Catholic Women's League

Aotearoa New Zealand Inc – CWLANZ

Women of Hope - Nga Wahine Tumanako

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Website: www.cwl.org.nz

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July Newsletter 2026

Dear Members and friends of CWL,

Greetings to you all. The cold weather this winter has certainly taken its toll with sickness around the motu. Hopefully the heavy frosts have chased all the bugs away and we can look forward to those beautiful sunny days that follow them.

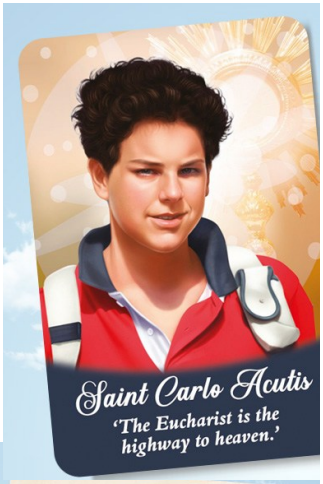
This newsletter this month contains brief reports from annual reports that were presented at our annual meeting in July which this year was held on zoom for the first time. (The full reports are available from Diocesan Secretaries) My grateful thanks to all our officers for their reports which are excellent and well worth reading in their entirety. We held four ,two hour sessions, over two days and were happy with the way it went as we were able to cover everything on the agenda.

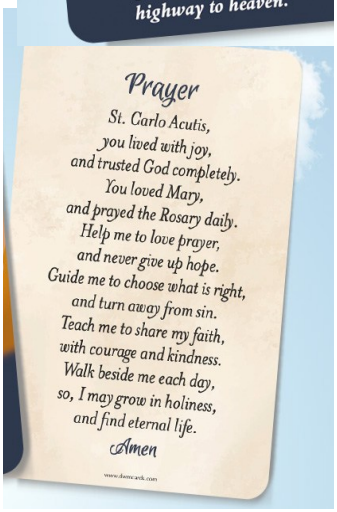
The theme for our meeting was 'Lest We Forget' In keeping with our At Home annual appeal this year-Alzheimers NZ . It is so important that we remember our members who forged the way for us and all those who have gone to God. We need to remember those too, who are no longer able to join us for meetings and League events, to keep them in our prayers and visit them where possible. I would like to encourage you also to write down your own memories of your lives so that your families can share them. I have recently asked my own family to do this and I have loved reading their memories. My brother in law recently commented—'Each memory jogs another memory'. I have posted below, some of the questions that I posed to them. Please think seriously about this. You might even like to send to me some memories of your journeys in CWL which I would love to post on our website -Lest we forget.
Keep warm and take care. Together in Faith and service

Sylvia

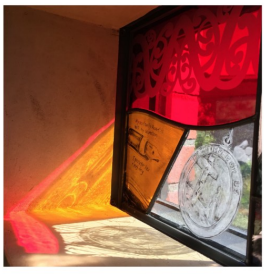
St Carlos Acutis -

Born: 3 May 1991
Died: 12 October 2006
Cause of Death: Leukaemia
Resting Place: Santa Maria Naggiore Assisi





From our Chaplain Christine



"Kahupapangia te awa ki te rakau kia whiti tatou ki tera taha."

"Throw a plank across the stream for us to cross to the other side. Us, together."

From Suzanne Aubert's Mäori phrase book



"Let's pray today for the grace to see in others a little of what God sees, and the grace to be able to treat them always with the respect they deserve"

Our website *is presently being redeveloped. Unfortunately, unbeknown to me and despite my numerous efforts to contact the designer and provider, the site had been taken down and I have had to buy it back. My wonderful Grandson Noah, an engineering software student at UC is now rebuilding the site for us - free of charge. You can access it on the same address - www.cwl.org.nz. - Please remember it is still under construction until I advise otherwise.*

At Home Appeal: Alzheimers NZ

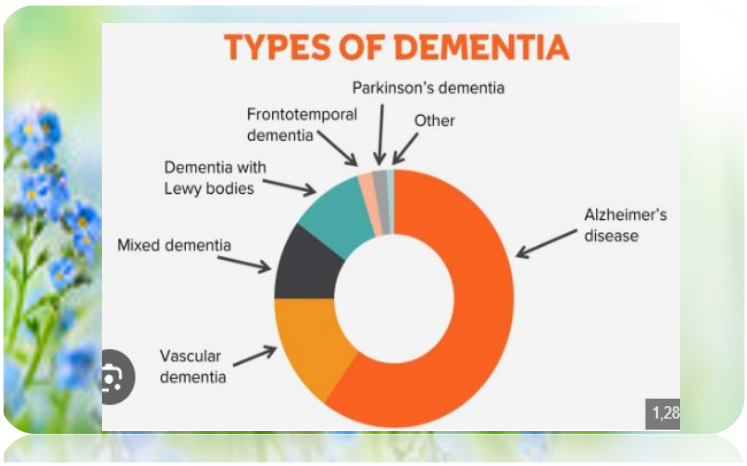
How can we help?

