



Catholic Women's League Hong Kong Newsletter

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Dates to Remember

Feast of the Assumption:
Aug 15

**Fr Russell's b'day
celebration:** Aug 22

**There will be no Committee
Meeting in July.**

**The Mother's Evening Prayer
group meets every 2nd and 4th
Thursday of the month -
7 to 8 pm**

**Venue: 7th floor, Rm 708,
Catholic Diocese Centre**

From Fr Russell's Desk...

Our Lady: Un-doer of Knots



When Pope Francis was a student in Germany in the 1980s he came across a painting in a church in Bavaria dating from about the year 1700. It depicted Our Lady standing on a crescent moon, crushing the serpent underfoot, surrounded by angels with the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove above her head, as she unties a series of knots on a long ribbon. The future Pope bought a copy of the painting and on his return to Argentina promoted this devotion. It was inspired by St Irenaeus (martyred in 202) who wrote about Mary untying the knot of Eve's disobedience. The donor presented the painting to his parish church in thanksgiving: his grandfather's marriage was saved through prayer to Our Lady "to untie all knots and smooth them".

The painting (left) is executed in Baroque style by Johann Georg Melchior Schmidtner, of around 1700. The first chapel to be named "Mary, Untier of Knots" was completed in 1989 in Styria, Austria, inspired as a supplication in response to

the Chernobyl Nuclear Tragedy. The image of "Mary, Undoer of Knots" is especially venerated in Argentina and Brazil.

(Fr John Russell has been spiritual director of the Catholic Women's League since 1991.)



Farewell Dear Dolores!

When I turned on my phone after Mass on Palm Sunday, April 13, there were five missed calls from Canossa Hospital at 10:30 am. I called them back nervously and the nurse told me that Dolores had just passed away. I went to the hospital immediately, with mixed feelings of sorrow and joy. I was saddened because Dolores had lost the battle against cancer that she had fought so bravely for seventeen months. But I rejoiced that the Lord had taken her soul to its heavenly abode on such a special day in the Catholic Church. It was just like the palm branch which symbolizes triumph and victory, Dolores had overcome her trials with courage, perseverance and faith.

I had not interacted much with Dolores before she turned sick. It was during my visits while she was at the hospitals and elder care homes, that I came to admire the strength and courage of this beautiful woman who was always known for her gentleness and humility. When she was recuperating at the Buddhist Hospital after each of her six chemotherapy sessions she had two goals to achieve: to eat well and to gain back her muscle strength. She would force herself to finish most of the meals and would proudly share with me what she ate. With such determination, she did not continue to lose weight. On a good day, there was even a tint of rosiness on her cheeks.

Dolores treasured every single session of physiotherapy and would cooperate with all her strength to complete the exercises required. She often received encouraging compliments from the staff. Once she told me that her doctor invited her to be a volunteer because she was so positive and would be a model for other patients with chronic illnesses.

Dolores was discharged from the Buddhist Hospital when her cancer index touched a very low level. At that point she was hoping to go to an elder care home where she could begin living a normal life. She found a place and started her physiotherapy sessions. Her progress was remarkable. One day I saw her walking up and down the stairs with the help of the therapist. She would proudly tell me how many times she walked the stairs. She also tried to walk by herself in her room -- with her back straight and her chin up and said, "I do it as if I were marching." She explained, "That was my training as a cadet."



Left: Dolores at her First Holy Communion in 1951
Right: Dolores at 21, our beauty from yesteryears



11 Jul 2017: With Betty Olaes (centre) and Maria (R) at China Coast Community

That was the first time I heard about her being an air cadet. I learnt more about her achievements from other air cadet officers. They had high respect for "Miss Brown," the colonel who mentored them with love and care since they were young cadets. They organized a birthday party for her 76th and 77th birthdays. More than 80 officers came to her Requiem Mass.

Dolores had many groups of friends. One lady whom I met a few times was her neighbour, who always brought her the newspaper and things she needed from her home. There was an older man who regularly visited her and brought her favourite snacks. He was a good friend from Citibank. Dolores also had Tai Chi buddies at the China Coast Community where she was a volunteer as well as a participant in their activities. Betty Olaes, a CWL member and resident at CCC, called on Dolores every day to check on her well-being.

Dolores didn't talk much about the glorious days of her innings as an air cadet officer. It must have been the most precious memories of her life.

