greater than all the agents of division and strife.

Celebration for Ash Wednesday

Leader: Take a look around you, tell me what you see; people here to workshop the Lord, just like you and me.

Left: Some have come in gladness, some have come with fear.

Right: But all have come because they know that love grows here.

Leader: Yes, love grows here and all of us can share the wonder and joy that it can bring. For God is near, teaching us to care, and showing our hearts how to sing.

Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Song: Peace Prayer or Service

Leader: Today the ashes remind us that we are mortal. We have been marked with ashes to show our humble state. Our bodies return to dust from where they came. Our bodies will rise again to experience eternal life. God's great gift to each of us.

Left: Some of us are lonely, some have many friends.

Right: Some lives just beginning, some are near the end.

Left: We come together, knowing He is near.

Right: Once again reminding us that love grows here!

Leader: Yes, love grows here and each one of us can feed and nurture it and watch it grow as we are present to each other. The League and its members have the power to make love grow beyond belief. Let us join hands in unity and love and recite the prayer that Jesus taught us:

All: Our Father…

Lynn L'Heureux
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

Lenten Forgiveness Service

This service requires small papers and pencils for all. These should be handed out before beginning. A lectern, leader and lector are needed.

Introduction: As we come together this evening, let us take a few moments to reflect on our busy lives and our relationships with family, friends and those with whom we work. You have all been given a slip of paper; as you think about your relationships, write the name of one person whom you might have hurt in the last week – were unkind or unfeeling. Hold the folded paper in your hand during the service. *(Allow time for thought and writing a name.)*

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Heavenly Pardoner, we all have a need for forgiveness – to forgive and to be forgiven. You sent us Your Son to teach us the peace of a forgiving heart. Grant that we may always know peace in the lives of those we touch. We ask this in Jesus' name.

We shall begin with a beautiful gospel story of forgiveness and love, and reflect on its meaning in our lives today.

Reader: A reading from the gospel according to St. Luke. (Luke 7:36-50)

(Pause for a time of reflection or have a time of sharing.)

Leader: Jesus saw in the woman's act of love her need for reconciliation and, because of her great love, extended forgiveness to her. God calls us all to reconciliation. How do I respond? *(Pause)*

Is someone hurting because of my failure to love? *(Pause)*

Let us each, in our heart, ask forgiveness of the Lord for each person we have hurt. Let us now hold up our paper, turn to the person next to us, confess we have sinned and ask forgiveness. We will not name the sin nor the person hurt. When you have extended forgiveness to each other, give each other a sign of peace.

Tear up your paper as a sign of reconciliation. Let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us, paying special attention to the petition that God forgive us as we forgive others.

All: Our Father…

All: Heavenly Forgiver, we have been touched by Your great love and compassion. Grant that we may show that same love and compassion and that our lives may speak of peace to all those whose lives we touch. We ask this through Christ, our Saviour, the Prince of Peace.

Closing Hymn

Joan Durand
Ontario Provincial Council

Lenten Journey

"This is what Yahweh asks of you: only this, to act justly,
to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

Leader: Let us walk together, walk humbly with our God. (Micah 6:8)

All: Lord, You have probed me and You know me… You know when I sit and when I stand. Behind me and before me You hem me in… You rest Your hand upon me. (Psalm 139:1, 18)

Leader: Fear not, for I have called you by name… you are Mine. When you pass through the water, I will be with you… when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned because you are precious in My eyes… Before I formed you in the womb I knew you… I appoint you as prophet to the nations. (Isaiah 43:1-5, Jeremiah 1:5)

All: But Lord I do not know how to speak… I am too young. (Jeremiah 1:6)

Leader: Say not, I am too young; to whomever I send you, you shall go: whatever I command you, you shall speak… have no fear for I am with you to deliver you. (Jeremiah 1:7-8)

All: Woe is me for I am doomed. I am a person with unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the king, the Lord of Hosts. (Isaiah 6:5)

Leader: Not according to your sins do I deal with you… nor according to your crimes… for as the heavens are high above the earth, so surpassing is my kindness to you who fear me. (Psalm 103)

All: I am deeply troubled by Your words… how can this be? (Luke 1:26ff)

Leader: Fear not… the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most high will overshadow you… nothing is impossible with God. (Luke 1:36)

All: I am the servant of the Lord, let it be done according to Your word.

Leader: Then you must take up your cross and follow me… for the Son of Humanity must suffer and die before He rises on the third day. (Luke 9:22)

All: But I am weak… I still have faults and limitations… take away the thorn in my flesh I beg you. (2 Corinthians 12:7)

Leader: My grace is enough for you; for in weakness my power reaches perfection. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

All: That I may know Christ Jesus and that I may experience the power flowing from His resurrection. (Philippians 3:10)

Leader: You will be content with weakness and distress for the sake of Jesus for when you are powerless, then you are strong. (2 Corinthians 12:10)

All: Grant me the spirit of wisdom and insight to know Jesus clearly... enlighten my innermost vision that I may know the great hope to which You call me. (Ephesians 1:17-18)

Leader: My power is at work in you… and it can do immeasurably more than you can ask or imagine. (Ephesians 3:20)

All: To You be glory in Christ Jesus through all generations. Amen (Ephesians 3:32) Be quiet in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.

Left: Lord Jesus, open our hearts and our minds.

Right: That we might learn from You that prayer is entry into life.

Left: Lord Jesus, we long to be our truest selves – to be one with You and the Father.

Right: Yet we fear that self-abandonment which leads to life.

Left: Lord Jesus, this day though we are yet a long way off…

Right: Let Your Father catch sight of us, let Him be moved with pity, and let Him touch us that we, like You, might be a person of prayer.

Left: Lord Jesus, lay Your hands gently upon us.

Right: That we might respond to the life that You and Your Father call us into.

All: Consecrate them by means of truth – "Your word is truth." As You sent Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world: I consecrate myself for their sakes now, that they may be consecrated in truth. (John 17:17-19)

Left: God, You are my God, I am seeking You. My soul is thirsting for You, my flesh is longing for You, a land parches, weary and waterless; I long to gaze on You in the sanctuary and to see Your power and glory.

Right: Your love is better than life itself, my lips will recite Your praise; all my life I will bless You, in Your name lift up my hands; my soul will feast most richly, on my lips a song of joy, and in my mouth, praise.

Left: On my bed, I think of You. I meditate on You all night long, for You have always helped me. I sing for You in the shadow of Your wings; my soul clings close to You. Your right hand supports me.

All: Be quiet before the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.

Prayer: *(Time for quiet and shared prayer)*

All: Lord, You wait for us until we are open to You. We wait for Your word to make us receptive. Attune us to Your voice, to Your silence; speak and bring Your Son to us, Jesus, the word of Your peace.

We worship You, Holy Spirit of God, and we may only guess as best we can who You are for us. We call You by human names and words so that we may not be entirely silent. We open our hearts to receive You that we may learn how deeply and invisibly You are present everywhere.

Thanksgiving Service

Opening Prayer

Leader: O God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we, the women of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, are gathered together to praise and thank You. We thank You for Your goodness and kindness to us and to all humankind. We praise You for bringing us to life and filling us with the hope of one day being with You in Your home. Grant that we may praise You, not only with our words, but also by serving You with our lives. May we always be aware of Your mighty deeds and give thanks to You through Jesus Christ, our Lord, now and forever.

Psalm 138: Thanksgiving and praise

Scripture: Matthew 15:36
Response by all: Glory be to the Father…

Petitions: Life-giving God, You have shown us by Your many gifts the great love You have for us. Hear our prayers of gratitude. **Response:** Giver of gifts, we thank You.

For the gifts of joy, that we might radiate our happiness in You. ***R***

For the gift of peace, that we might bring tranquility and serenity to our dealings with others. ***R***

For the gift of patience, that we might understand and be thoughtful of those around us. ***R***

For the gift of faith, that we might realize that our world is Your hands. ***R***

For the gift of humility, that we may recognize the many talents You have given us so lavishly, and that all success comes from and through You. ***R***

Grant, O bountiful God, that we may walk always in Your presence and give thanks to Your name.

Closing Prayer

All: Almighty God, You are the true light of the world. We rejoice and give thanks in Your grace and peace. Sanctify our souls and instill into our hears a desire to serve others as Your Son served us. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Closing Hymn

Joan Durand
Ontario Provincial Council

Advent Service – The Light of the World

This service should be conducted in a darkened room or church. Everyone should have an unlit candle. The pascal or other large candle is placed beside the lectern. Music may be recorded or hymns sung at appropriate times. Have matches handy. A leader and two readers will be needed.

Introduction

Leader: In our prayer lives we try to be open and listen to the voice of God within us. Tonight, let us try to relax as the room is darkened. Let us quiet ourselves and be aware of the presence of God in and around us. *(Soft music, room is darkened.)* Let us listen and experience the message of the Lord.

Reader 1: In the beginning, God created heaven and earth.

Reader 2: The earth was dark and empty. *(Pause for silence.)*

Reader 1: And God said, "Let there be light."

Reader 2: And there was light. *(Leader lights the large candle.)*

Reader 1: God covered the earth with all kinds of plants and animals. Then He made a man called Adam and a woman called Eve and placed them in a beautiful garden called paradise. He gave them one command:

Reader 2: "Do not eat the fruit of this tree." But the devil came and promised them greater knowledge if they disobeyed. And so, because they were proud and foolish, they listened to Satan and betrayed their promise to God. They ate of the forbidden fruit.