From the President's Annual Report

Lest we forget

Caring with love through the changing seasons

Holding on to what matters most - Together









A few starter questions you might like to ask if you are writing a memory book for someone - or even for yourself.

1. Generally speaking what was your childhood like? Brothers, sisters, cousins, relatives?
2. Memories of your parents?
3. What is your first memory?
4. What are one or two stories you remember of your childhood?
5. Where have you lived during your life?
6. What do you remember of the places where you have lived
7. Describe the neighbourhood etc?
8. Who were your best friends? At home? Friends at School, Work. Other?
9. What are the names of the schools you attended and dates?
10. What are your earliest school memories and teachers? How did you get to school?
11. Were there any subjects you particularly liked or disliked?
12. Were you involved in sports or music out of school hours?
13. What was your favourite 'pass time' activity?
14. What was your first job and how did you get it? Other Jobs?
15. What was your facourite holiday destination?
16. Most memorable family trips?
17. What do you remember of your grandparents?
18. How did you meet your first boyfriend/girlfriend. Spouse?
19. If you married when was this? Names and DOB of any children, grandchildren
20. Did you volunteer at anything?
21. Where was your happy place as a child, teenager, now?
22. What are you most grateful for in your life
23. Are there any special items that you have or were given?

Write a time line from your birth date to the present time.





Auckland

hosted the National Conference in July at The Parnell Hotel with eighty women from the Dioceses of Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, Hamilton and four women from Australia attending along with eighteen members from Auckland. We began with a powhiri to welcome everyone followed by our first speaker Manuel Beazley- Vicar for Maori – who explained the meaning of powhiri and then spoke on his Synodal Journey. Father Anthony Malone explained the terms "Acolyotes, Lectors and Catechists" and Rocio Figuera spoke on Women in the Church and offered us a new perspective of the personality of Mary. Bishop Peter Brown celebrated Mass for us on the second day followed by dinner with some great entertainment from Father Chris Skinner. On the last day Linda Thompson from Women's Refuge- this year's charity for the At Home Appeal spoke on the work they do. There was an outstanding response to the knitting project 303 fish and chip jumpers, 60 cardigans, jumpers and singlets , 90 bonnets and booties and 12 blankets were delivered to Middlemore Hospital and peggy squares to The Nest. Judy Cronin was awarded Life Membership to Auckland Diocesan Council for her many years of service first as Regional Rep and then as Diocesan Treasurer. Branches held their AGM's in October and sadly Blockhouse Bay voted to close after 56 years due to dwindling membership. Marie Foskin kept this branch going for many years. Orakei Branch were also unable to appoint a President and at a meeting held in March thi year they also voted to close. There are now only 6 branches left in Auckland with the strength in membership in the South. All the Diocesan Council roles are held by members from the Southern branches except for one and I cover the President and Treasurer role. Twenty members came together in May in Pukekohe to celebrate the WUCWO liturgy and share morning tea. We will hold our bi - annual Mass and luncheon at the Carmelite Monastery on July 14th.

Fleur de Farias - *Auckland Diocesan President* *Women of Hope-Nga Wahine Tumanako*

Hamilton



Hamilton Diocese currently has nine active Branches - Matamata, Te Awamutu, Morrinsville, Cambridge, Mt Maunganui, Whakatane, Rotorua, Gisborne and Tokoroa. Although some Branches are small and have struggled to get people to take on leadership roles, with the power of prayer and shoulder tapping, the executive roles have been filled and now have positive committees which is wonderful to report. Three Regional Days in 2025 within the Hamilton Diocese were well-attended by members from all branches during August and September. There were reports from all branch Presidents, Treasurers and Mission Convenors. Unfortunately, some branches are still experiencing difficulties with communication with their Missions. The highlight of the year was the Diocesan Conference held in Gisborne in March. This, again, was one-day conference, and all who attended agreed it was very successful where good discussions took place. It was a pleasure to have our National President, Sylvia Mellish, in attendance. Congratulations to Gisborne on a well-organised day. During April several branches made cards, prayer cards or flowers for distribution on Mother's Day which were much appreciated, followed in May with several members attending a World Day of Prayer Mass. All branches have participated in the WUCWO liturgy, either in their own branch or joining with a neighbouring branch and followed by a shared lunch. Cambridge Branch has donated Rosary beads to St Peter's School. Te Awamutu members have been busy knitting baby clothes for Loving Arms - Loving Arms has helped over 7000 Waikato babies and their families by distributing donated baby items, including clothing, bedding, nappies, toiletries, cots, car seats, and prams. Mt Maunganui branch are considering ringing/visiting CWL members who may be unwell, living alone or just need a visit. Regional Days for 2026 have been arranged, and all regions have confirmed their dates: Central – Te Awamutu 15th August, East – Gisborne 27th August, and South – Tokoroa 2ndSeptember. Next year's Diocesan Conference is to be held in Te Awamutu on 17th March 2027. Discussions are ongoing for a new Mission Convenor and Vice President to complete our executive. Hopefully we will be able to fill these positions in the not too distant future.

