



# Review

**Volume 55 No. 6  
December 2015**

**“PRAY AND ACT FOR CHANGE”**



## **P r e s i d e n t ' s M e s s a g e**

On a very hot and windy November evening I was joined by Pat, Anna, and Eris on a visit to *Light the Way Learning Centre* to donate the educational resources and money that you generously donated. Brother Sean McManus was extremely appreciative of the thought that went into these donations. The hall at St Therese's in Moonah is the location for the Centre, we arrived to the sound of laughter and chatter as the different age groups were solving some very challenging problems set by their tutors. The interaction of school aged refugees, from a range of countries and young local college and university students as tutors and mentors, was an example of young people promoting peace and harmony amongst different religious groups.

By the time this goes to print I will have attended an *afternoon tea* organised by our Anima ladies; a social occasion and fundraiser for lighting in St Mary's Cathedral. Members please encourage young women in your family or parish to attend these events or contact one of the current Anima Members to keep informed of future activities.

Please continue to pray for Archbishop Porteous while he waits the outcome of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner's decision. If accepted and the case proceeds this will be a litmus test for freedom of religion and freedom of speech. While following the opinions of prominent writers, it reminded me of the strong censorship laws of major literary works, pamphlets and even comics, enforced in Australia from the 1850s to the 1970s. Under the *Customs Act 1901*, publications deemed controversial were *automatically* banned.

Right to Life Australia organised for Troy Newman, President of Operation Rescue to speak in various cities in Australia. Amid the controversy and media attention we went ahead and arranged for Troy to speak at our venue in Hobart. On the grounds of 'inciting violence' Labor backbencher Terri Butler intervened and consequently, Troy's visa was revoked. He did arrive in Melbourne but was immediately taken into custody and sent straight back to America. Fortunately for us, Dr Katrina Haller, from Right to Life, offered to fly to Hobart and deliver Troy's prepared presentation. With Troy's notes and her own personal anecdotes Dr Haller delivered an informative and thoughtful speech on the abhorrent practice of the selling of body parts from aborted babies at Planned Parenthood clinic in USA. *Is this happening in Australia?* CWL Tasmania has written to two politicians requesting answers to find out if this practice is being carried out in Tasmania.

Anti-abortion campaigner from QLD, Graham Preston will appear in the Tasmania Magistrate's court on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> of December, you may remember he defied the law against protesting 150 metres outside an abortion clinic in Tasmania; please continue to support Graham and the court deems the buffer zone law 'unconstitutional'.

Congratulations to Kath and all our regular writers who contributed to the Review in 2015. The articles, reports and stories have made interesting and informative reading for members. When you have finished reading this issue, it will be time to prepare for Christmas. Thank you to all members who contributed to our fundraising efforts, organised meetings, social events and supported each other throughout the year. Occasionally we need to remind ourselves to pause and put aside the work we do for the League and just enjoy moments of friendship with our catholic women colleagues. A very happy and safe Christmas and New Year with family and friends. All the best for 2016.

*Sandra Harvey*

**Reflection****December 2015**

During Advent 2015, Pope Francis has declared the beginning of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, December 8 2015 to November 20 2016. Central to this Jubilee is the “embrace of God’s mercy”, the immeasurable love of God for all humanity and for the whole of creation. As Pope Francis says “God’s love for us is so great, so deep; it is an unfailing love, one which always take us by the hand and supports us, lifts us up and leads us on “(Pope Francis Church of Mercy)

**Reflection**

You are invited to reflect on a scene from the Gospel of Luke Be still.....Listen!

*There were shepherds in the area living in the fields and keeping nightly watch by turns over their flock. The angel of God appeared to them and the glory of God shone around them; they were very much afraid. The angel said to them “you have nothing to fear I come to proclaim good news to you – news of great joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in David’s city, a saviour – the Messiah - has been born to you. Let this be a sign for you: you’ll find an infant wrapped in a simple cloth, lying in a manger”*

*Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in high heaven! And on earth peace to those on whom God’s favour rests.” When the angel returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem and see this event that God has made known to us.” They hurried and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the manger; once they saw this, they reported what they had been told concerning the child. All who heard about it were astonished at the report given by the shepherds.*

Luke 2:8-18

**Consider and discuss**

- a) What words or images touch your heart or attract you?
- b) What fresh insights do you “hear” and “see” as you reflect on this gospel text?
- c) What might God be showing you afresh about His tender mercy and love as you ponder this familiar scene?
- d) The shepherds were seen as the poorest of society and yet “the glory of God shone around them” and “they found Mary and Joseph and the baby... the Saviour and Messiah... lying in a manger” (Luke 2:16) we notice that God comes among humanity in powerlessness, simplicity and poverty. How might we, the CWL, continue to support people who are fragile or vulnerable eg. the elderly, children, those who are unwell, refugees and those who live on the edge of society?