Reader 1: As punishment for their betrayal, God sent them out of the garden of paradise. From that moment on, humankind was made subject to sin, suffering and death.

Reader 2: The light of God's life was gone from their souls. The earth was plunged into the darkness of sin and ignorance. *(Leader extinguishes large candle.)*

Reader 1: But God promised Adam and Eve that He would send a redeemer who was to be a new light for the world, who would fill the souls of humankind. The people kept God's promise in mind and looked forward with longing for the coming of the redeemer.

(Sing two verses of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" or play soft recorded music.)

Reader 1: To remind people of His promise, God sent certain people from time to time to be as candles of light shining in the darkness.

Reader 2: God inspired certain prophets to tell about the coming of the saviour. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel were such prophets. They spoke of a shepherd who would watch over them and care for them.

Reader 1: The people were told to have courage and fear not, for God would come to them. The deaf would hear and the blind would see. There would be no more sorrow or mourning.

Reader 2: At last a man came who was to prepare the people for the coming of the redeemer – John the Baptist.

Reader 1: I, John, am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths."

Reader 2: And the people asked, "Are you the promised one or shall we look for another?"

Reader 1: And he said, "There is one coming after me who is greater than I, whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."

Reader 2: Be ready, my people, to meet the Lord, for He is coming. *(Sing two verses of "The King of Glory" or play soft music.)*

Reader 1: In the fullness of time, God sent His angel to a maiden called Mary. "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women."

Reader 2: And the angel said, "Do not fear, Mary, for God is pleased with you. The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and you shall have a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great and people will know Him as the Son of God."

Reader 1: And Mary answered, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word. My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour, for He who is might has done great things for me and holy is His name."

Leader: And so the redeemer of the world came, for whom the people had waited thousands of years. *(The large candle is lit.)* Because of His very great love for us, God sent His Son in the likeness of a man. *(Light all the members' candles.)* He enlightens every person who comes into the world. We have seen His glory, glory as the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Closing Hymn

Joan Durand
Ontario Provincial Council

Martha and Mary
An Advent Reflection

Reflection: Luke 10:38-42

Don't you feel like Martha at this time of year? A hundred things to do, so much expected of us, our helpers letting us down – no time to stop and attune ourselves to the spirit of the season?

In the gospel, we are only told that Martha was "distracted with all the serving," but we can, in our imaginations, put in some details – the neighbour, for instance, who promised to come and help but didn't show up; the servant girl who let the bread burn, broke two of the best cups and required constant supervision to do the smallest tasks; the special dishes Martha was expected to make for the village feast the next day; and so on. And to top it all off, there was Mary sitting and having a wonderful visit with Jesus. No doubt Martha would have loved to do that too. Jesus was a good friend – it was a joy to be with Him. But she had too much to do and they didn't seem to miss her anyway. Martha probably felt rather left out.

But in response to Martha's request, Jesus didn't tell Mary to "get busy" and help her sister. He confirmed that she had chosen the right way. Again our imaginations must help us. Probably Jesus didn't send Martha back to their kitchen alone. He must have made her sit down too – take time off – be one with Mary and Himself – put their close relationship first. Perhaps He even helped with the work later on – Jesus was never one to let role stereotypes stand in His way.

We can learn from Martha's experience when our busy lives become too much for us. We must take time out to spend with Jesus, just to be in His company and allow our personal relationship to grow. When we go back to work afterward, He will go with us and help us do what needs to be done. Perhaps we can try this with the people close to us too – our spouse, child or friend – even if we don't get quite as much done, our lives will be enriched.

O God, help us be closer to You and more present to those we love.

Patricia Sheehan
Toronto Archdiocesan Council

Meeting and League Prayers

Prayer Service for The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Welcome

Opening Hymn: League hymn or Hymn to Our Lady

Leader: We rejoice and give thanks for the grace and peace with which our God has blessed us. We ask Him to be with us tonight (today) and to instill in our hearts a greater love for the League and a deeper desire to serve others through the workings of the League.

We begin by praying Psalm 105, which is a beautiful expression of love and praise for God.

Left: Give thanks to the Lord, proclaim His greatness, tell the nations what He has done.

Right: Sing praise to the Lord; tell the wonderful things He has done.

Left: Be glad that we belong to Him; let all who worship Him rejoice.

Right: Go to the Lord for help and worship Him continually.

Left: You descendants of Abraham, His servants; you descendants of Jacob, the man He chose.

Right: Remember the miracles that God performed and the judgments that He gave.

Scripture: Colossians 3:12, 17 *(followed by silent reflection)*

Petitions: Let us respond to God's goodness by bringing Him our needs and asking His care for our concerns.

For all League members, living and deceased, that each may share in the life of our God, we pray: **Response: Lord, teach us Your ways.**

For each of us, that we may serve the Lord by serving our families, neighbours and community with love and devotion, we pray. ***R***

For those who are suffering injustice or indignity in society, that they may find freedom and compassion, we pray. ***R***

For the unborn, that they may find in us protectors of their lives who have the courage to speak out on their behalf, we pray. ***R***

For those in leadership roles throughout the world, and especially in CWL councils across Canada, that they may be people of faith and courage, we pray. ***R***

God of love, You have heard our prayers. Grant that we may be Your voice, hands and heart in today's world. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Meeting Opening Prayers

Leader: Lord Jesus, may I give myself completely to become a disciple of Your service:

All: To develop the human abilities You have given me; to learn from the Christ-like example of others; to be open to the pulsings of Your Spirit; to desire mightily to share Christ's mission.

Leader: Lord Jesus, may the deeds of my day-to-day life be dominated by true Christian actions:

All: Let me speak the gospel word in the midst of conflict; let me act with the charity of Jesus toward people in need; let me reach out the touch of compassion to those suffering; let me courageously confront those forgetting their commitment.

Leader: Lord Jesus, may my dreams and hopes be infused with zeal for serving others:

All: That daydreaming be turned to realizable projects; that musings be filled with motives of love; that my own hopes be really shared with others; that shared desires may build visions of faith.

Leader: Lord Jesus, may my very bodiliness be responsive to the hard realities of ministering:

All: To interrupt my time when others call; to bend my body in responding to daily demands; to offer aches and pains as part of Christ's suffering; to know my bodiliness as an incarnated faith.

Leader: Lord Jesus, may the prayers of my life be carved from the deeds and failures of ministry:

All: Let worship flow through the joys and sorrows of my daily world; let the Eucharist reflect my celebration of faith through life; let the groans of serving become my cries of obedience; let the joys of faith gained become my praise of God's mystery.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, grant that we may place whatever gifts or resources we may have at Your disposal, as faithful stewards and conscientious managers, to be used wisely and gloriously in Your service. Amen

National Council of Catholic Women
USA

Prayer – Before a Meeting

Leader: Let us pray. *(Pause for people to gather their thoughts together and prepare for prayer.)* For the courage to represent Christ and emulate Mary and their teachings to our families and sisters in the League. *(Pause again – a little longer for silent prayer.)*

1st person: Father in heaven, You have given us much to be thankful for.

2nd person: You have placed many challenges before us.

3rd person: You have a great love for all of Your creatures.

4th person: The love of Your Son Jesus for all of us led us to be sisters.

5th person: Led to accept suffering as Jesus suffered for us by His death on the cross.

6th person: This was an act of reparation for our sins.

7th person: Lord, give us the virtue to understand our continual need to identify with the suffering of Christ.

8th person: Help us not only to know the death for our sins, but the forgiveness.

9th person: To know the hope and the new life brought by His resurrection.

10th person: Change our selfishness to self giving.

11th person: Help us to respond to our baptismal call so that we may meet the needs in our parish generously.

12th person: Use us, Lord, as Your instruments to transform selfishness and pride into the life and joy of Easter.

13th person: We ask You to be with us, Lord, guiding and inspiring each CWL member.

14th person: Help us to see Your Son in all people we serve.

15th person: We ask all this through the suffering, death and resurrection of Your Son.

All: Amen

Leader: Let us now stand and join hands so that we may repeat the words given to us long ago: Our Father…

Leader: Our Lady of Good Counsel,

All: Pray for us.

Lynn L'Heureux
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

Closing Prayer

Leader: Lord, be with us as we celebrate the work we have completed. We rejoice and are grateful for the good that has been accomplished in Your name. There were times when we were doubtful and frustrated because of the task ahead of us. But, with the wisdom and guidance of Your Spirit, we found joy in our work – Your work. And so, Father, we celebrate and give You thanks.

Reader: 1 John 1:1-5

Psalm
Reader: Psalm 34

Left: I will bless Yahweh at all times, His praise shall be on my lips continually; my soul glories in Yahweh, let the humble hear and rejoice.

Right: Proclaim with me the greatness of Yahweh, together let us extol His name. I seek Yahweh, and He answers me and frees me from all my fears.

Left: Every face turned to Him grows brighter and is never ashamed. A cry goes up from the poor ones, and Yahweh hears, and helps them in all their troubles.

Right: How good is Yahweh – only taste and see! Happy the one who takes shelter in Him. Fear Yahweh, you His holy ones: those who fear Him want for nothing.