Kris Shaw, Hamilton Diocesan President.

Wellington



We were fortunate to have 17 of our members attend the last years National Conference in Auckland. Our Branches continue to be active with knitting, fundraising by way of raffles, Bonus Lotto numbers and Quiz evenings. CWL quiz evenings have become popular among our wider parishioners, enabling primary schools in our areas to benefit from monetary donations with one Branch raised $2850 for St John Ambulance from their quiz evening. Most Branches took on the challenge of collecting Love Grace handbags. Members have arranged various social get-togethers, including group to movies-- Downtown Abbey and Holy Days where particularly enjoyed. The annual Conference was held recently at St Thomas More Church, Otari. A special ("thank you" and presentations were made to Susan Lloyd and Pat O'Connor for their time and great work as our President and Co Presidents. Janette Dorward was welcomed as the incoming President and a new Council was elected -- secretary and treasurer have agreed to stay. The Conference concluded with Mass celebrated by Cardinal John Dew who joined us in the commitment of the new Council. This was followed by an informative and, at times, very amusing talk on Cardinal John's participation in last year's historic Conclave. Invited guests from around the Archdiocese joined us for this talk and for the following lunch. Many of our Branches participated in World Day of Prayer in their local areas joining other churches in a celebration together and Levin Branch hosted WUCWO day celebrations. We are also extremely fortunate to have Christine Paterson continuing as our archdiocesan Chaplain. The reflections and prayers she shares at our Council meetings are always well thought-out and provide the opportunity not just for personal reflection but also for sharing our thoughts, memories, hopes, and sometimes our fears. Otari has begun their Winter Reflection series of meetings which has become traditional over recent years. In March I joined New Plymouth at their promotional day enjoying a shared lunch to which an invitation had been extended to the Parish and to Inglewood Branch. It was a pleasure to meet Christine Drinkwater, president of Ingelwood. Lower Hutt branch celebrated their 75th birthday this week with a Luncheon attended and enjoyed by many, Levin celebrated their 70th birthday in November with a High Tea, I attended Heretaunga's birthday afternoon tea, where we were entertained by the St Brendan's School music group and New Plymouth recently celebrated their 63rd birthday with a luncheon at Cobb and Co.

Christchurch


Past and Present Christchurch Diocesan Presidents cutting the cake

2026 marks the 90th year of existence for CWL in the Christchurch Diocese. The Diocese retains 11 branches with the addition of a 5th Region, covering the Dunedin and Invercargill areas, joining them for CWL business. Marie Kelly represents CWL on Church Women United and is currently the chairperson. Susan Dickson and Lynette Windle attend the National Council of Women as representatives of CWL. Fr Farrant retired as Christchurch CWL's Chaplain and Bishop Michael Giesen, unable to provide a chaplain in Fr Peter's place for 2026, has asked parish priests to support CWL Branches. In July 2025, 18 Christchurch members attended the National CWLANZ Biennial Conference in Parnell, Auckland, which was chaired by the National CWLANZ President, Sylvia Mellish from Christchurch. The opening Mass of the 2026 Conference in March at St Peters in Beckenham was celebrated by Mgr Rick Loughlin deputizing for Bishop Michael. *(Continued over)*

