



**THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA
TORONTO DIOCESAN COUNCIL
YOUTH AWARDS 2024**



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MARY MATTHEWS

Mary Matthews joined the League in 1945 in Ottawa and subsequently moved to Toronto, served at the parish and diocesan levels, being elected Archdiocesan CWL Council President from 1965-67. She served as national convener of Social Action and was chairperson of committees, which prepared League briefs on the "Status of Women" and "Poverty in Canada." She was elected as national president in 1974. She served on the Pontifical Council for the Laity, WUCWO, Canadian Conference of Catholic Lay Associations and was the first woman to chair the Board of Directors of the Catholic Children's Aid Society. She received the Pro-Ecclesia et Pontifice Medal in 1975. She passed away in 2016 at the age of 101.

MARY MATTHEWS PUBLIC SPEAKING CONTEST 2024

Grade 7 and 8 students are eligible from all parish schools, private or public. Contestants choose their own topic. Any speech prepared within the current school year can be used.

First place: Padraig Doyle, St. Christopher CS, St. Mary of the People Parish, Oshawa (Durham Region)

Topic: The Importance of Physical Activity

Second place: Thakshiya Jeganathan, St. Cecilia School, St. Anne's Parish, Brampton (Peel Region)

Topic: Why is English so complicated?

Other 2024 Participants

Grace Buchanan, Monsignor Lee Catholic School, Guardian Angels Parish, Orillia (Northern Region)

Emma Domingo, St. Antoine Daniels Schook, St. Edward the Confessor Parish, North York (North York Region)

Isabel Gregoris, St. Margaret Mary Catholic School, St. Margaret Mary Parish, Woodbridge (Humber Valley Region)

Isabella Tsolakidis, St. Bartholomew School, St. Bartholomew Parish, Scarborough (Scarborough Region)

First place: Pdraig Doyle,
Topic: The Importance of Physical Activity

Imagine this: you are sweating but having fun. It is hard work, but you know it will pay off in some way! You have been moving, pumping your arms left and right as you run down the court. Now as you get the ball you know what to do, you have been training for this.....your heart starts beating faster and faster as you feel the ball in your hands, you shoot and score! This is the average day for a student in a physical activity program, sound fun? I know that some of you might be thinking, great, another average speech about why Gym is the best school subject. But no, today I am here to talk to you about the importance of physical activity.

Good evening members of the CWL, my name is Pdraig Doyle and I've come to talk to you about the benefits and importance of physical activity.

Now one of the biggest reasons I believe physical activity is important is because of its mental benefits. For far too long we have had this perspective that physical activity only helps you physically. While this is partly true the mental effects are also very impressive. This is because physical activity releases a chemical called endorphins. These are the feel-good chemicals which give you a natural sense of satisfaction and wellbeing. This leads to the reduction of stress that gives you a good headspace. Over time this can greatly improve your overall Mental health.

Going hand in hand with mental illness, is physical illness. Physical activity also helps with that as well. Not only does it help fight common colds (such as the flu), but it also helps prevent diseases by flushing out bacteria, causing changes in white blood cells that fight disease and slow down the release of stress hormones. Performing physical activity at a basic level can combat almost every disease and even expand your lifetime. In a study from the National Institute of Health, it says that if you perform a physical activity for more than 10 years it lengthens your lifespan by 0.4 to 4.2 years! This means for 20 years you could expand your lifespan by 8.4 years!

Alright let's move on. What do we live for? Well, there are multiple reasons but over time we realize that our life is just the experiences that we have. In turn these can be good or bad, but physical activity is something that can help us create these unique opportunities that ultimately allow us to enjoy our brief time on this earth fully. As George Bernard Shaw said, "We don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing." This is so true as we ultimately stop playing (or doing physical activity) we age, and with age comes the inability to play with your grandchildren, or even just go for a walk. In other words, if you don't use it - you'll lose it! That is why physical activity is so important.

Overall, the benefits of physical activity should be discussed more often. The positive effects are through the roof, yet it is something that we are letting go unnoticed. I hope today, I have convinced you to go out and try to improve yourself by performing even the simplest of activities. Thank - you for your time.

Second place: Thakshiya Jeganathan

Topic: Why is English so complicated?

