

## CWL MEET AT BIRREGURRA

Recently, close to fifty Catholic Women's League members from the southern zone of the Ballarat diocese gathered at Birregurra for their conference. This year the Catholic Women's League in the Ballarat diocese is celebrating its centenary.

Dr Sr Mary Glowrey, JMJ Servant of God, was the first President in the diocese and Birregurra is her birthplace and so it seemed a fitting location in which to hold the conference. In 1917 as President of the Victorian Guild Dr Mary chaired the meeting of three hundred women in Ballarat to inaugurate the Catholic Social Women's Guild as it was then known, in the diocese.



Amongst special guests attending were Pauline Adams and Sue Connellan, granddaughters of Mary's sister Lucy Connellan and great nieces of Dr Sr Mary Glowrey.

The conference was opened by Anne Hughes, Director of Faith and Mission and Learning Area Facilitator Religious Education at Trinity College in Colac. Prior to opening of the conference Anne spoke inspiringly on Mary Glowrey's life and made a comparison with Saint Mary of the Cross McKillop, both were faith filled, strong and exemplary women. She also spoke on her role at Trinity College intertwining the CWL theme for this year which is, "What return can I make to the Lord for his goodness to me." Psalm 116

The five zone branches of the Southern Zone then gave brief reports. Members then reassembled at St Peter's Church Birregurra where our Diocesan Chaplain, Fr Wally Tudor celebrated the Mass. St Peter's Church, built in 1907, replaced the earlier wooden structure on the same site which the Glowrey family would have attended.

After Mass we lunched at the Royal Mail Hotel, visited the Birregurra Historical Society and then returned to the Conference held at the Birregurra Community Centre.

Our guest speaker, Robyn Fahy, then spoke on the life and work of Dr Sr Mary Glowrey. Since 2007 Robyn has played a key role in the research effort into the life of Mary Glowrey as part of her cause for canonisation. Robyn has recently commenced a PhD at Melbourne University exploring Mary Glowrey's legacy.

Robyn spoke beautifully to her power point presentation about Dr Sr Mary Glowrey. Robyn explained there are new insights coming from the reading of her letters. A greater appreciation can be gained of the deep faith and trust that Mary had in God. This gave her the strength to do such amazing work in very difficult conditions. Robyn was thanked and received a gift.





Certificates of appreciation were presented by Fr Wally to Nelly Bongers who has served the CWL in Simpson and Colac and also to Helen Watts of Cobden. Beth Hose of Cobden will be presented with her certificate at a later date. Fr Wally congratulated the speakers and thanked Robyn for bringing Mary Glowrey alive to those present as an ordinary woman doing extraordinary things.

President of Colac Branch Winsome De Jong thanked everyone who made the day such a success. Diocesan President Margaret Rowe announced that the Ballarat Cathedral branch was reforming which is great news! Throughout the day lucky prizes were drawn.

Fr Michael O'Toole PP of Colac was thanked for enabling the Tuesday evening presentation at St Mary's Colac and arranging for Robyn to hold presentations at Trinity College, Sacred Heart and St Mary's Primary Schools.

*Winsome De Jong - President Colac Branch CWL, Diocesan Committee Member Ballarat Diocese*

Photos:

1. Margaret Rowe Diocesan President (Centre) and Pauline and Sue, great nieces of Mary Glowery
2. Nelly Bongers
3. Fr Wally Tudor and Helen Watts