(Christchurch continued) Liz Roche continues her work for WUCWO and with Sylvia Mellish and Zella McGirr from Christchurch, attended the WUCWO Asia Pacific Conference in Sydney, in September 2025. Our theme for 2025 to 2027 is 'Women of Hope', 'Nga Wahine Tumanako'. WUCWO has requested branches plant trees as witness to hope and improving our environment. A long service CWL award was presented to Lincoln's Jeanette O'Donnell for 58 years. Congratulations to Margaret Rea, Lincoln, and Sylvia Mellish, Rakaia, who were individually awarded the Papal Benemerenti Medal for outstanding, life-long service to the Church, in their respective communities. Members attended a performance by the PMH Players who offered CWL a Charity Night performance where tickets were sold as a fundraiser for KidsCan and Women's Refuge. Pope Leo has declared 2026 a Jubilee year in honour of St Francis of Assisi, being the 800th anniversary of Francis's death. The motto of the Franciscan Friars is Pax Bonus, meaning peace and goodness. During this 90th year of celebration. Let us be peacemakers as we model our faith beliefs and serve in our community. ***Lynette Windle*** - *Christchurch Diocesan President*.

WUCWO is an organisation, is growing, facing challenges and achieving results by hard work, and commitment to the resolutions passed at the General Assembly of 2023. The highlight of the year for the Asia Pacific Region was the Regional Conference held in Sydney last September. It was a privilege to learn of the work being carried out in the various Catholic women's organisations around Asia and Pacific One common challenge which we are all facing in our countries is domestic violence, but through the work of the World Women's Observatory, Catholic women are being given the necessary training and tools to effectively bring about change in women's lives, the latest project being carried out in Indonesia. and the latest one on Celebrating the 'World Day of Prayer for Creation' with the New Mass. This has been helpful for me in the context of Laudato SÍ Action Group Waitaha, where we are planning events and celebration during the Season of Creation in September. Our membership in WUCWO is invaluable. Webinars are a great way to learn. WUCWO President General Monica Santamarina has issued timely and informative News-letters, and has also visited several Catholic women's organisations in various countries to see first-hand the work that is being carried out. We are grateful for her leadership and her strong voice, especially as Consultant to the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, and involvement with other Vatican Dicasteries and through the representation of WUCWO Board members on other influential International organisations. Women's Voice magazine has been updated—in digital and hard copy, it is an informative publication. WUCWO Day was celebrated in May in Branches and Regions, affording an expression of our faith, and a time of fellowship. Notification has been received of the WUCWO General Assembly to be held at El Escorial, Spain, from 6 to 12 June 2027, under the theme: "Women for Peace leading in the Care of Life." Let us hope that there will be representation from CWLANZ! I will forward more in- formation when it comes to hand. ***Liz Roche*** *International Secretary of WUCWO*

Missions Three application forms were emailed to the four Mission Convenors, namely Jubilee Fund, 'At Home Appeal' 2026 and the Mission Education Project In October. Mission Education Fund applications were received and paid out as follows: $300 (Levin branch) St. Marys College in Samoa' $300 (Matamata branch) Tarapaina Rural Training Centre in Solomon Islands. In November, I compiled all the financial reports from the information sent to me by the four Diocesan Mission Convenors -- In February 2026, I presented the National Mission Report Return and Report to the Board meeting in Kaiapoi, highlighting our fundraising and donations within NZ and the Pacific-another very successful fundraising year. In March 2026, three Mission Education Fund applications were received and paid out as follows: - $400 (Levin branch) to Samoa; $400 (Otahuhu branch) to Rarotonga; $400 (Halswell branch) to Tonga; The 'Love Grace Handbag Appeal' was also well supported by many branches throughout NZ. In April 2026 I undertook an audit of all our mission communities and it was really pleasing to receive the completed lists returned to me by the four Diocesan Mission Convenors; an outstanding feature of this was the number of communities we have lost contact with either through branches closing or lack of suitable means of communication. In May 2026, a real highlight of the year for me was, I visited the Solomon Islands and based in Honiara where I met and made very positive contact with Arch Bishop Chris Cardone OP—he was able to help me with re-establishing lost communities and establish linka with new communities. -(*Report of visit attached.)* ***Lorraine Macmillan***—*CWLANZ Mission Secretary*