P-L-A-1-D. I'm sure you are all familiar with this simple 5 letter word. But if you aren't, let me introduce you to this beautiful pattern. plAID. *tugs shirt collar.* Yes, you heard me right, plAID. Now some of you may be wondering, "isn't it pronounced plAD." And to that I ask you, why?

Good morning, my name is Thakshiya Jeganathan, and I took a journey across my entire school to answer that very question. Every student, teacher, principal, and person I came across all told me the same thing, "that's how English is," Now this wasn't just a one-time occasion, no, this happened with SO many other words Mascara, Bologna, Colonel, the list goes on. But that brings me back to my first question, "why?" Why is MY pronunciation wrong? Why is that "how English is"? And most importantly. "Why is English so Complicated?", the very question I will be speaking about today.

Just like any other problem, I started my research from the VERY beginning, so join me as we travel 15 centuries ago, to the time of the Anglo-Saxons, a group of immigrants from Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands. Contrary to popular belief, English isn't a Latin language, in actuality it's a Germanic language. The creators of English, the Anglo-Saxons, were part of the Ingvaeonic language group, based around North Sea Germany. Now, that raises the question, why does English sound like Latin? Put simply, English is a melting pot of languages. It's notorious for borrowing other letters, words, and entire alphabets, which makes the language quite confusing. Around 60% is Latin and French influenced, 30% is Germanic, and the other 10% belongs to a variety of languages including Greek.

Combine this crossroad of languages with a multitude of 1.5 billion differently accented individuals, and you get the contradictory pronunciations we have today. Now that the facts are out of the way, let's get down to me, you, and my opinions. I believe that the most complicated aspects of English are the pronunciations and spellings. Take for example, my first word of the speech. If you remove the first 2 letters, you get aid. Add an L, and you get laid. Add a P and you get plaid. Wrong, you get plad. And again, with aid, add an S, and you get sade, or sad like plad. Nope, it's said. And don't get me started on the rest. Comb, Bomb, Lamb, Tomb, I can go on for hours. But the problem here isn't WHAT's complicated, but WHY it's complicated.

And I'd like to thank a little something called Heteronyms & Homophones. If you've ever encountered two words that look the same, but are pronounced differently, you've come across a heteronym. On the flipside, if you've encountered two words that are spelled differently but pronounced the same, you come across a homophone. I don't understand either. Nor do I understand why some letters are silent, why certain pairs make certain sounds, or why I must learn all these rules. And that's Why English is so complicated for me.

So to anyone else who's EVER, struggled with English, I feel you. I mean, why else would I make a whole speech about how it's so hard? Jokes aside, English is an amazing language, and it's the only reason you've all been able to understand me. So, the next time you mess up a sentence, or say a word wrong, don't be ashamed. In one of its many parts or influences, you might be right. Just like how P-L-A-I-D is Plaid, why? It's complicated. Thank you.

MARY DOBELL

Mary Dobell was a life-long resident of Toronto and lived her entire life in St. Joseph's Parish in the east end until her death in 2007 at the age of 105. Mary graduated from St. Michael's College, University of Toronto in 1924. She served as Toronto Archdiocesan President from 1959 to 1961, Provincial President from 1967 to 1969 and served on the National executive. Mary was instrumental in the development of the "Leadership and Public Speaking Course" that is still offered today. For her lifetime of devoted service to the Church, she was awarded the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice medal in 1981.

THE MARY DOBELL PRO-LIFE ESSAY AND POETRY CONTEST

The Toronto Diocesan Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada promotes the Mary Dobell Pro-Life Essay and Poetry Contest to support and encourage an awareness and positive attitude towards a broad range of pro-life issues. All submissions must reflect the teachings of the Catholic Church concerning the sanctity of life and the value of human life from conception to natural death. Topics can include but are not limited to any topic which is reflected in the CWL Objects of the League.

MARY DOBELL PRO-LIFE INTERMEDIATE ESSAY CONTEST 2024

First place: Eshleah Noronha

Title: We Are All Welcomed

The teachings of the Catholic Church are centered around love, compassion, and acceptance. As said in Colossians 3:12 " Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience". This is how Jesus wants us to live. As Catholics, it is our duty to promote these teachings and show others that we accept all of God's children, regardless of their background, financial status, possessions, abilities, or disabilities. This means welcoming people from all walks of life, showing them love and understanding, and treating them with dignity and respect.