Reader: John 15:9-17

Silent Reflection

Leader: In praise and thanksgiving, let us pray to our Father in the words Jesus taught us to say:

All: Our Father…

Leader: Father, hear our needs and remain with us as we go forth with even greater enthusiasm and confidence among League members.

All: The Lord bless you and keep you! The Lord let His face shine upon you and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace.

Leader: Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God who sends us forth.

Patricia Sheehan
Toronto Archdiocesan Council

For God's Blessing on Our Work

Leader: Let us pray. *(Pause)* Lord God, our loving Father and Creator, from whom all good things come, we give You thanks here today for supporting us in our League work and for the knowledge, courage and honesty of our sisters and priests.

Left: We pray to You Lord for our friends, companions, peers and co-workers and for all those who direct our work.

Right: We pray for all workers, those in factories, on farms, in offices, on the road and in homes.

Leader: We especially pray for…

Left: Mothers and fathers to be given the strength and wisdom they need as they work with their families.

Right: The young to be guided in the choice of vocation and profession. Bring health to the sick and comfort to the aged.

Leader: By doing the work You have entrusted to us, may we serve You with joyful hearts and in a spirit of sisterly love.

All: Amen

Leader: Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom,

All: Pray for us.

Leader: Our Lady of Good Counsel,

All: Pray for us.

Lynn L'Heureux
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

Development Day

Reflection: 1 Peter 2:1-7

We are living stones. On the cornerstone and foundation of Jesus we have been built into God's temple. God lives within His temple.

As living stones, we have the responsibility of maintaining ourselves in good condition – fit to be part of such a sacred temple. We must model ourselves in our daily lives as faithfully as we can on Jesus, our foundation, avoiding sin that can disfigure or destroy us. A crumbling stone diminishes even a magnificent building.

Besides being responsible for our own stone, we are also called on to adorn and improve the whole structure. We are all familiar with the tasks required to maintain, add to and decorate a home and keep it operating smoothly. And we know that they call for many different kinds of talent and training. Only the cooperation and education of those involved in the work can ensure that the home will reflect the spirits of those who live there. Each person must give of his or her best.

Today we meet to do some maintenance and improvement work, both to our own stone, and to our particular group of stones, The Catholic Women's League of Canada. Both we and the League will then be better able to do our part to help the whole temple reflect and serve, as perfectly as possible, the loving and magnificent God who lives within it. We ask that He will oversee and assist our efforts with fatherly care.

Petitions

For all League members, living and deceased, and for their families, **Response: We pray to the Lord.**

For all unborn children, that our legislators may be inspired to introduce a law that protects them fully. ***R***

For all of us participating in this development day, that we do our best to develop the gifts God has given us so that we may use them to best advantage in our lives as Christian lay people and particularly in our CWL work. ***R***

A Litany of the League

(Any group, large or small, may be divided into left/right sides.)

All: O Holy Spirit, who has generously filled League members with gifts, we thank You for the many women who have cooperated with You in using and sharing their talents. We remember today what some of Your gifts have been and how they have grown and blossomed in the League to produce great works for the good of all.

Left: We think of those who shared with us their gift of knowledge and understanding of the faith, their deep prayerfulness and spirituality.

Right: They inspired and enriched sister members, reached out to communicate with those of other faiths, and helped spread the Good News of Christ at home and abroad.

Left: We think of those who shared their leadership abilities, their organizational skills, their understanding of finances, their business and secretarial skills.

Right: They have helped all parts of the League run smoothly, thereby fostering unity and understanding and assisting in all League work.

Left: We think of those who shared their ability to welcome and affirm.

Right: They have attracted, welcomed and enriched new members, creating in the League a haven of fellowship and community.

Left: We think of those who shared their ability to teach and inspire.

Right: They have helped members discover and develop their gifts, their self-confidence, and their knowledge of the League for the good of all, and have reached out to young people to assist them in self development.

Left: We think of those who have shared their gift of compassion, their quickness to see and take responsibility for the needs of others.

Right: They have given service in the community, assisted immigrants and provided help to the needy here and in developing countries.

Left: We think of those who shared their dedication to life, their steadfastness and courage in the face of discouragement and difficulty.

Right: They have persisted against the tide of the times in defending life, strengthening the family and promoting vocations.

Left: We think of those who shared their gifts of communication by word and pen and their knowledge of modern methods and technologies.

Right: They have made known League goals and works and have made every effort to help the media work for good rather than evil.

Left: We think of those who used their sensitivity to justice and the needs of society, their skill in research and preparation of resolutions.

Right: They have been the conscience of government and have mobilized members to be a leaven in the world.

Left: We think of those who have shared their creativity in ideas, handicrafts and food.

Right: They have contributed immeasurably to the life of the parish family and have provided financial support for innumerable charities.

Left: We think of those who have developed their gifts of wisdom and faithfulness through long service in the League.

Right: Their experience and careful preservation of the history of the League has ensured that the works of those who have gone before will not be forgotten, but will live to inspire future League members.

Closing Prayer

All: For all our own talents and the talents of other League members, we are grateful. We thank You, O Holy Spirit, for the many ways in which You have enhanced these gifts and given us new ones through the League. Please continue to be with us and live in us.

Patricia Sheehan
Toronto Archdiocesan Council

Service for Our Lady of Good Counsel

It is recommended that a table/altar be set up, on which there is a picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel, lit candles and perhaps a rosary. A leader and lector are needed. "Gentle Woman" could be sung or played.

Leader: As patroness of the League, Our Lady of Good Counsel guides our work "For God and Canada." We trust that she will be with us now as we unite our hearts to pray in her honour.

Left: It is truly fitting, Mary, that we should honour you, for God chose to honour you by making you the mother of His Son.

Right: The prophets of old spoke your praises and called you "the glory of Israel" and "the glory of all womanhood."

Left: The angel bowed in reverence as he addressed you who were chosen to be the mother of God.

Right: And all generations have called you blessed.

Left: So joyfully, Mary, we praise you.

Right: We praise you in your spotless chastity, which made you worthy to bear the saviour of the world.

Left: We praise you in your virginity, which you kept so preciously together with your motherhood.

Right: We praise you in your openness to God's will for your life, and in your perfect following of that will.

Left: We praise you in your courage in facing hardships, misunderstandings and criticisms your vocation brought upon you.

Right: We praise you in the honour you have brought to motherhood throughout the ages and for the example you give to Christian mothers in a sinful world.

Left: We praise you in your motherhood which, by God's decree, had made you the mother of us all.

Reader: Luke 1:46-55

Leader: As a response to Mary's beautiful words, let us pray a decade of the rosary, asking God to give us the openness to accept His desire for our life as Mary did. *(decade of the rosary)*

All: O Lord, our God, by Your love and mercy, help us to imitate our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel. Make us humble and generous in all we do for You. Teach us to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labour and not to ask for reward save that of knowing we have done Your will. Let the joy of Your grace overflow in our hearts and grant that we each will be builders of peace and of Your kingdom. We ask this through Our Lady of Good Counsel.

Joan Durand
Ontario Provincial Council

Prayer of Farewell

Opening Song: "Companions on the Journey" (*Breaking Bread*, #406, verses 1 and 2)

Leader: God of our life's journeys, we gather here to celebrate the goodness of these presidents and to ask Your blessing upon them as they continue on the road of life. May the love that is in our hearts be a bond that unites us forever, wherever we may be. May the power of your presence bless this moment of our leave-taking.

Response: We know that God goes with you.

Leader: As you journey onward, may you remember always that our love and appreciation for you are etched on our hearts…

Response: We know that God goes with you.

Leader: As you experience the pain of change and the insecurity of moving on, may you also experience the blessing of inner growth…

Response: We know that God goes with you.

Leader: As you meet the poor, the pained, and the stranger on your way, may you see in each one the face of Jesus.

Response: We know that God goes with you.

Leader: As you walk through the good times and the hard times, may you never lose sight of the shelter of God's loving arms.

Response: We know that God goes with you.

Leader: As you question your decisions and wonder about the fruits of your choices, may the peace of God reign in your heart…

Response: We know that God goes with you.

All: We praise and thank You, God of the journey, for our League sisters who are soon to leave this executive table. We entrust them into Your loving care, knowing that You are always the Faithful Traveler and Companion on our way. Shelter these special women and protect them from all harm and all useless anxiety. May the future be for them, a source of many enriching and transforming moments. Amen

Closing song: "Companions on the Journey" (*Breaking Bread*, #406, verses 3 and 4)

Memorial Service for Deceased Members

Hymn

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Leader: The grace of Jesus Christ and the love of God and the companionship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

Instruction

Leader: We gather tonight as members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada to honour the memory of… [number] members of *N*... council, who have gone from this life to their eternal rest in Christ.

We welcome the family members who are with us to join in the memorial for our departed sisters: … [read names].

In the world of today, as perhaps never before, the church needs an enlightened and faithful laity. Dedicated members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada live their faith by serving others and thus discover Christ through relationships with others.

The members we honour today openly made a solemn commitment to be witnesses of Christ, carrying out the mission of Christ at home, in the parish and in the whole community.

We recall now their service to others, and we pray that the God of all has joyously welcomed them into the fullness of life, where they rest in peace and love.

Opening Prayer

Leader: Gracious God, to whom mercy and forgiveness belong, hear our prayers on behalf of Your faithful servants whom You have called into the light of Your presence. May they be welcomed joyously into heaven. We ask this through Christ, our Redeemer.