Social Issues Report, July 2026 The following Social Issues Report provides a mixture of topics covered over the past twelve months. We find challenge, uneveness, at times danger, intergenerational poverty, power on the side of perpetrators...for starters. Introducing a vista of hope, we meet writings, clarity and insight by Popes Francis and Leo XIV. As well, an inspirational piece by Father James Lyons. So we really are just knocking on the door of some of our brothers and sisters who are likely less comfortable nor safe. Kainga kore/Homelessness highlights the mismatch in our communities where although there is an abundance of resourcing, the share is not abundant. Expect mental health, trauma, unhappiness and disconnection. Humans by design have the right to dignity and equality like the proverbial 'roof over the head'. The entire material universe speaks of God's love, God's boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God' (Laudato Si', #84). The earth is our 'sister' and 'now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed us.' I am sensing a deterioration. Think Gaza, Ukraine, South Sudan... Rivers, Air, Water, Rangi and Papa. Sky Father, Earth Mother and in between...long term global damage and extremely delayed recovery. Human Trafficking, Alive and (Un)Well in Āotearoa. More than 50 million wāhine, tamariki and tāne (Global Slavery Index) (2023) are trapped inside modern slavery. Forced labour is in Āotearoa within agricultural, dairy, building, hospitality and food services. Those of us in the 'free world' hold the responsibility to seek solutions and attempts to halt such evil and contribute our inherent wairua/ holiness and skills to act upon the Good Samaritan that abides within as advised by Pope Francis. *Nō rēira, kua mutu taku korero Conclusion. Let us give thanks.* ***Bonnie - Social Issues secretary***

Missions Communities – Spotlight on the Solomons



As National Mission Secretary I undertook a visit to the Solomon Islands and from the 15th—22nd May I stayed in Honiara (the main island and the capital). It had been a long, long time since anyone from the league had visited and currently, we, nationally, support 12 Mission Communities. The Christchurch Diocese CWL have 4 of those communities that we support with fund raising. .

My initial impressions were of a very hot country (average temperature 35C: 80-90%humidity) where the people live simply in small villages but are humble and welcoming. Many are employed but poorly paid and live hand-to-mouth; many families run road-side stalls built from whatever they can find, sometimes just under the shade of a market-type umbrella. They sell locally grown vegetables, bread, betelnut, bottled water and oil.



Firstly, I made contact with Arch Bishop Chris Cardone OP who was very welcoming, very inclusive and informative, and also very realistic. He was able to confirm with me the communities contacts we currently have there and, now, with his assistance, have a guaranteed line of communication and pathway for transferring funds to our mission communities.

In 2025 the CWL nationally donated $16,939 to their various mission communities in the Solomons and the Christchurch Diocese contribution within that was $4000





The Catholic Church is in great shape in the Solomons ably led by Arch Bishop Chris and a real highlight for me was attending 9am Sunday Mass (1 of 4 services held every Sunday) said by the Arch Bishop alongside over 2000 other parishioners in the beautiful open-air Holy Cross Cathedral.

Hundreds of families attended, a secondary school choir sang, and 2 small cultural groups performed as well as plenty of youth---their faith is visible, they are proud, devout and sincere!!! Mass lasted 90 minutes—it was inspiring and refreshing.

An absolute delight for me was being able to track down Sister Donna-a sister from the DMI Order(Daughters of Mary Immaculate)- the local sisters. She was the contact for my own branches' mission community (Greymouth)—we had lost contact through covid times.



Sister Donna is a midwife at the Good Samaritan Hospital in the Tetere Parish—she told me they had delivered 70 babies in May and I saw her on the 20th May!!



I was able to assist her by buying some basic food supplies(rice and tinned fish) for patients meals in the hospital. Families must feed their own family members in hospital and many cannot because of distance and poverty. I also arranged for a fridge/freezer to be delivered to her own house in late June—she has never had one!

Life in The Solomons can be tough for many but generally I found the locals happy, friendly, clean and tidy and very grateful for anything you did for them.

- Lorraine – CWLANZ Mission Convenor













From One Broken Pot to Another

- A beautiful song from Fr Chris Skinner that fits in so well with our theme – with permission

Let's rest against the wall . 'Til the sun wakes up the Meadow
and gives light and warmth to all,

I see you need some fixing , we all need that somehow
Lets just share this brief encounter and be satisfied for now

I bet you have a story and it's not my place to pry,
You see I still can listen. I'll help the time go by.

I've been around for ages, you can tell that by my glaze
The pot you see before you, sure has seen better days

but I wouldn't change a thing now. I'm damaged yeah that's true
But with these cracks I'm stronger. They let the sun shine through

I may not be as fine now as china or Belleek
and not so good for flowers - the water tends to leak

But I'm good for brooms and papers and lots of memories too
and even as a doorstop, to let the air blow through.

Now I've done all the talking. I hope your didn't mind
I've been told I sure can chatter. A trap for me, I find

I truly care to listen if you've a word or two
and it's fine to sit in silence if that's what you'd rather do

From one broken pot to another. Let's rest against the wall.
'Til the sun wakes up the meadow and gives light and warmth to all.



You can hear Fr Chris sing this song -and others from the album it comes from, on his website –
www.chrisskinner.org.nz

Check it out.