Religious tolerance is another key aspect of promoting the teachings of the Catholic Church. While we may hold firm to our own beliefs, it is essential in promoting unity and understanding among all people. Just as we believe in the importance of sharing our own beliefs, we must also be open to learning about and respecting the beliefs of others. By engaging in conversation with people of different religions we can build bridges of understanding and compassion that can lead to a more peaceful world.

Showing religious tolerance also means rejecting intolerance and hatred in all its forms. It is important to show love and acceptance to all individuals. Every person has unique gifts and talents to offer, and it is our duty as Catholics to celebrate these differences. Disability does not diminish a person's worth or value in the eyes of God, and we are called to show compassion and support to those who may be facing challenges.

One of the teachings of the Catholic Church is that we are all made in the image and likeness of God. This means that every individual, regardless of their race, nationality, or social status, is worthy of love and respect. As Catholics, we are called to see the face of Christ in every person and to treat them with compassion and kindness. This means accepting and embracing all of God's children. Standing up for justice and equality and working towards reconciliation and peace. Serving others with humility and selflessness, showing them the love that Christ has shown us. It means being a voice for the voiceless, a friend to the friendless, and a source of hope and encouragement for those who are struggling.

In a world that is often divided by conflict, prejudice, and intolerance, it is more important than ever for Catholics to promote the teachings of the Church. By reaching out to those in need we can be a light in the darkness.

In conclusion, promoting the teachings of the Catholic Church and showing acceptance to all of God's children is a vital part of our faith as Catholics. By embracing and loving others, or beliefs, we can truly live out the message of Christ and be a witness to the power of God's love in the world. Let us strive to be compassionate, inclusive, and accepting of all, just as Christ has shown us.

Second Place: Mikhael Vaz

Title: Sacred Beginnings: A Pro-life Exploration

At 13, life is a whirlwind of discoveries, questions, and adventures. Among the several topics that interest me, one stands out like a beacon: the concept of "Sacred Beginnings." It is not just a phrase; it's a key to unraveling the mysteries of life, and as a young mind navigating these waters, I find myself on a pro-life exploration.

Growing up in a Catholic household, the idea that life is sacred has been a constant melody in the background of my existence. From the Bible stories shared during bedtime to the hymns sung at Sunday Mass, the essence of sacredness has always been intertwined with my understanding of life. Now, as a teenager, I am exploring what makes life truly sacred.

In the heart of my pro-life journey lies a simple yet profound belief; life is a gift, and every moment of it is sacred. The teachings of the Church echo in my ears, reminding me that we are all made in the image of God. It is a powerful idea, one that tethers me to a sense of purpose and responsibility.

To be pro-life, for me, is to acknowledge and protect the sacredness woven into the very fabric of our existence. The adventure begins with a glimpse into the Bible, the ancient treasure trove of wisdom. Genesis speaks of a divine proclamation, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness' (Genesis 1:26). This verse is like a compass, guiding my exploration and affirming that life is not a random occurrence but a deliberate creation. In the sacredness of beginnings, I find a map that leads me to appreciate the uniqueness and value of each life story.

As I take my first steps into the world of science, another layer of the pro-life adventure unfolds. It is fascinating to learn that life, with all its complexity, begins at the microscopic union of an egg and sperm. This moment of conception sets in motion a miraculous journey, creating a new individual, it is like discovering a secret, code embedded in the magic of beginnings, a code that makes each of us unique.

As I see the world around me, I realize that being pro-life means championing the value and dignity of every person, from the littlest in the womb to the elderly. In a world filled with different opinions, the pro-life stance is not always the popular choice. But I am starting to understand that being pro-life isn't about judgment or division; it's about encouraging a culture of respect, love, and importance for life in all its sacredness.

In conclusion, my 13-year-old self is embarking on a pro-life exploration that goes beyond textbooks and rules. As I navigate these uncharted waters, I carry with me the simple yet profound truth: life is sacred, and the adventure of protecting that sacredness is a journey worth taking.