All: Amen

Scripture Reading

Reflection on the Word of God

Individual Memorial Rose

Leader: God is the glory and joy of each of our departed members whose memory we celebrate today. A rose, a symbol of life in Christ, will now be presented as a living memorial for each one.

Chairperson of Spiritual Development

(optional): *N*... , we thank God for the gift of … that You shared with us.

All: Amen

Hymn

Closing Prayer

Spiritual Advisor: Compassionate God, Mary, the mother of Jesus, gave of herself completely. Blessed is she who gave humanity to Jesus, and blessed are our sisters who spent their lives serving others in God's name.

We join Mary in proclaiming Your greatness and in thanking You for giving us life through death and resurrection of Jesus. We proclaim Jesus and the gift of Your life-giving Spirit.

All: Amen

Leader: Eternal rest grant unto them.

All: And let perpetual light shine upon them**.**

Leader: May they rest in peace.

All: Amen

Final Blessing [Form 'A']

Spiritual Advisor: May the peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and in the grace of Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

Spiritual Advisor: May almighty God bless you, the Creator God, Jesus our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Final Blessing [Form 'B']

Spiritual Advisor: May the love of God and the peace of Jesus Christ, bless and console us, and wipe every tear from our eyes: in the name of our Creator God, Jesus our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Sign of Peace

Leader: Let us conclude our celebrations by offering one another a sign of peace.

Women at Prayer

Rooted in Gospel Values

The history of the Catholic church, turned back to Christ's time, visibly speaks of women being called to holiness through service. Christ Himself turned to women. The roots of the gospel emphasize women who patiently, almost thanklessly, followed the apostles ministering to their needs. These same women also persevered in their commitment to Christ by following close by to the top of Calvary to be near Him.

Opening Prayer

All: Almighty God, through the ages You raised up special women who honoured and loved You, who did seek Your plan for their lives. Grant that each one of us may fully seek Your plan for us in our daily lives. May we become rooted in the gospel values taught to us by Your Son, Jesus Christ.

Reading: Luke 4:16-20

Martha and Mary of Bethany (Luke 38-42)
Spiritual Development

Chairperson: Mary of Bethany was a friend of Jesus' family. Mary spent as much time as she could with Him – listening to Him and talking to Him. He comforted her many times and forgave her. They were very close.

Of prime importance to the CWL is the gift of prayer and the gift of listening to others, as Mary did to Jesus. Our aim is to develop the spiritual growth of members, both individually and collectively.

All: Lord Jesus, thank You for the faith and devotion of the many women who have gone before us in the League. Help us to follow their example and the example of Mary of Bethany in the art of prayer and listening.

Lydia of Thyatira (Acts 16:14, 40)
Organization

Chairperson: Lydia was in the purple dye trade. She was a successful business woman. She was a woman who did her work with enthusiasm and purpose of mind. Lydia attended meetings with other women to share ideas about the business. The Lord opened her heart and she and her whole household were baptized. From then on, she opened her home and served many brothers and sisters in Christ.

All: Lord Jesus, we thank You for the gift of the League in our lives. Help us to use our organizational gifts "For God and Canada" as we continue to unite Catholic women and encourage them to minister to others.

Mary of Nazareth (Luke and Acts)
Christian Family Life

Chairperson: God chose Mary to be the mother of His Son. Jesus, Joseph and Mary were a family with many stresses and strains – her premarital pregnancy, losing her child in Jerusalem and witnessing the crucifixion of her son. It was not easy, but her faith strengthened all those around her and everyone supported and encouraged each other.

All: Lord Jesus, thank you for Christian families, for their example and inspiration – their love, nurturing, caring and concern. Strengthen us in Your ways to continue to promote Christian family values, offer support to each family member and encourage each to follow God's call in their lives.

Naomi (Ruth 1:-1-17)
Community Life

Chairperson: After the men in her family died, they lost everything. Naomi emigrated to Judah to care for her elderly mother-in-law. She gleaned in the fields to get food for them. Her concern was for others.

All: Lord Jesus, we thank You for those first members of the League whose primary concern and work was for the exploited immigrant women arriving in Canada. Help us to continue to welcome and assist newcomers to our land.

Mary of Magdala (Mark 16:9-11, John 20:17, 18)
Communications

Chairperson: After Jesus rose from the dead, our Lord appeared to Mary of Magdala and sent her to give the brothers a message. She related all she had heard to them.

All: Good communication is vital in the CWL organization. Communication can be between members, between the various League levels and with all those around us. Lord Jesus, we thank You for the gift of being able to communicate, the basis of all relationships. Help us to share of ourselves with others.

Priscilla (Acts 18)
Education and Health

Chairperson: When Apollos spoke so boldly and eloquently of Jesus in the synagogue, we saw that he only knew of the baptism of John. Priscilla and her husband took him home and taught him more correctly the way of God.

All: Mothers are the first educators of their children. League members have been involved in education at home, at school and at church – of the young, of adults, of members. Lord Jesus, we thank You for all educators – for parents, teachers, catechists and youth leaders.

Samaritan Woman (John 4:7-30)
Resolutions

Chairperson: It was the sixth hour; the day was hot and dry. The Samaritan woman came to draw water. It was women's work to draw water. She came with an empty vessel. She was an empty vessel. Nothing and no one could feel the hollow of her heart. The man at the well asked her for a drink and said, "If you knew who it was asking you for a drink, you would ask Him instead, and He would give you living water."

All: Large numbers of women have personal experience of sexual domestic violence. Wife battering, rape, incest and child abuse cut across all class, religious and colour lines. Lord Jesus, be the voice of the CWL as we speak out in our resolutions for justice.

Esther (Book of Esther)
Legislation

Chairperson: Haman tricked the king into signing a blank document; he published the order to slaughter all the Jews living in the Persian Empire. After prayer and fasting, Queen Esther met with her husband and used her influence to have the law changed. The people were saved.

All: The growing influence of the CWL is seen in the presentation of resolutions to all levels of government. Lord Jesus, we thank You for the changes for good that have happened when the CWL speaks up for justice and rights. Help us to work for just laws.

Leader: As League members, we have lived the lives of some of the women mentioned in scripture. Continuously we need to be reminded of these women and be aware that we must always be ready to share with family and friends that the life of Jesus can be lived. We are called to share the lives of women in scripture who lived their lives "Rooted in Gospel Values."

Dorice Marcil
Newfoundland and Labrador
and
Vivian Bosch
Saskatchewan Provincial Past President

Women's Creed

Opening Prayer
Lord, let my cry come before You: teach me by Your word. Let my pleading come before You; save me by Your promise.

Let my lips proclaim Your praise because You teach me Your commands. Let my tongue sing Your promise for Your commands are just.

Let Your hand be ready to help me, since I have chosen Your precepts. Lord I long for Your saving help. I am lost like a sheep; seek Your servant for I remember Your commands.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit…

Gospel Reading

Women's Creed
We believe in the goodness and value of women: our strength and sanity; our willingness to weep; our capacity to support each other instead of being rivals; our ability to cope with children's demands and the burdens of life; our willingness and ability to get on with the job; our spirituality and our earthliness flowing with life, from birth to death.

We affirm the story of women as the story of humankind: food gatherers and farmers; child bearers and teachers; pioneers and policy-makers; needle-workers and textile-makers; homemakers and factory workers; parents; scientists; doctors; housekeepers and economists; givers of life and creators of art and thought; unpaid hidden workers at home and paid members of the community.

We rejoice in our diversity and versatility, our intuition and our logic.

We confess our failures, frailties and imperfections, including our past acceptance of violence and injustice in relationships between men and women.

We look forward to the future in faith and hope, working for the day when we and all our sisters are free to use our gifts and share in all the benefits of human life and work.

We look forward to the age of peace, when violence is banished.

We believe that our future depends on us, but that all the forces of good, love, peace and justice and You, heavenly Father, will help us achieve the vision.

May it come soon. Amen

Response
That women, the world over, who have died as a result of violence have found everlasting repose in the glorious kingdom of God, our Father. **Response:** Oh, Blessed Mother, hear the prayers of your children.