**Let us pray together:**

**Leader:** Lord, may we bring your mercy and compassion to all our families and community.

**Response:** *God of Bethlehem be born anew in our hearts*

**Leader:** Lord, may we contribute to peace and justice in our neighbourhood and in our world.

**Response:** *God of Bethlehem be born anew in our hearts*

**Leader:** Lord, may we see ever more fully that your hand is at work in the beauty of human life and in the wonder of all creation.

**Response:** *God of Bethlehem be born anew in our hearts*

**Leader:** Lord, may we, like the shepherds, bring the joyful news of Jesus to all whom we meet during this Advent and Christmas season 2015.

**Response:** *God of Bethlehem be born anew in our hearts*

*Clare Kieley-Hoye*

*From the Editor*

Our grateful thanks to Clare for her thought provoking reflections during 2015. Clare is not continuing next year. We are most appreciative of her time preparing the reflections and wish her well in her busy schedule.

**Our prayers are asked for the following people.**

Archbishop Porteous, it is shocking what he is going through.

Jose and Fred Verhoeven's daughter, Karen, who suffered a brain aneurism in August. Her parents went to Geelong to care for her when she was released from hospital. Fred came home after awhile but Jose stayed on. Jose is now home and Karen's husband and family are caring for her. Her concentration is very lacking and has short term memory loss. Doctors think it could take 12 months for her to get really well. She was the bookkeeper in their business but they have had to employ someone instead.

Ruth Wilson from St. Leonards branch has had 2 knee reconstructions but is doing well.

Launceston informs me that Pat Cameron has had a stroke and is now in the LGH.

Sadly we have lost a wonderful stalwart of CWL in Evelyn Yates who died this week. She was one of the greats of CWL, a fountain of knowledge and a Life Member. Evelyn was once a State Secretary, a Southern Vice-President and National Vice-President. Lillian Deane and Evelyn together rewrote our present rule book and arranged for the printing of same.

Evelyn and husband Jim were living in Sandown until Evelyn was recently admitted to the Nursing Home.

Our condolences are offered to Jim and their three children, Brian, Peter and Helen. May she rest in peace.

Last but not least our State Chaplain Father Terry Southerwood.

*From the State Secretary***Theme for State Conference.**

It may seem a long way off, but it isn't too early to start planning for the next State Conference which is scheduled to be in Launceston – hopefully in September.

Would branch presidents please engage with their members and come up with suggestions for a theme and send them to the State Secretary. We hope to announce the winning entry in the February/March "Review", or that the very latest the April/May edition.

May I take this opportunity of wishing all members and their families a Christmas filled with peace and joy. Please remember also in your prayers the people of Paris and the Middle East, whose Christmas will be one of the utmost sadness. We have been asked by A.C.W. to especially remember in our prayers the people of Beirut, victims of a suicide bombing and the powerful earthquake that struck north-eastern Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Tajikistan, killing hundreds. We are unbelievably lucky to live in Australia and not be subjected to these dreadful events. *Lillian Deane*

**Stop Press:** Please pray for Pat Haines who has had a stroke and is in the LGH.

*Northern Report*

It is hard to believe that Christmas is just “around the corner” again as it only seems so short a time ago that we were celebrating last Christmas. How the year has flown!

Often we miss Advent's power because these December weeks are so full of secular Christmas activities and preparations and the busyness of the season serves to distract us from having an Advent season that truly prepares us for a meaningful celebration of Christmas. So this year may we be able to make that time to fully prepare for the true joy of Christmas.

Also may we keep in our hearts and our prayers, all families who have had to flee their homes to find refuge in an alien land, as did Mary and Joseph with the baby Jesus.

The northern branches of Lilydale/Karoola and George Town will celebrate their Christmas Mass and dinner with the ladies from Scottsdale in George Town on Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> Mass will be at 11.00am and dinner at Bass and Flinders at noon

Launceston will celebrate their Christmas mass on Wednesday December 9<sup>th</sup> Mass will be at 5pm in St. Vincents hospital chapel and dinner will be at Steve's Grill at 6 for 6.30

I wish all CWL members and their families a happy and holy Christmas and a safe and healthy New Year.