Third Place: Gabriel Vaz

Title: Sacred Beginnings: From Conception to Compassion: Nurturing a Pro-Life Perspective

As a 13-year-old Catholic, I was taught from an early age about the importance of valuing and treasuring the gift of life. This belief is deeply intertwined in my faith based on the teachings that I received from my parents, teachers and my prayer group that has influenced my perspective on many issues, including the controversial topic of abortion.

Being pro-life to me means valuing every human life, from the moment of conception until natural death, in this essay I will be describing what, why and how pro-life relates to Catholicism and with the Church's teachings, I believe that every person, regardless of their ability or stage in life, is worthy of love and compassion.

I will share my thoughts and reasons for being pro-life. Primarily, as a Catholic, I believe that God is the creator of life. In the book of Genesis, it says, "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). This verse clearly shows that human life is sacred because we are made in the image of God. Every person, regardless of their age, race, or circumstances, deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

Taking the life of an innocent human being through abortion goes against the very core of our faith and dishonors God's plan for us. Additionally, as a pro-life advocate, I am also aware of the scientific evidence that supports the humanity of the unborn. It is a well-established fact that a unique human life begins at conception. From the moment of fertilization, a new individual with its own DNA, distinct from its mother and father is formed.

This tiny human being has the potential to grow and develop into a fully formed person. It is heartbreaking to think that many lives are ended before they even have

a chance to take their first breath. There is often a misconception that being pro-life only means caring about the unborn, but that is not the case. Being pro-life also means advocating for the value and dignity of all human life, including those who are elderly, disabled or terminally ill.

As Catholics, we are called to be champions for life. In conclusion, being pro-life is not just a belief or a political stance, it is a way of life. It is a fundamental principle that is rooted in my faith and has shaped my perspective on the value of every human being. From the moment of conception, every life is precious and deserving of love and protection.

Rooted in the bedrock of my faith, it has shaped my outlook on the value of every human being. Every life, from the moment of conception, carries preciousness, deserving of love, respect, and protection. As I navigate the complexities of youth, my pro-life commitment stands as a compassionate acknowledgement of the sacredness woven into the fabric of each human existence.

MARY DOBELL PRO-LIFE SENIOR ESSAY CONTEST 2024

First place: Sarah Garcia

Title: The Silent Scream of the Unborn

The Catholic Church teaches that "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life. Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you." (Catechism of the Catholic Church - Paragraph # 2270) From conception, everyone is loved by God and given the right to life. There is an attack on the innocent unborn in society because of abortion. Abortion is the killing of a preborn human inside of a mother's womb. Children of God have a duty to God to protect the unborn, and they can help through donations, volunteering and educating themselves and others about abortion.

Abortion is either performed surgically or chemically-also referred to as medically-and it is legal even in the third trimester up to term in Canada. For pregnancies less than 9 weeks along, an abortion would be a chemical/medical abortion. It consists of two drugs: Mifepristone blocks the body's production of progesterone, stopping the body from nurturing the baby, then Misoprostol induces contractions to evacuate the preborn baby. For pregnancies in the first trimester, up to 14 weeks, abortions are performed using a suction catheter to vacuum out the preborn baby. For pregnancies in the second trimester, 14 to 22 weeks, abortions are performed using forceps to dismember the preborn baby from the mother's womb. For pregnancies in the third trimester, 22 weeks to term, abortions are performed by the preborn baby being injected with poison either potassium chloride or digoxin before the mother gets induced to give birth to her dead baby.

About seventy-three million abortions happen worldwide annually. About 100,000 babies die from abortion annually in Canada and about 45,000 people die from cardiac disease in Canada annually cardiac disease is one of the leading causes of death in Canada. With an average of twice the number of people murdered by abortion than killed by heart disease. Abortion rates are too high, which is an injustice in society because so many babies do not get the chance to experience life. The Bible states the seven things that are an abomination to him, "seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood..." (Proverbs 6:16-17). Shedding the blood of the innocent is an abomination to God, making abortion an abomination to God.