She loved every opportunity to volunteer and guided the young cadets to a life of compassion and charity. During my short encounter with her, I witnessed her courage to fight, her determination to live, her obedience to accept, and her total surrender to the Lord. Blessed are you Dolores, who lived the ways of the Beatitudes. Thank you my dear friend for inspiring us to walk a path of faith, hope and love. **By Maria Chu**

Reminiscing a good friend

When I first joined CWL in 2013, I noticed Dolores always seated at one end of the front pew, quiet and all alone at the Thursday morning masses. After Holy Hour one day she introduced herself to me. On that day after lunch we went home together as our homes were on the train lines, and that was the beginning of many train journeys together. Dolores's quietness and shyness soon disappeared and she began talking to me about anything and everything.

Many times on our journey home, she would not get off at Mongkok to change the train to take her to Kowloon Tong MTR station (which was where her home was located). But instead she would accompany me up to Mei Foo and then take the train back to her home. I asked her why she did that and she said, "I don't want to go home yet, as it's too early. I will just feel lonely".

On another occasion she told me how she had joined many groups and communities to be with people, so that she could dispel her loneliness. She was part of the Police Senior Volunteer group, a Tai Chi group, a senior Girl Guides group and the China Coast Community where she attended yoga, bingo and lunch outings. She was a founder member of the Air Cadets where she had been a member for almost 40 years, and an escort travelling companion for air cadets visiting Hong Kong.

She also mentioned to me how after her mother's passing away she had started feeling very nervous and afraid of a few things, such as turning on the microwave at home and had also begun using bank counters to withdraw money instead of the easy ATM machines. Also when she would sign cheques her hand would be gripped with a tremor.

Over the years as our friendship grew, I could see that she was happier and getting more confident.

We often had lunch together after long chats. At times we attended mass and went to the movies. Or we would go to the outlying islands and enjoy a relaxed lunch. We were also regular attendees at Lola's and Nancy's lunch recitals at St John's Cathedral.

Dolores was also my translator, and at times in jest she would translate the gossip of MTR passengers' for me. One very useful translation was "*Sap men yat cheung*" (\$10 per ticket) which I use during our raffle ticket sales.



2017: Dolores selling raffle tickets at St Francis of Assisi Church



March 24: Celebrating her last birthday with besties: Barbara (centre) and Angelina (right)

In September 2017, Dolores joined the pilgrimage to Poland after much persuasion. During the trip she was often unwell and had a bad cough.

She had begun complaining about the discomfort in her stomach since November that year. On Jan 2, 2018 she felt dizzy after a Tai Chi workout and had to call an ambulance and be taken to the hospital. That was the beginning of the unravelling of the disease that had afflicted her, and her long battle until she died.

Dolores fought the disease bravely and had many moments of recovery. On Jan 17, she attended the CWL potluck for the last time in her life. On March 24, this year we celebrated her last birthday. She insisted that I attend it and I'm so glad I did. **By Angelina Chow**

Raffle 2019: A show of team spirit



This year, we visited 36 churches and mass centres. The total church sales were \$476,600; \$36,260 more than 2018, or an increase of 8 per cent.

We added two new churches this year: Annunciation Church and SS Cosmas & Damian Church, both in Tsuen Wan. In addition, three churches that we did not visit last year were included, namely, Our Lady of Rosary (Kennedy Town), St. Andrew's (Tseung Kwan O), St. Benedict Church (Sha Tin).

Excluding the aforementioned 5 additional churches we visited, of the 31 churches we visited, we noted increased sales in 12 of them whilst 19 churches have shown sales decline compared to 2018.

The highest sales made was at St. Margaret Mary's Church for a total of \$41,190, followed by the Cathedral at \$40,050. The total of these two churches was comparable to last year's numbers. These two churches continue to be our top performing churches year after year.

The highest increase in sales was at the Rosary Church (Tsimshatsui) +\$7,060; second was the Holy Cross Mass Centre (Shau Kei Wan) +\$5,560; and third was St. Mary's Church (Hung Hom), +\$5,210.

We began our raffle-ticket-selling knowing that our biggest challenge would be insufficient manpower. Other factors like second collections, competition with St. Vincent de Paul collections, economic impact, renovations, student exams, rainy

weather also affected our sales.