That the decision-makers of every country make every effort to ensure that the mothers of their nations be protected from such violence. ***R***

That society as a whole, and we as Christians, become more sensitive to violence and strive to rid all forms of violence from all walks of life. We pray that our efforts will free all victims of violence from its cycle of devastation. ***R***

And finally, Blessed Mother, please intercede on behalf of our prayers today, with our Heavenly Father, that He might send His Holy Spirit into the hearts of those who perpetuate these acts of violence. We pray that His Spirit will help them find inner peace through repentance and forgiveness, so they may end the devastation that they inflict. ***R***

Marlyne Reindl
Saskatchewan Provincial Council

A Mother's Look at the Hail Mary

Hail Mary
Hi, Mary, here I am again. Finally have a moment to myself and I need to talk to someone who understands. Who better than you?

full of grace
Once, Mary, I thought this made you untouchable, far removed from my own life. You were seen as one so perfect that I could neither relate to you nor hope to imitate you. But now, childishness put aside, I know you needed God's graces just as I do. It was your asking His help that made you holy. And now, as I go to Him, who knows? Maybe I too can follow in your footsteps.

the Lord is with you
Surely you turned to God, asking Him help you through the nitty gritty of daily life. It's reassuring to finally realize that you had those days like I have, days when everything seems to go wrong. I had never envisioned you as not having the time to get the work done, things breaking, or visitors coming when the house was a disaster! Nor did I think your day was ever so hectic that your prayer amounted to a quick "Help me through this day, Lord," or a short psalm. If He helped you, won't He also help me?

blessed are you among women
Yes, you are closer to Him than any other, but that shouldn't put you so far and remote from me! It won't be easy, but I'll try to rid myself of that pristine statue image of you that I grew up with. It's taken me so long to see you were real and walked this earth just as I do. You too struggled to understand and wondered why these things were happening. But you accepted also, and trusted in God's plan. Maybe someday I can become more like you in that way.

and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus
Thanks, Mary, for saying "yes," even when you had no idea of all you were saying yes to! How often I think of you now when I want to control my own life. I hadn't planned on all the twists and turns my life has taken; the moves, death, job changes and pressures of them, and too, these "extra" unexpected kids. I've had to put a lot of things on hold as I watch my family change and grow. But this wondrous event brought many changes to your life, too. Your "yes" gives me a hope that I too will live through it all. Could this be my path to holiness?

Holy Mary
I still have trouble thinking I could ever be holy. You were one of the chosen few to be so close to Jesus. We talk about His humanity, but yours has been so terribly overlooked. By rethinking you, I now have a new hope! (I'll never look at a Christmas card in the same way again!) It is within my reach to emulate your life on earth, and I can still revere your holy place in heaven. Will I ever be able to fully change these old attitudes?

Mother of God
What an awesome task! God placed in your hands His one and only. He placed six *(change number accordingly)* in mine! My task too is pretty awesome. How often I've heard that God doesn't give the responsibility without also giving the graces you need. I will never forget that early morning talk with Him (my usual free time – 2:00 a.m.!). And as is my habit, I did all the talking, bombarding him with questions. How He calmed each fear! I was shocked to realize these are not **my** kids, but His, on loan to me, to be returned to Him! My task is to entrust them (and myself) to His care! Mary, do you understand how awed and unworthy I feel?

pray for us sinners

Some will never understand this, going through you to Jesus. I didn't always do this. But you gave us one reason at Cana, and He gave us reason at the cross, making you mother of us all. I like thinking of you as "mother." I'm so glad to discover this side of you now, to see us as mothers in common. It's easier to turn to you with my frustrations, fears, worries and tears. In turning more readily to you, I turn more readily to your Son. What a privilege. Will you help me to treasure all these things and reflect on them in my heart, Mary?

and at the hour of our death

Mary, it's overwhelming to think you will greet me when this old body dies. Because of the love I've had for your Joseph (the forgotten saint), I'd always hoped that he would lead me across that threshold. To think you too would be with me as I face your son is overwhelming! Thank you, Mary, for being with me on my journey, and so patiently awaiting my coming to know you better. Thank you for being fully human and real and for helping me to see. Thank you for giving me hope.

Amen

So be it. I think I'm on my way now, lucky to be living in these times, no matter how difficult they may be. I still have my doubts and questions, but I feel like I'm setting out on a new journey with you as my guide. If I can retain all I've learned about you, I will make it. Thank you, Mary, and please continue to help me.

Mary

She is my strength, Most Holy Virgin, privileged one from birth.
Her love restores the weakest to citadels of worth.

Without fear, I speak to her and even as I start,
the words which seem the hardest are closest to my heart.

There comes a captured moment in the quietness of day
when through the healing silence I somehow hear her say:
"Don't worry, I am with you through loneliness and fear.
I will be your confidence. Remember, I am here."

And so I do remember at any time or place
the power of my endurance is in her warm embrace.

(Kathy Vignoli, printed in *The Marian Helpers' Bulletin*, August-September/89)

Kay Allen
Newfoundland and Labrador

A Woman of Faith

All: Hail Mary full of grace…

Leader: "What must this woman, Mary, have been like. This woman who was chosen by God as mother for His God-Son. She was blessed among women! She was the first creature who was able say an unconditional yes to God's will."

Reading: Isaiah 55:3-8

All: No one heard the word of God more than Mary; she opened herself completely to it. No one put it into practice more than she; through her it became flesh. Mary is the perfect example of how to listen. Through Mary's listening, the word became God within us.

Left: Jesus living in Mary, come and live in me. Here is a body to move among people. Reach out again to others.

Right: Jesus giving in Mary, come and give in me. Here are two hands that are able to give, teach them to share with others.

Left: Here is a mind to be filled with Your light, let it ignite for others. Here is a voice that was made for Your word. Let it be heard for others.

Song: Listen to "Hail Mary: Gentle Woman" (from *I Will Not Forget You*, Carey Landry)

Leader: Mary, teach us here today. As Christian women of the Catholic Women's League, we are called to serve, to hear the word, to live it and to believe. We are called to know that we are deeply loved and this spirit of love is within us to share. You are waiting for our "yes," released in love. Teach us, Mary to be fully open, loving and forgiving. Help us to serve each other in all we do. This we ask in Jesus' name.

All: Amen

All: Each one of us has a mission to fulfil, a mission of love. At the hours of death, when we come face to face with God, we are going to be judged on love; not how much we have done, but how much love we have put into our actions. (Mother Teresa of Calcutta)

Leader: Blessed Mary, so humble.

All: Obtain for us the blessing of Jesus.

Leader: Blessed Mary, in mourning.

All: Comfort us in our daily trials.

Leader: Blessed Mary, pure of heart.

All: Help us have uncluttered hearts.

Leader: Blessed Mary, lover of peace.

All: Help us become a peaceful people.

Leader: Blessed Mary, desirous of justice.

All: Aid us in doing the will of God.

Leader: Let us pray. Lord, help us to perform our CWL duties with the same response that Mary gave. Help us to use our special talents to help others. Give us the courage to love and understand, to change the things we are capable of, to make this a better world. Help us to always work together, for ourselves, our parish, our diocese, our province and our country in love. We ask this in Jesus' name.

All: Amen

(Recite together a decade of the rosary, or more if time permits. Allow time for meditation. Do not rush the prayer.)

Lynn L'Heureux
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

Mary, Mother of the Redeemer

Reader 1: "My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord."

Reader 2: Mary's whole being resonated with the overwhelming goodness of the Lord. Faithful to His repeated promises throughout the ages, God was about to send us the long awaited saviour and redeemer. With her whole being, Mary praised God and her joy burst forth in this magnificent song, which we call her Magnificat. As we recall the greatness of the Lord in our lives, our hearts too will sing His praises with joy.

Reader 1: "My spirit finds joy in God my Saviour."

Reader 2: Genuine Christian joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Since Mary was sinless, the Holy Spirit was dynamic and operative within her all her life. Her deep appreciation of God's redeeming love for sinful mankind was certainly a cause for joy. Jesus reiterated the source of our joy when He told us that He was revealing the good news of our redemption so that our joy might be complete. With Mary, let us rejoice in God our Saviour.

Reader 1: "For He has looked upon His servant in her lowliness; all ages to come shall call me blessed."

Reader 2: Mary was truly blessed because of her unquestioning obedience to God's will and her total trust in His power to accomplish in her whatever He willed. This is an ideal prayer posture, realizing as Jesus said that without Him we can do nothing, but with Him we can do all things. This is the path Mary points out to us.

Reader 1: "God who is mighty has done great things for me, holy is His name."

Reader 2: Genuine humility is based on truth – the truth about ourselves and the truth about God. Mary attributed all that was happening to her to the might power of God. She accepted no accolades nor claimed any credit for herself. As the Lord wrought His power through Mary because of her receptivity, so He will accomplish great things in us and through us to others. Genuine humility is the key that unlocks the foundation of God's blessing for us.

Reader 1: "His mercy is from age to age on those who fear Him."

Reader 2: Sin is a refusal to love. Throughout history the human race consistently turned away from God and rejected His love, yet His merciful love was always extended to anyone who turned to Him. God's merciful compassion reached its zenith when he sent His son, Jesus, into our sinful world as its redeemer. In doing so, He kept His promise: "My love shall never leave you."

Reader 1: "He has shown might with His arm, He has confused the proud in their inmost thoughts. He has deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places."

Reader 2: The proud are intoxicated with their own self-sufficiency. They use their God-given gifts as though they were personally responsible for them. Their humanistic ideals have become their neon, plastic god. Like the Pharisees in the temple, they are not open to the working of God's power in them. In contrast, God's divine power worked marvels and wonders in Mary because of her lowliness and humility.

Reader 1: "The hunger He has given every good thing, while the rich He has sent empty away."

Reader 2: There is within each one of us a longing, a hunger, a restlessness, which can be satisfied only when we have the reassurance that we are loved and accepted by God. Only God can and does satisfy this hunger. However, one all-important condition is necessary. We must be open and receptive to the Lord by humbly and trustingly presenting ourselves to Him so that His will may be accomplished in us. Once again, Mary shows us the way. "To Jesus through Mary."