Fortunately, there are ways to reduce abortion and spread awareness of its brutality. Firstly, we need to educate ourselves on the realities of abortion and afterwards, we can educate other people. The more people that understand the evil of abortion, the more information can be shared, and we are better able to conquer this problem. People can donate and volunteer for pro-life organizations like Campaign Life Coalition, Aid to Women, Sisters for Life, and many others. These organizations provide resources for women who may be struggling with abuse, financial issues, and the list goes on. They can receive help like baby clothes, formula, diapers, grocery store gift cards, a place in a shelter, and other essentials. We need to support women, so they do not feel like their only option is to have an abortion. By helping in one or more of these ways, everyone doing so can make an impact by helping to save preborn babies from abortion. The other option would be for the birth mother to give her baby up for adoption to another loving family.

I became more concerned about the abortion issue after watching the movie *"Unplanned"* at Precious Blood Parish years ago. In one scene, Abby Johnson assisted with an ultrasound during an abortion. Watching the helpless unborn baby try to get away from the suction catheter shows that unborn babies do experience pain. I have always been pro-life, and seeing this gave me a newfound rage against abortion. I had the opportunity to go to the March for Life in Ottawa last May and joined thousands on Parliament Hill to stand up for the rights of the unborn. The media depicts the pro-life movement as being run by old white men but there were men and women from all races and ages standing up. 3 John 1:4 states, "I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth." We must spread the truth about abortion for the greater joy of our Lord. Unborn babies are the most vulnerable people in society, without the strength or voice to defend themselves. Thereby, we take on the duty of protecting them to honour God's precious gifts of life.

Jeremiah 1:5: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Second place: Cheyenne Ilagan
Title: The Sanctity of Family

In the Catholic faith, the concept of family is something that is extremely significant with its connections to the love and respect that only a family can hold. A deeper understanding one can hold about a family is that a family is not just united by blood biologically, but is instead a bond created by God, to put these specific people in each other's lives for a reason, to support and love each other, whether they are connected biologically or not. Members of a family share spiritual and emotional connections, going far past being together physically.

What connects every family, or family connection, is love. A love for each other that can surpass boundaries and causes one to sacrifice selfishness, a love that can cause a sense of safety and belonging. This love in the family is modelled after God's unconditional love for all humans on earth, as we are family with the Father. Members of a family act on their feelings of love, giving us important connections in our life that are much different than that of other connections, less than family, allowing us to prioritize each other's needs over our own, ensuring that everyone feels a sense of belonging with them.

Along with the connection of love, members of a family are connected with a sense of dependence and support. Each member of a family's actions of care and love contribute to the overall well-being of the entire family by offering their talents, unique gifts, and overall strengths to the welfare of the family. As guardians of the family act as its base and foundation, being there to support the other members of the family not only physically, but also mentally through wisdom and advice, the other members of the family help keep the family well-spirited, always held in faith to God and to appreciate the small things in life. Through shared experiences, similar goals, and the desire to care for and nurture one another, a family's bond is strengthened further, providing a sense of unity in the family.

Further, the Catholic faith emphasizes the importance of showing respect to elders in the family, as elders hold a place of respect and high regard. Due to the amount of time, they have spent alive and, on this earth, experiencing things that people of this generation would and would not, they are able to pass down valuable information and advice to those younger than them, to ensure their safety and happiness in life. This can be related to how God passes His wisdom onto us through prayer and through the Holy Spirit. By showing respect to elders, we acknowledge their valuable contributions to the family, honoring their role as children of God, creating an atmosphere of harmony in the family.

In conclusion, understanding the importance of family goes past a family's biological and blood connections, as being family is, in the eyes of God, having a special bond of love and trust, ensuring each action we do for each other is infused with God's love. By showing respect for elders, we honor their wisdom and experience, strengthening a family's bonds and uniting each family member further. Embracing what makes a family a family in God's eyes, we do not only have the capability of building strong connections and communities, but we also confirm the power of God's love as humans.

MARY DOBELL PRO-LIFE INTERMEDIATE POETRY CONTEST 2024

First place: Daniel Cordeiro

Title: My Soul

In the depths of my soul, a flame does ignite,
A flickering light, burning ever so bright,
It is my faith, my guiding star,
Leading me through life, no matter how far.

Through winding paths and endless trials,
My faith remains steady, never beguiled,
It provides me solace, a soothing balm,
When life's storms rage, causing me harm.