For those of us who were at the churches every weekend, we all know how physically demanding it was to sell tickets, especially on the leaders. One of the leaders told us that after finishing with the Saturday night mass and a difficult commute home, she had to get up at 5 am in order to set up for the 7 am mass and sold at 5 masses on Sunday. Not to mention having to meet with the weight of the tickets and other things she needed to carry to the church.

However, we were also met with very helpful parishioners selling tickets with us at Ricci Hall and St. Anne's. We sold out at a number of parishes and wished we had brought more tickets. We thank God for the generosity demonstrated by many of the faithful despite the obstacles.

Let me take this opportunity to express my sincerest appreciation to all our team leaders who have devoted six hectic weekends selling tickets for a very worthy cause. In addition, I want to thank all our volunteers. Not only members, but also friends and relatives, helpers, students from Caritas and a group of dedicated senior ladies, for sacrificing their precious weekends. It was through the concerted effort of all that we were able to achieve our goal. Thank you and wish you all a Happy Summer Holiday. **By Irene Chen**



May 23, 2019: CWL members on the Day of the Draw

Raffle 2019: A few glimpses



Holy Cross Church



Trinity Chapel, Discovery Bay



St Bonaventure



St Jude's, North Point



Our Lady of Mount Carmel



Cathedral



St Benedict Church



The customary lunch at Caritas restaurant

Birthday Cheer



Father Russell and members
sing for our April b'day girls
Lanyin Fletcher and
Yvonne Tsui



May: Rose Wu and
Joyce Lai

We would like to hear
from you too! If you
would like to give us
your feedback or have
some information to
share please email it to
office@cwllhk.org

The Medjugorje Message

Many friends asked me if I have seen a miracle during my pilgrimage. I was there for only 3 days. On the first day I climbed the Apparition Hill for one hour. The second day I was too tired, so I did not go to the Mount of the Cross, which was higher than the Apparitions Hill. I spent my day in the Shrine praying and looking for souvenirs. I told my friends that I had a peaceful pilgrimage and was content even though I did not experience any miracle. I was convinced that I did not need miracles to remain in faith and in prayer. But I believe that with each pilgrimage I make, there are gifts and graces which I experience later during the year.

I read the Apparitions Booklet and searched for messages the Heavenly Mother wanted us to know. I read about the people of Croatia and their history of Christianity dating back to 641. Thanks to the two brothers St. Cyril and St. Methodius, who Romanized the Slavic language, translated scripture and liturgy, evangelized people, about 80% of the population is Catholic. Croatia suffered much during the Turkish invasion in the 16th century, followed by the Austrian and Hungarian rule, then the French and German attacks. A severe earthquake in the 18th century destroyed many churches.

Croatia had a shrine dedicated to the Mother of God at Bistrice since the 18th century. It was during these moments of suffering in 1981 (Czechoslovakia became several independent states) that Our Heavenly Mother appeared to 6 visioners.

What are the messages from our Lady?

Conversion is the basic message to all people, "Cleanse your heart of evil" (Jer. 4:14). Cleansing and heart-conversion is effected through the power of God. Our Lady intends to convey the power of conversion from God to all people. No one is excluded from conversion. Because everyone is a sinner. Our Lady told the visioners, "convert before it is too late while there is time". She revealed she came to convert and reconcile people and bring peace to Christians. The means of conversion are prayer, penance, fasting and monthly confession.

Prayer: Our Lady comes to teach us to pray. At every apparition, she prayed together with the visioners. Pilgrimages help us to grow in faith and prayer and search to heal their faith. Our Lady intercedes for us, she responds to visioners' questions to pray to Jesus, she will help and intercede. She asks for prayers for the souls in Purgatory.

Fasting: Fasting in itself has no value, no meaning, but in the services of faith, it strengthens faith. When we fast, we control ourselves, and when we are in control of ourselves, we can give ourselves to God and to others. Our Lady being unhappy with the practice of fasting, which has disappeared in the church, wishes that it be revised. It is hoped that believers will fast on Friday, subsisting only on bread and water. This wish is corollary to her counsel of repentance and pertains to the necessity of reparation.

Prayer and fasting have constantly been emphasized as the most preliminary to conversion and the surest way to obtain cures from illness.

Having shared this information, I hope all readers are invited to make some response to our Lady's invitation to conversion, to faith, to prayer and fasting, and acts of charity in our daily life. **By Joyce Chang**