All: God of wisdom and love, You have sent Your Son Jesus to be the light of the world and continue to send Your Holy Spirit among us to guide us into the way of truth. Open our hearts to Your word and let us ponder Your actions among us. Give us Your Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of understanding and counsel. With Mary, may we rejoice in Your gifts and walk in the way of truth and love. With all Your people and in eternity, we ask this prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, in the unity of Your loving spirit, one holy God, forever and ever. Amen

Rev. Charles MacDonald
Cardigan, Prince Edward Island

Holy Spirit

Spirit of God

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Leader: Let us trace the sign of the cross on our foreheads, on our lips and over our hearts.

Song: "Spirit of the Living God"

Leader: Almighty and eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, You caused us to be born again of water and the Holy Spirit and You pardoned all our sins. Pour out upon us Your Holy Spirit, the Paraclete and His seven spirits.

(After each gift is invoked, a person will light one of the seven candles surrounding the lectern.)

Leader: The spirit of wisdom.

All: Amen

Leader: The spirit of understanding.

All: Amen

Leader: The spirit of right judgment.

All: Amen

Leader: The spirit of courage.

All: Amen

Leader: The spirit of knowledge.

All: Amen

Leader: The spirit of reverence.

All: Amen

Leader: The spirit of awe in Your presence.

All: Amen

All: Strengthen, O God, what You have begun in us. You gave Your apostles the Holy Spirit, ordaining that they and their successors should hand down that gift to the faithful. Look with favour on us whose foreheads have been anointed with chrism and sealed with the sign of the cross.

May the Holy Spirit consecrate our hearts as a fitting dwelling for Your glory.

Reading: John 20:19-22

Leader: Our response to the petition is: We thank you, Lord.

Reborn as children of God in baptism, we confess the faith we have received through the church. ***R***

By the sacrament of confirmation we are more perfectly committed to Christ. ***R***

The Holy Spirit endows us with special strength to spread the faith in word and action as true witnesses of Jesus. ***R***

As members of the _____ council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, we share also in Jesus' prophetic office. ***R***

The Holy Spirit leads and sanctifies the people of God. ***R***

By His gifts the Holy Spirit makes us ready for the work of building up the church. ***R***

Leader: In baptism and confirmation the sign of the cross was traced on our foreheads. I invite you to turn to your neighbour and trace the cross on her forehead once again saying, "Receive the sign of the cross." *(Pause)* Let us pray.

Lord God, hear our prayer and protect all of us assembled here. We have been marked with the sign of the cross. Let us treasure this sharing and go forth to use Your gifts in the service of Your people.

All: Amen

National Council of Catholic Women
USA

Gifts

Leader: Spirit of the living God, help us to realize that we are the body of Christ, that we are His way of loving the world, of binding its wounds and bringing it to Him. Make us one as He and the Father are one. Help us to nurture the gifts You have given us, affirm them in one another and always to use them for Your glory.

Do not neglect the gift you have. Each has her special gift from God. One of one kind and one of another.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love.

Leader: Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love.

Leader: If prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love.

Leader: One who teaches, in their teaching; one who exhorts, in their exhortation.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love.

Leader: One who contributes, in liberality; one who gives aid, with zeal; one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love.

Leader: For as in one body we have many members, and all members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually, members of one another.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle them in the fire of Your love.

Leader: As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love.

Leader: For what have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love.

Leader: I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love.

Leader: And so that we may be mutually encouraged by each others faith, both yours and mine.

All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love.

All: Loving God, we thank You for Your love, for the gifts You have given us and especially for the precious gift of each other. Help us to show our gratitude by loving each other as You love us, with understanding, patience and forgiveness, with generosity in sharing the joy and strength we can offer each other. Grant Your CWL family lively faith and courage to share it with all. Direct us to our state in life according to Your will and help us to use our gifts for the building of the kingdom. This we ask in the name of Jesus, Your Son, through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel. Amen

Joan Chesser
National Executive

The Variety and the Unity of Gifts

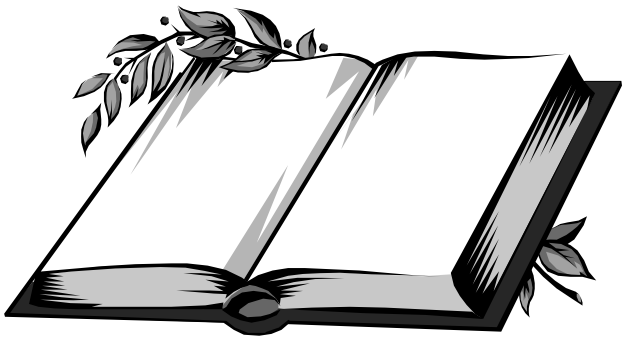
I Corinthians 12:4-11

God is very generous with His gifts. Through His Spirit, He pours into each person a large variety of gifts of many types and sizes. He expects these gifts to be used – and used for the good of all.

In this great giving of gifts, Catholic women were certainly not left out. Their talents are many and varied. In inspiring the early leaders of the League, God assisted them to create a vehicle and a tool which would enable all Catholic women to develop and use all their talents for the common good. As gifts are seen in members, uses for them can be found in the League; as needs are felt by the League, gifts arise from the members to fulfil them. This is the wisdom of God in giving the League such scope and flexibility.

But with such variety of activity, so many different directions, can we all be one? Yes, we can be – united in purpose, mind and heart by the Spirit of God who brings us all our gifts and inspires all our works. As St. Paul tells us in his comparison of the church to one body with many members, no one expects a nose to hear or an ear to see. Nor does the eye suggest that the body stop hearing because the eye itself cannot hear. Each member or council contributes to the League according to its gifts and reaps the benefits of the activities of other members and councils who have different talents. Though we are many, in spirit we are one.

Patricia Sheehan
Toronto Archdiocesan Council



Scripture Reflections

I am the Vine, You are the Branches

Reflection: John 15:1-8

Jesus knows us so well – He knows just how to choose the examples from our human experience which will best stimulate a multitude of images in our minds, leading to a richness of understanding, a sort of burgeoning vine in our minds.

When we plant a little ivy or grape vine, what does it do? It grows energetically with healthy branches radiating out from the nourishing vine to fill the garden.

And what does a healthy branch do?

It spreads eagerly and vigorously, increasing rapidly in length and producing many new shoots and branches, until it fills every cranny, even the most inaccessible. (Lord, help us to be eager to spread Your message – stretching out to touch even the most inaccessible of Your people – the ones only we can reach.)

It has thick healthy green leaves, especially when pinched off and pruned. (Lord, help us to accept gratefully and patiently the pinching and pruning by which You help us to grow well.)

It covers ugly things and makes them beautiful. (Lord, help us to bring Your love to the ugly things and unattractive people of this world and, by it, transform them.)

It depends on the vine for life. (Lord, help us share in Your life ever more fully, remove all blockages and help us return that life to You, the vine, for the nourishment of all the other branches.)

And, above all, it bears abundant fruit. (Lord, in all our work, let us bear fruit in abundance to the glory of Your father.)

Amen

Patricia Sheehan
Toronto Archdiocesan Council

Parable of the Vineyard Labourers

Reflection: Matthew 20:1-16

When we hear this parable, everything in our little human minds rises up and agrees – it's **not** fair that the last labourers received the same as the first – it's **not** fair that "good" people, keeping all the rules serving God all their lives, should be joined in heaven by deathbed penitents.

So we look for extenuating circumstances to make some sense of God's action. "Oh, the poor people," we say, "they really **wanted** to work, but no one would hire them. It wasn't their fault." But chances are that most of them really didn't want to work – would rather laze around in the sun or go for a good time in town with their friends. And, knowing this, still the vine grower hired them. There's no way to get around the inescapable fact – God's ways are just not our ways.

What human vine grower chooses weak, sickly or lazy labourers for his vineyard instead of the best and strongest available? God does, and He shows His power by the wonderful work He does through them.

What human vine grower cares for and tends and cherishes the weakest, puniest plants in his vineyard instead of pulling them out and replacing them with new strong ones? God does – and His power is most evident when the biggest yield of fruit comes from the scrawniest vine.

And what human vine grower actually **searches out** labourers right up to the end of the day and rewards so abundantly even those who finally agree to work only at the last minute? God does – His love needs only the slightest opening to pour into a soul and transform it.

We can be doubly grateful for this amazing behaviour on God's part – first because it strengthens our faith that He can bring good out of even the greatest evil; and second, as sinners ourselves, we all must be aware that if God kept account books, none of us could ever earn a heavenly dime.

O God, thank You for Your generosity to all who turn to You in love and in need, whether at daybreak or at the eleventh hour.

Patricia Sheehan
Toronto Archdiocesan Council

You are the Vine

Intercessions

For all CWL members, living and deceased, who have laboured so faithfully in Your vineyard, we pray to the Lord, **Response: Lord, let us bear abundant fruit.**

For Your church – lay faithful, religious and clergy, especially our spiritual advisors – that all may draw life from You, the vine, and as vital growing branches, spread it through all the earth, we pray to the Lord. ***R***

For all those who are deliberating on a choice between life and death, whether by abortion, suicide or euthanasia, that they may realize the value of life, Your great gift, and decide to enhance rather than destroy it, we pray to the Lord. ***R***

For our beloved country as she struggles to find the shape of her future, that You may grant to each of her branches the realization of its necessity to all the others, and that You will bless the efforts of all those who are dedicated to her survival with a harvest of unity and good will, we pray to the Lord. ***R***

For all people, that they may conscientiously take up their role of stewardship, not only of the beautiful vineyard, Your earth with its myriad plants and animals, but of each other, so that Your healing may be brought to all of broken humanity, we pray to the Lord. ***R***

Patricia Sheehan
Toronto Archdiocesan Council

Service of the Beatitudes

Leader: May God our Father, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit grant us grace and peace.