**Prayer for Advent**

God of Life,  
We rejoice in the promise of your coming.  
You have sent your Son, born in Bethlehem.  
He is the Prince of Peace, and  
The one in whose name all oppression shall cease.  
May we welcome his coming each day  
And prepare for his coming at the end of time.

We pray through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Wendy Fittler*

*A  
Child Is  
Born*

*Mass Crusade*

December                      Hobart

Prayer Intention:

Universal:                      That all may experience the mercy of God, who never tires of forgiving

Evangelization:              That families, especially those who suffer, may find in the birth of Jesus a sign of certain hope.

*From the North West Vice-President/Editor*

Devonport and Ulverstone branches will come together to celebrate Christmas lunch at the Lighthouse Hotel Ulverstone on Friday 11 December at 12 noon.

I thank all contributors for their input to Review and Father Mike Delaney for his support and wish Father and all members a holy and happy Christmas and a joyful New Year.

*Kath Pearce*

**Marie Dunn Award**

Marie Dunn's daughter asked me if there was enough money in the account.

I enquired from Launceston branch who hold this account and was surprised to learn the many things the money is used for, whereas I thought it was only used for a prize in the Handcraft Exhibition. I then realised other members may not know.

Apparently Jack Dunn told Launceston to use the money as they saw fit.

So far they ran an essay competition in the schools for some years, printed prayer cards to pray for priests and distributed them to members and of course still give a Handcraft Award. On each occasion a memorial card is printed to say, 'in memory of Marie Dunn'. *Kath Pearce*

*From the Treasurer*

Advent will soon be upon us and this is usually a busy time. Don't let us be too caught up in our business to overlook the true meaning of Christmas which is the birth of our Lord.

I wish all members peace and joy this Christmas and in the New Year. *Jan Lawler*

*Vale Anne Bailey" Springfield" Parattah***Our Sister in Christ :**

*\*Quote from Central Parish & also the Oatlands Church Bulletin Sunday 27th Sept. 2015:  
"Anne was a model & mentor in Christian faith.*

**Her leadership in faith included Minister of the Word, Minister of Communion, Member of the Sacramental Preparation Team, Lay Leader, Religious Educator, Member of the former Central Parish Pastoral Council & Catholic Womens' League.**

**Anne worked to maintain our Church, provided hospitality & conducted hospital visitations."**

She was an active member in Catholic Women's League for over thirty years holding office in her local Oatlands branch much of the time.

She was an inspiration to her fellow members and was loved for her friendly & caring nature. She would often add a touch of dry humour & inspiration to meetings.

When she retired from teaching she gave of herself wholeheartedly to the Church, Ecumenism her family and the community, including her beloved Drama Club.

She used her car to transport others to meetings, conferences, funerals & other functions – not to mention the delivering of Meals on Wheels. She was treasurer and president several times for this. She took an active part in The Hospital Auxiliary and held office which included being President. She helped with the catering for function & for never ending funerals, always producing her lovely date scones for which she was known.

She was rewarded for some of her efforts, in 2007 by the Southern Midlands Council, when she received **The Australia Day Citizen Award.**

In the last weeks of her life she folded 200 brightly colored serviettes into fans for the forthcoming Annual Luncheon. ( That had been her job for some years).

She is missed very much by her sister Judy Gibbens, brother Michael Bailey and her six nieces and one nephew.

**She was loved by all who knew her.**

RIP Anne

*Judy Gibbens*

### *From the International Secretary*

#### **Human Rights Council resolution 29/22 on the protection of the family**

Catholic Women's League Australia Incorporate (CWLA) is grateful for the opportunity to make this response to the United Nations Human Rights Council's request for input into the preparation on the Report on the "Protection of the family and the contribution of families in realizing the right to an adequate standard of living". CWLA, the national peak body representing the League's six member organisations (Catholic Women's League Branches) located throughout Australia aims to:- Influence legislative and administrative bodies at all levels of government in order to preserve the dignity of the human person; Promote and support the formation of women to meet contemporary challenges; Liaise with other organisations and organisations for the respect of human rights with a particular focus on women, children and families.

**We are a Non-Government Organisation** and have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council at the United Nations. In that capacity we send a representative annually to the Commission on the Status of Women.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights calls the family the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State (Article 23-1). The family plays a role in supporting its members; rising above poverty; caring for each other in times of sickness; nurturing the young and education of children. Many of the Millennium Development Goals would have been difficult to attain, if it were not for the contribution of the family. The Sustainable Development Goals will need the same focus.

