



Catholic Women's League Hong Kong Newsletter

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Dates to Remember

October 25: CWL annual general meeting at 12:15 pm on the 18th floor, Catholic Centre

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... God hasn't finished fashioning me yet!

When you come to think of it there is something remarkable in the fact that practically every one of us wants to be better than they are. Is this too optimistic a reading of the human race? Four – or is it now five? – billion human beings all trying to improve themselves?

Granted that for most their aspirations will focus on being able to eat two or three meals a day instead of one or on living in a house that befits a human being. Who can blame them? But I feel sure that a significant number aspire after something more spiritual than career or bank balance. A pop poster of yesteryear bore the plea: *Have patience with me. God hasn't finished fashioning me yet!* Yes, to our dying day we will remain a work in progress. The Divine Potter is at his wheel putting finishing touches to his work of art, his masterpiece.

Sometimes the work is slow: the clay the Divine Potter works on is of imperfect consistency and does not gel as it is meant to. The fashioning takes longer and the result does not always wear as well as it might. But the Divine Potter does not lose patience. We often do. We pray for the grace to overcome a shadow area of our character or some unlovely emotional hang-up, and when the change does not occur overnight we lose courage and our trust in the efficacy of prayer.

But we should know well enough that in our world change does not come about like that. Significant change that is sudden should always be viewed with circumspection. The most we can reasonably hope for is to be able, each day, to take a few steps in the new direction. We are today what we were yesterday and so will be for some time to come. Have patience! Give the Divine Potter a chance.

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



Celebrating another milestone birthday!



CWL celebrated Fr Russell's 92nd birthday on August 23rd at the Catholic Centre. About 45 members and friends joined in the feasting and fun of the afternoon. Our members prepared a delectable spread. We also had a few solo renditions by Nancy, Elaine, Mary Wa and Fernanda with Salween on the piano.



Fund Allocations: A Studied Choice

Our League's main fund-raising event is the Annual Grand Raffle conducted from March to May each year. Its purpose is to raise funds to help needy families by funding tuitions for students and for hardship cases.

In July 2018, following the successful completion of the Grand Raffle, applications were invited from supervisors, social workers and parents. About 51 students applied for tuition assistance. Three teams, each comprising two CWL members, were set up to assess and conduct interviews. All applicants were recommended by social workers who have an in-depth knowledge of the need of the students. In our assessment we primarily look into the following:

- learning abilities/disabilities;
- family and financial background/situation;
- achievements, academic results;
- their aspirations, talents, challenges and eagerness for improvement.

I have been involved in this exercise for over seven years and have realized that most of the cases are quite sad. In addition to being financially burdened, many families are broken, or have parents who are divorced, stricken by

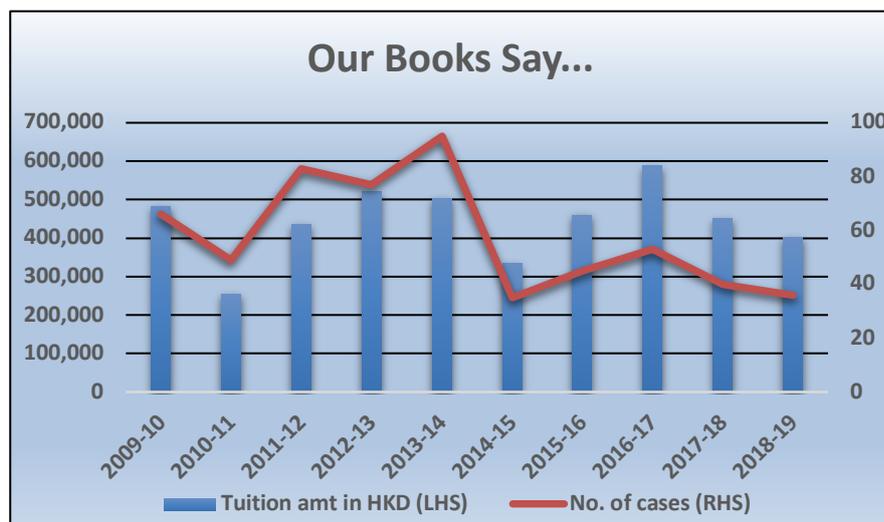
addictions, imprisonment or have health issues. Many suffer from depression. However, there have been quite a few 'successful' cases, and this has made our endeavor very worthwhile.

This year the committee has approved 36 cases. Our focus was mainly secondary students, particularly those studying in Secondary 5 and 6. We hope that with our assistance these students will be able to achieve better results that would help them achieve their aspirations for a better future. We were not able to support 14 cases, three of whom were Primary 1 students. We are of the view that at the lower levels, students should try to study on their own and not have to depend on tutors.

Hardship Cases

As regards Hardship cases, we have approved six of the nine applications. CWL started funding hardship cases in 2016 and has approved 37 cases so far. Most cases were well-deserved due to proven hardships. Appended below are the profiles of two new cases that received the League's endorsement this year:

- A 17-year-old teenager whose parents are missing. He was being cared for by his paternal grandmother but due to objections from his uncle, he has been staying in a Boys' Home since 2011 and has relied on CSSA (government assistance). His academic grades are very good and he will attend Secondary 6 this year. In the last academic year he has done very well in extra-curricular activities too. He has received a Bronze Award from the SAR Government for contributing 50 hours of volunteer service to the community in 2017; an award for Outstanding Cooperation at the HK School Drama Festival. He also attained Merit in Service in his school for being the Chairperson of the Music Club and as a School Photographer. We were most impressed with this young individual who is surviving on government assistance, hence we decided to give him a grant of \$1,800 per month.
- The applicant is a 32-year-old lady. She came to Hong Kong with her husband and 5-year-old daughter, two years ago. She said her family was still finding it difficult to adjust to life here. They live in an old flat and pay a rent \$8,000 per month. She now faces financial hardship as her husband, aged 30, who worked as a porter suffered a serious leg injury three months ago, and so will not be able to work for some time. She is trying to apply for government assistance but this takes time. A hardship grant of \$2,000 per month for 12 months was approved to alleviate at least some of the hardship faced by the applicant and her family. **By Paulette Santos**



BIRTHDAY CHEER



June: Hilda Garcia



July: Nancy Tang,
Denise de Souza,
Paulette Santos,
Melin Pereira



August: Irene
Chen, Mercy Tham

CWL Diary...



Farewell Joan: Our last lunch with Joan Ng at Club Lusitano on July 5 before she left for Toronto



June 21: Joan cutting the cake with CWL members at her last potluck



June 21: Yvonne presents a token of appreciation to Imelda (centre) and her friend for helping us sell raffle tickets



July 19: Pauline (right) before she left for Sydney



We celebrated Paulette's 70th birthday at our July potluck and partook of longevity buns to mark the special occasion!