All: And make us faithful to His word forever.

Leader: We know that God has chosen us and called us through the League to do His work in the world. By our "yes" we try to let the full meaning of being one of God's chosen shine forth for all to see. We pray that our covenant God will guide and strengthen us that we may truly be His disciples. The words Jesus gave us in the Sermon on the Mount are words that lead us in our Christian mission. Let us pray to Him together.

Happy are the poor in spirit…

All: Make us poor in our searching, in our surrender to the Spirit, realizing that all we have You have given us.

Leader: Happy the gentle…

All: Make us gentle – sensitive to the needs of others.

Leader: Happy are those who mourn…

All: Teach us to mourn – over the selfish greed and pride that are part of us.

Leader: Happy are those who hunger and thirst for what is right…

All: We hunger – for love and peace; we thirst – for the day when all share in Your risen life.

Leader: Happy are the merciful…

All: May we be compassionate to all, especially the lonely and to those whose ideals and spirit have been crushed.

Leader: Happy are the pure in heart…

All: Grant us, Lord, the heart to love as You love.

Leader: Happy are the peacemakers.

All: Let us not rest as long as there is ill-will, dissension, division, disagreement. Father, we offer You our lives to be the instruments of reconciliation.

Leader: Happy are those who are persecuted in the cause of right…

All: May we be willing to suffer all things so that truth will prevail.

Leader: Covenant God, we thank You for the gift of Your Son, and for the power of His resurrection. We thank You for the Spirit who deepens us in love. Enlighten our understanding, that our eyes may be open to Your abiding life in our midst. Grant that our lives may speak peace to all and that the work of our hands and minds may awaken all lives to a new life in Christ.

All: Amen

Joan Durand
Ontario Provincial Council

Corporal Works of Mercy Meditation

Leader: Let us begin by putting ourselves in God's presence. The first reading is adapted from I John 3:17-18.

"If someone who has means sees a sister or brother in need and refuses that person compassion, how can the love of God remain in that one? Children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in deed and truth."

(Allow a moment for meditation.)

The second reading is taken from *Gaudiem et Spes*:

"Every social group must take into account the needs and legitimate aspirations of other groups, and even of the general welfare of the entire human family.

"At the same time, however, there is a growing awareness of the dignity proper to a human being since she stands above all things and her rights and duties are universal and inviolable, therefore, there must be made available to all human beings everything necessary for leading life such as food, clothing and shelter; the right of education and employment; the right to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one's own conscience, to protection of privacy and to rightful freedom, even in matters religious."

Loving God, make us aware of Your presence in all of creation. We are examples of Your life and Your beauty. May others know You by gazing upon the actions of our lives. Amen

(Allow a moment for meditation.)

Reading: Romans 12:9-17

Leader: The fourth reading is taken from *Mater et Magistra*:

"When one is motivated by Christian charity, one cannot but love others, for charity is patient and kind; charity does not envy, is not pretentious, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, is not self-seeking, is not provoked, seeks no evil, does not rejoice over wickedness, but rejoices with the truth, bears with all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

O holy, most high God, sometimes we get so set in our ways we are satisfied to sit in our security, to do the things we have always done, to act the way we have always acted. O gracious God, You call upon us to act in a different way. You call us to speak out against injustice and to make peace with those who hate us. Turn us toward Your Son. Uproot us from lives of comfort and help us to live lives of service to those in need.

All: Amen

Reading: Matthew 25:34-36 (adapted) *(Sections to be read by the leader and alternate sides of the assembly.)*

Leader: Then the king will say to those on His right: come you who are blessed by My Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me food. I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, a stranger and you comforted Me, naked and you clothed Me, ill and you cared for Me, in prison and you came to visit Me.

Right: Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and welcome You, or naked and clothe You? When did we see You ill or in prison and visit You?

Leader: Then He will say to those on His left: depart from Me you accursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me no food, thirsty and you gave Me no drink, a stranger and you gave Me no welcome, naked and you gave Me no clothing, ill and in prison and you did not care for Me.

Left: Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or naked or a stranger or ill or in prison and not minister to Your needs?

Leader: He will answer them: Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least sisters and brothers of Mine, you did to Me. Likewise, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for Me.

(Allow time for meditation.)

Merciful God, we are to serve You by serving our sisters and brothers, be being messengers of Your mercy. Help us to bring this message of concern to those in need, in the spirit of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Make us increasingly mindful of all who are in need. In humble service, may we seek to help the poor and deprived: those who are despairing and feel themselves beyond help. Make us mindful of our poverty and our need of You. We ask You this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord and healer. Amen

National Council of Catholic Women
USA

Prayer for Vocations

This service could have symbols for the scripture reading, such as ragged clothing, handcuffs, eyeglasses, etc., displayed on a table. A leader, lector and reader (for the petitions) are needed. Words for the hymn should be supplied and music to accompany the singing, if possible.

Leader: Through the Holy Spirit, God gives gifts to each one of us and calls us to His service. Let us praise God's goodness and ask that each baptized person hears this call and answers it.

All: Heavenly gifter, in Your loving providence, You sent Your Son, Christ Jesus, to establish Your kingdom on earth. You entrusted its growth to the Apostles, their successors and all those baptized in Your trinity. We implore You to raise up committed and generous souls to Your service. Grant us worthy priests to feed and nourish Your family; many dedicated, consecrated men and women to religious life and service; and a faith-filled, generous laity who live in witness and service. We ask this in the name of Your greatest gift to us, Your Son Jesus.

Lector: Luke 4:16-21 *(Follow with a period of silence for reflection.)*

Leader: A call to the priestly or religious life or to lay witness and service is a great gift from God. Let us pray for all who receive these gifts.

Petitioner: The response is: Lord, help all to respond generously.

For the church throughout the world, that worthy priests, religious and lay people will continue to build Your kingdom here on earth, we pray. ***R***

For all leaders in the church, priestly and lay, that they may be guided by Your spirit and live lives true to Your gospels, we pray. ***R***

For young people, that they may have the faith and courage to respond to Your call, we pray. ***R***

For our own personal intentions *(pause)*, we pray. ***R***

Leader: Heavenly gifter, hear our prayers for Your family on earth. Guide and strengthen us, Your church, so that all Your people may worship in peace and give witness to Your name. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Suggested Hymn: "Here I am, Lord" (*Glory and Praise*, Volume III)

Joan Durand
Ontario Provincial Council

Celebration of Peace

Suggested Gathering Hymn: "Peace" (CBW II, #700)

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, through Your overshadowing power You prepared Mary to be a worthy dwelling for Your Son. We come together today to celebrate Your loving providence and to place ourselves anew in Your service. Through the power of this word, enable us to carry out Your loving designs for peace in our world. This we ask through Jesus Christ, Your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen

Reading: Isaiah 32:15-20

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm #116 (CBW II)

Response: The Lord speaks of peace for His people.

Silent Reflection

Suggested Hymn: "Prayer of St. Francis (CBW II, #698)

General Intercessions

That God's persistent love may fill His church with tireless energy to work for a just peace among all. We pray to the Lord. **Response: Live in us, Lord, in peace and justice.**

That the voice of peacemakers may find a favourable reception in nations torn apart by war and civil discontent. We pray to the Lord. ***R***

That those in positions of authority will be "Slow to anger and rich in mercy." We pray to the Lord. ***R***

That the Spirit will awaken in the hearts of the angry and violent a longing for peace. We pray to the Lord. ***R***

That we may experience the peace of God which is the fruit of the resurrection and work to share that peace in our world. We pray to the Lord. ***R***

All: Our Father…

Greeting of Peace

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, bring peace into the world by bringing Your peace into the hearts of all. Teach us to share Your peace with all by loving and serving and forgiving them. Help us to be peacemakers with You all the days of our life. Lord Jesus Christ, hear our prayer, for You are Lord for ever. Amen

Suggested Closing Hymn: "Peace is Flowing Like a River" (*Glory and Praise*, Volume 1, #39)

Lynn L'Heureux
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

A Prayer for Someone in a Hurry

(said very slowly)

Lord, help me this day to slow down.

It will not be easy for You – even You – to slow me down, for I seem caught in the traffic-rush of life. I rush through my prayers, hurry through my meals and run from one thing to another. But I have faith that my choices and Your graces together can change my racetrack style of life. I know, Lord, even before You whisper it in my ear, that You are waiting for me in the slower, quieter things of life.

Teach me, Lord of life, how to eat my food with awareness; show me how to walk deliberately rather than constantly run; how to truly visit and be present rather than merely exchanging words.

Help me, divine friend, to take my time in praying to You. Show me that it is good just to "waste" time with You in such acts as enjoying a sunset or a friendship.

With Your presence and assistance, I will attempt to do all things with mindfulness: slowly, carefully and fully aware of what I am doing. Then, with Your grace, I shall find You, my God, in those unhurried and mindful moments.