**Family Support** : Family support implies support for the parents, so their relationship remains intact. This benefits their children; multiple studies indicate that children do best with their own biological parents, success in adult relationships and mental health. Women-headed households are often among the poorest. Support for marriage in government policy, to enable children to be raised with both parents is the desirable ideal. Working together as a unit, the family has a much greater ability to overcome poverty. The success of the family is undermined by access to pornography, early marriage (both forced and consented to), co-habitation, violence against women, substance abuse, unemployment, lack of respect for the cultural and religious values of the family, inability to access education, sexual abuse.

**CWLA's contribution** : Mindful of the need for solidarity with our brothers and sisters, both in Australia and overseas, some of the activities of the Catholic Women's League Australia include, **Donations** to an organisation that brings children born with severe abnormalities, or who are victims of war, to Australia for medical treatment, provide assistance to an orphanage in Nepal; donation to an Australian organisation that assists children in need, also helping students whose families have come to Australia as refugees with essential items of school uniforms etc.

*From a Report by Jane Munro. National International Secretary CWLA < Mary Walsh*

### *Bioethics and Social Issues News*

We still have a long way to go in the abortion issue; the culture of death is still strong. An article written by Marcus Roberts from New Zealand highlighted the extent of this culture in Cuba. There are 30 recorded abortions for every 1000 women of child bearing age in Cuba.

This is compared to 15 abortions for every 1000 women in USA and 14.4 per 1000 in New Zealand. This quote that Marcus found in a NY Times article shows the attitude held by many of the young people;

*Even then they say they are not certain they can afford the burden of a child. Earlier this year, the pair aborted a pregnancy, a decision for which they both express a degree of sadness. Still, it is not so uncommon in their families. Their mothers have had four abortions each, the two say, seated on the back porch of Ms Rodriguez's mother's home, where the couple live.*

*Mr Padilla, smirking, blurted out that Ms Rodriguez's aunt had undergone 10 procedures, prompting his partner to laugh.*

*'Quiet', she whispered sharply, slapping his arm, 'She has a degree in French and is inside right now.'*

As he stated, if having ten abortions is reason for laughter, then there is something seriously wrong with society's moral compass.

You can read the full article here: <http://www.mercatornet.com/demography/view/cuba-another-country-facing-demographic-collapse/17106>

With the increasing and support of 'transgenderism' here is an interesting article by Sharon Slater – 16 facts on gender confusion  
[http://archive.mlgn2ca.com/?u=e51aa8e9806a70a036a77fec150d1407&id=ae1e4736&e=5a86dbbb&utm\\_source-email+marketini](http://archive.mlgn2ca.com/?u=e51aa8e9806a70a036a77fec150d1407&id=ae1e4736&e=5a86dbbb&utm_source-email+marketini)

I attended a marriage equality talk by Rodney Croome and Stephanie Coontz a fortnight ago at UTas, I arrived 10 minutes late but only missed Mr Croome's glowing introduction by a dedicated supporter. I was surprised that Mr Croome was rather a poor speaker, maybe he was tired. Stephanie Coontz said she was an historian on marriage. On the whole, according to her, marriage was oppressive and the sole purpose in the past had been for uniting families for political and status gain. There were ghost marriages where infants were betrothed to each other and remained married even if one died and how many people preferred it that way. There seemed to be no history on Christian marriages! She did mention Catholics and Christians, but only in the context that Jesus was apparently hostile to marriage because he told people they should leave their mother and father and follow Him, and if married they would not be able to fully give themselves to their religion. A Pope was mentioned who tried to clarify marriage but in a mocking way.

One member of the audience asked what about the sacredness of marriage but that was dismissed as not important – non-existent. Another member referred to Asian, Indian and African people, new to this country. How would it impact on their culture? In answer, Mr Croome said that while SSM would sound nonsensical to them, as long as the LGBT community gently kept pushing the human side of SSM, people would eventually come round to their way of thinking.

What about us who have been here all our lives and have a culture?

Another person was very offended and emotional that a plebiscite is even being considered on the issue whether or not he can marry his SS partner and received applause.

I was very offended, firstly they deny the existence of the sacredness of marriage and secondly, Stephanie said that children reared in a SSM marriage fare better because 49 % of children in heterosexual relationships are unplanned, implying therefore that they are not cared for as well.

To sum up Stephanie made marriage sound so bad that I wondered anyone would even dream of entering such a relationship let alone campaign for it to be accepted worldwide.

Like us, they only use the very best of their cases as examples for their cause. But like them, we are trying very hard to improve the state of marriage and family – maybe thanks to them.

*Anna Matuszek*

*From the Southern Vice-President*

I find it hard to believe it is time to write another report! Where has the year gone? I guess that is a sign we have been busy and making the most of life.

The highlight of the last few weeks was our social day on October 9 at Richmond. It really was a great day and enjoyed by about 30 women.

Our day began with a meaningful mass at St. John's church. Richmond ladies looked after us very well with a beautiful shared lunch and social time with no formalities for a change.

The raffle and lucky door prizes caused a lot of happy laughter. The trade table was well supported with half the proceeds of \$60 going to state funds. Hopefully we can organise a similar event next year as I feel it helps us cement our friendships.

I have just read the article on CWL in the Standard. Congratulations to all those involved as it sums up my feelings (and yours too I'm sure) on the benefits and joys of being a CWL member. Some of the most enjoyable times I have had this year has been meeting members from all over the State and making new friends. I look forward to catching up again next year.

What a wonderful article about Pat Gartlan in the Standard. She does a superb job keeping up to date with all social issues.

Several members have suffered ill health and hopefully will make a full recovery.

Some members have experienced sadness with the loss of a loved one. We offer our heartfelt sympathy and prayers.

The sudden loss of Anne Bailey from Oatlands was such a shock. Only weeks before we enjoyed her company at the State AGM. We extend our sincere sympathy to her sister Judy Gibbens and to the Oatlands branch.

Sister Marjory Bouchard was sadly farewelled also.

She wrote our wonderful gospel reflections in Review for some time. Several members were in attendance at both funerals. Thank you each and every one of you for keeping up the great work in your branches and parishes.

I wish you all a very happy and holy Christmas season and hope you will be refreshed in the new year.

*Deirdre Reid*

**STATE PRESIDENT'S REPORT OF CWLA'S 47<sup>TH</sup> BIENNIAL CONFERENCE – SEPTEMBER 20-24, 2015**

The National Conference was held in Parramatta – a city rich in heritage, as I discovered on my early morning walks around the outskirts of the city and along the Parramatta River. The venue was the Novotel and the conference theme was *Listen with the heart*. I found it particularly impressive that all the key note speakers wove this theme into their presentation; from a very witty and lively talk by Pat McDermott, journalist and author, to Pru Howard MP, presenting the extremely serious issue of domestic violence; Sr. Hilda Scott, discussing 'how and where we can talk to God', and Jennifer Burn, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law, speaking on the topic of human trafficking.

The first day was the Council Meeting at which there was much discussion as to whether CWLA should terminate its membership with Equality Rights Alliance (ERA). The National International Secretary, Jane Munro, in her presentation invited a

serious discussion on whether CWLA should remain a member of ERA in light of their support and publication of a couple of controversial issues surrounding abortion, marriage equality and the teaching of Catholic dogma in Catholic schools. Jane presented the following facts to support her proposal that CWLA remove their association from ERA:

- The publication of the document ‘Oh My God I’m Trans’, which is on ERA’s Young Women’s Advisory Group Facebook page – published for young adults.
- The letter from ERA to Mehreen Faruqi, Green’s NSW, requesting she vote against the Crimes Amendment (Zoe’s Law) Bill 2013, because the Bill may grant “legal personhood to an unborn foetus” and the Bill may “operate to weaken the right of women to access safe and legal pregnancy termination.”
- Members of ERA do not support Catholic schools teaching Catholic dogma!

Partnership and collaboration are imperative to enable us to deal with issues such as same sex marriage, abortion, euthanasia, religious practices, but when a number of groups within ERA have contrary views to our Catholic views, CWLA are, as Robyn Fahy quite rightly points out “on the receiving end of damage by association”.

**MOTIONS.** Motions as published in the August/September edition of “Review” were voted on and accepted with minor changes.

## **SUMMARY OF KEY NOTE SPEAKERS.**

### **Associate Professor Jennifer Burn – Director of Anti-Slavery Australia.**

Anti-Slavery Australia is a group which offers an advocacy program and assistance to anyone residing in Australia who is a victim of slavery. In her discussion Jennifer outlined the types of slavery her organisation deals with – exploitation of workers, forced marriages, women being “tricked” into prostitution and any person being held against their will. She gave examples of the hospitality industry, where overseas workers were being paid extremely low wages, living in appalling conditions and often denied contact with other people and given insufficient, sometimes no medical care when they urgently required it.