Amen

Appendices

Scripture Meditations for Peace on Earth

Stewards of God's word
Revelation 5:11-14
Revelation 7:1-8
Psalm 84:1-12
Ecclesiastes 42:15-26
Leviticus 25:11, 12
Leviticus 25:18-22
Psalm 67

Signs of peace
Zechariah 8:16
Isaiah 32:15-18
Luke 7:48-50
Deuteronomy 13:1-3
Malachi 2:5
Luke 1:59-66
Joel 2:28, 29

God's peace
Isaiah 60:103
Isaiah 60:18-22
Matthew 5:14-16
Luke 2:8-14
John 9
John 12:35, 36
John 12:44-50

Peace, healing and health
Psalm 103:2-6
Isaiah 40:30, 31
Matthew 8:28-34
Matthew 11:2-6
Matthew 12:10-13
Mark 5:25-34
III John 1:2
Mark 16:1-7

Peacemaking and justice
Psalm 41:1-3
Psalm 112:4-9
Proverbs 14:21
Proverbs 19:17
Proverbs 29:14
Luke 12:15b
Luke 19:1-10
James 6:17-19
Proverbs 30:7-9

The promise of peace
Genesis 8:6-12
Genesis 9:8-17
Psalm 29:11
Psalms 72:3-7
Isaiah 40:9-11
Isaiah 55:12
Ezekiel 37:26
Jeremiah 33:6
Zechariah 9:9, 10

Peacemaking: concern for the hungry and poor
Leviticus 19:9, 10
Psalm 12:5, 6
Psalm 9:18
Psalm 58:6-12
Isaiah 25:4
Isaiah 29:18-20
Matthew 25:31-46
Luke 13:12-14
Luke 16:20-31
Psalm 72
I John 3:17, 18
John 2:13-25

Peacemaking and economic justice
Leviticus 19:13-16
Psalm 98:7-9
Psalm 9:7-9
I Timothy 1:5
Hebrews 13:3
James 2:1-5
Amos 5:21-24
Joshua 23:14-16
Isaiah 59
Proverbs 21:3
Proverbs 10:17
Proverbs 24:11, 12
Proverbs 21:3

Peacemaking and evangelism
Psalm 40:6-10
Isaiah 52:7
Acts 10:34-36
Acts 6:1-4
II Peter 2:5
Luke 1:76-79
Luke 4:18, 19
Ephesians 6:13-16
II Corinthians 13:11-13
Romans 15:7-13
Acts 9:31
I Thessalonians 5:23-28
Psalm 23
Psalm 25

Preparing a Liturgy

I Prayer – openness to God's Spirit, asking for guidance, for the glory and praise of God

II Factors

A. Group – age, size of group, common bonds
B. Occasion – reason for celebration, mood, theme
C. Time – length of service
D. Space – layout, environment, focal point

III Elements

A. Scripture – well-chosen, proclaimed, narrated or dramatized
B. Prayer – collects, individual prayers, responses, etc.
C. Music – music reflects mood, words reflect theme
D. Visual – must be large enough to be easily seen and not need much, if any, explanation
E. Gesture – must be symbolic, large enough to be easily seen and not need much, if any, explanation
F. Silence – for personal reflection/prayer at appropriate times
G. Breaking Open the Word – reflection, a homily or sharing with an application to our lives
H. Welcome/ Gathering – greeting, opening song or physical gathering
I. Blessing – asking God to bless us
J. Missioning/ Sending – inviting (commissioning) of participants to go out and live this experience of God

IV Order of Service – with a rhythm of proclamation and response
– not all elements must be used every time
– the order of the elements is to be varied

Guidelines for Blessing and Missioning (Sending)

Blessings
Ordained ministers (priests) usually ask God's blessing with words such as: "May Almighty God bless **you**…" while making the sign of the cross over the congregation.

Lay presiders ask God's blessing with such words as: "May Almighty God bless **us**..." while making the sign of the cross on themselves.

Silences
Silences are a time for individual reflection/prayer. They should be long enough to allow people to collect their thoughts and pray, but not so long as to be uncomfortable.

Inclusive Language
There are two levels of inclusive language – when referring to God and when referring to people.

When referring to God, who is neither male nor female, the attempt is made to use titles without sex. This does not exclude the use of Father, Brother or Son, but simply indicates that other titles should also be used commonly.

When referring to persons, the rule of thumb is that, if scripture refers to a specific person who is male (such as Isaac, Abraham, Peter, etc.), the reference remains in the masculine.

If scripture (or prayer) refers to all people, then inclusive terms are used (all, everyone, anyone, people, person, etc.).

Celebrations – Parties
Think of the elements of a party – for a birthday, Christmas, anniversary – and compare it to our often solemn celebrations as a Christian community. Some of the elements are family, friends, candles, food, drink, balloons, cakes, gifts, music, singing, reminiscences, decorations, etc.

Prayers of the Faithful
The prayers of the faithful consist of three parts: an invitation to prayer; the petitions themselves; and the closing prayer. Normally, the petitions follow the order from broader to more specific, i.e., the world, the church, those groups suffering in some way, the community and specific people.

The petitions may be presented in different ways. The more common form seems to be the announcing of those being prayed for, the petition, and the people's response. For example: (naming) For the leader of the church, (petition) that they may be faithful in the ways of the Lord. We pray (response) Lord, hear our prayer.

Canadian Studies in Liturgy #3, Mary in the Liturgy, published by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2500 Don Reid Drive, Ottawa ON K1H 2J2, cost $5.00, contains the proper of the Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Good Counsel, B.V.M. Health of the Sick and B.V.M. Queen of Peace, as well as special prayers to Our Lady of Good Counsel.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has publications on various subjects. You may want to inquire if one is available that is specific to your needs.

Symbols help us to focus on what we are doing and saying and to apply it to our lives. They can help us to pray. We simply take something common in everyday life and use it spiritually – water, light, oil, a plant, blooms, a broom (dedication of work or repentance – sweeping things clean) thanksgiving harvest, pictures of children, family, bread, grapes, wheat, Jesse tree for Advent, a well for water (easily made with cardboard around a clothes basket, and bricks drawn, painted or pasted on the cardboard) or cloth (each member traces and cuts out the shape of her hand. These are attached, fingers hanging down, in layers (like shingles), starting at the bottom – for service, helping, commitment, even praying hands.).

Devotion to Mary: The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops pamphlet signals Mary as a model for us. What God has done for Mary, He also does for us. The four characteristics are: chosen; gifted with faith; called to obedience; and, rewarded in heaven. In Pope Paul VI's 1974 apostolic exhortation, *Marialis Cultus*, he laid down four guidelines for devotion to Mary. It should be:

1. scriptural – that is, based on what scripture tells us of Mary
2. ecumenically sensitive – if it is based on scripture, members of other denominations will be able to accept it, and we may be able to promote such devotion among them
3. compatible with liturgy – for instance, it is not appropriate to pray the rosary during mass or a baptism, etc.
4. anthropological – which means that we cannot hope to live Mary's way of life in our age, culture, society, etc., but we can use her as a model of faith, openness and obedience to God's will, of close relationship with God through prayer, and so on

Litanies can be composed in petition, thanksgiving, praise, etc., and prayed or sung to a very simple tune – for instance: thanksgiving for the League; the response could be: Loving God, we thank You. Litany could include friends, growth, service, support, enjoyment the League has brought to our lives – opportunities, ministries, sense of unity – and so on.

A litany of praise could include beauty, love, joy, faith or simply the good things God has done – giving us His Son, faith, family, jobs, health, appreciation, etc.

CWL Calendar suggestion. The spiritual development chairperson, with the spiritual advisor and the committee members, or with the whole executive, could draw up a calendar of themes for each month's meeting. All the standing committee chairpersons could take a turn highlighting one month's meeting. Perhaps the calendar could include some of these suggestions:

September	commitment, service, new beginnings, community life
October	Our Lady of the Rosary, thanksgiving, family, Christian family life
November	souls in purgatory, appreciation of League ministry, life, organization
December	Advent, service of light, giving, poverty
January	peace, family, a better world, legislation
February	love, faith, hope, the elderly, resolutions
March	Lent, sight, hope, the abused
April	Easter (depending on date), water of life, prayer life, communications
May	Mary, Bloom Where You're Planted, motherhood, fatherhood, spiritual development, education and health
June	Sacred Heart, joy, growth, spiritual development or education and health

ABCs of League Members' Action – for reflection

A	assist, attain, answer, articulate
B	become, bloom, bring our gifts
C	celebrate, cooperate, comfort, convey the Good News, communicate, choose
D	develop, defend, distribute
E	empower, encourage, educate, elect
F	foster, fan enthusiasm, feed, forgo criticism
G	gather, gift, give
H	heal, help, harmonize
I	imitate Mary, increase, involve, invigorate
J	join, jot down needs, joke with each other
K	kindle, kneel in prayer, keep communication open
L	learn, lead, laugh, labour
M	mail reports, make friendships, mourn, match gifts and needs, minister
N	nurture, nourish, name, notify
O	obey God's will, object to injustices, offer, observe
P	participate, promote, pray, proclaim the Good News, protect, provide
Q	question, quench, qualify
R	reach out, renew, respect, resolve, realize
S	support, serve, spread, spend and be spent, share
T	teach, taste, tap into, try
U	understand, unite, upgrade
V	value, venerate, verify, vary, vote
W	witness, work, wait, win people to Christ
X	expect, excite, expose, exalt
Y	yearn, yield to majority decisions
Z	zealously treasure the League

Dorice Marcil
Newfoundland and Labrador