Jennifer discredited the myth of the trafficked person being impoverished, having poor English literacy skills, being young and mainly students. The evidence suggests victims can come from any background, social class, age group or ethnic group.

She encouraged us to listen with our hearts and speak out against exploitation and slavery.

### **Pat McDermott, Journalist and Recently Published Author of “Life Matters”.**

Pat opened with a spirited commentary on how she had set the usual ten goals to achieve before she was to present at the CWLA Conference – losing five pounds, new outfit, hairstyle revamped, etc., but being a busy woman with a family as her

priority – none of those goals were achieved. Family was the dominant theme of her talk – the love, the different personalities, the work-load and she reiterated the importance of family learning to listen more attentively to one another.

Writing a column in the “Women’s Weekly” since 1984, many of the CWL ladies were familiar with her husband and children. Pat gave an overview of the challenges she faced leaving Canada to commence a new life with her Australian husband; number one – defending her Canadian accent of which most Australians referred to as her “American accent”. Pat referred to her first job as a journalist working for Kerry Packer, with Ita Buttrose as her boss.

Pat, with her wry sense of humour, pointed out how women coped in a predominately male environment; how she dealt with sexism in the workplace; the long hours she was expected to work and being tasked with covering fashion shows, cooking competitions and church fetes! But she endured it, the assignments became more interesting and she was rewarded with the offer to write a column in the “Women’s Weekly”, which she successfully wrote for over 30 years and later writing those stories into her recently published book, *Life Matters*.

### **Sister Hilda Scott Benedictine, Nun.**

Sister Hilda gave thirty minutes of pure pleasure with her gift for storytelling, laced with humour, kindness, love for God and delivering an informative component in the art of prayer, she captivated her audience and allowed us to leave the conference with permission to pray anytime, anywhere.

Her love for her mother was deep; she relayed her Irish mother’s quirky habit of talking to God in the most obscure places. One of the most humorous examples of how her mother conversed with God was in the back-yard while mother, with God’s help, was trying to fix the pool pump; nothing went right, so mum went into the kitchen, put on the kettle and organized two cups of tea – one for her and one for God. After ‘they’ had finished their conversation ‘they’ managed to fix the pool pump.

Unfortunately, I missed the ABC documentary *The Abbey*, which was filmed at Jamberoo, south of Sydney, starring Sister Hilda. The audience identified with her anecdotes of *that* experience. Many of the CWL ladies had visited Jamberoo and recommended it as a place to visit.

### **Brian Powyer, Parramatta Historian.**

Local historian, Brian Powyer spoke on the history of Parramatta and showed us, via power point, pictures and images of early settlement. His comments on the early settlers and surrounding buildings was informative and at times entertaining. He concluded by setting the scene for the future of the city, which is experiencing unprecedented growth – dubbed the next ‘Sydney’ due to the increase in population and building approvals. The juxtaposition between preserving the heritage buildings and the alarming number of new high-rise buildings has caused angst amongst historians, residents and local preservation societies.

### **Prudence Howard MP, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.**

Focusing on the recent family violence cases and the horrific deaths of Australian women, Prue highlighted the need for more urgent action to prevent more deaths. A complex and somewhat overwhelming picture emerged of the powerlessness of women involved in domestic violence disputes. Prue cited many case-studies highlighting not just physical violence but emotional and financial abuse of women – issues very difficult to prove. The sense of alienation felt by women emotionally and financially abused were the cornerstone of suicide and/or taking the life of their husbands/partners. She hoped a serious debate would be canvassed amongst academics and politicians, and members of the community would be educated to the signs of this silent abuse.

### **CONFERENCE MASS AND DINNER**

The Conference Mass was held in the recently rebuilt sandstone building – St Patrick’s Cathedral. In 1996 a fire destroyed the Cathedral, but with the determination of the parish a replacement was completed and dedicated in November of 2003. It was an honour to walk the interior of the building with Jan Lawler holding our League’s banner and knowing Lola Phillips was quietly supporting us from the pews.

Noteworthy – the Altar and President’s chair are made from Tasmanian Huon pine!

The conference dinner was a networking opportunity; a fine meal was served; a continuous display of photos from all the Member Organisations and plenty of dancing.

### **GENERAL COMMENT**

The tightly programmed conference was a credit to the CWLA Executive, who built the programme around a number of very creditable speakers, all of whom provoked reflection on how we, as a Catholic group, can incite change in either our lives or those in most need and to *listen with the heart*.

*Sandra Harvey*

— • —  
WISHING YOU A VERY,  
MERRY CHRISTMAS  
— • —

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