In times of darkness, when all seems lost,
My faith emerges, like a bridge across,
It lifts me up from the depths of despair,
Whispers hope, reminding me to dare.

It molds my character, shapes who I am,
Instilling love, like a divine program,
Teaching me to forgive, to let go of hate,
To shower compassion, in an endless cascade.

It encourages me to spread my wings,
To dream big and chase life's beautiful things,
To believe that miracles can come true,
If my faith is unwavering, steadfast, and true.

For in my faith, I find a higher power,
A force of love, like a blooming flower,
It nurtures my spirit, frees my soul,
Filling my heart with a love that is whole.

So, I'll hold onto my faith, with all my might,
Embracing its wisdom, its radiant light,
For it is the anchor, the rock in my storm,
Guiding me towards peace and keeping me warm.

F A I T H

Second place: Eshleah Noronha

Title: We Are All Welcomed

no matter the colour, race, or creed
We are all brothers and sisters, indeed.
united in our humanity
embracing each other in unity

for God's love knows no bounds,
and in his eyes, we are all found,
to be worthy of his grace,
no matter our identity or place.

in the teachings of the church, we find grace,
to love and accept every person and every face.
For the gospel guides us to show compassion,
to all of God's children, in every fashion.

Third place: Meron Al-Baashike

Title: God's Place

In a world so high up in the sky,
Where angels sing and clouds float by,

There's a place of joy and endless grace,
Where God's love shines on every face.

Heaven's gates, they stand so wide,
Welcoming souls with arms open wide.

Streets of gold, and skies so blue,
Where dreams come true for me and you.

God watches over, kind and true,
Guiding us in all we do.

In this land where love prevails,
Every heart tells wondrous tales.

No more pain, no more fears,
Only laughter, only cheers.

With God's love, we're always free,
In heaven's joy for eternity.

Oh, how amazing, this heavenly place,
Filled with smiles and endless grace.

MARY DOBELL PRO-LIFE SENIOR POETRY CONTEST 2024

First Place: Eden Britto

Title: Voices for Change of Fate

The poor, the young, the old and forgotten,
There is a great need for our love and compassion.
Little fingers, little toes should not be considered worthless and rotten,
It's about giving each life a chance without being forgotten.

Let us support them in their struggle,
And raise awareness for their pain.
Let us relieve them from their trouble,
And free them from their strain.

The womb a sacred place to nurture and grow,
Making that choice to be bold and never let go.
Love will always be the example showing respect and dignity,
Together we can trample societies' intense malignity.

It's time for us to lift our voices,
For those who don't have many choices,
For those who struggle to get medical help,
And for those who are forced to hurt themselves.

They deserve so much more than the world can offer,
Jesus would welcome them with open arms.
They deserve our judgement to be much softer,
And our actions to reflect God's will of no harm.

To be supporting life, means to not pick and choose,
To accept all who present themselves in any state,
To show them that they are worthy and will not lose,
To embrace them and actively change their fate!



Second Place: Kiji Martin

Title: To Connect

I live on the street,
no shoes on my feet.

People shuffle by,
Looking not in my eye.

But by closing this distance,
you can make a difference.

You have the ability,
to return to me my dignity.

For it is God's will for us to connect
and to treat each other with respect.

As human beings, love is within us,
our main power being that of forgiveness.

We are made to be social, our world full of promise,
just reaching out could even bring me solace.

So, the next time you see me, remember this advice:
love thy neighbour, preserve the sanctity of life.



JEAN McCANN

Jean lived a life of service to her family, her church, and her community. She was involved in working with new immigrants through the Women's Interfaith Council Coalition. She was also involved with the Community Care Access Centre. Jean was a Life member of the CWL and President of the Toronto Archdiocesan CWL (1971-1973). She received the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship in 1974 and the Pro ecclesia et Pontifice award from the Pope for her service to the Church. Jean died in 2013, in Barrie, in her 102nd year.

THE JEAN McCANN YOUTH SERVICE AWARD 2024

The Jean McCann Service Award for Youth recognizes and affirms the role played in our parishes by our confirmed Catholic youth between the ages of 15 and 18. This award emphasizes the necessity of service to others and shows appreciation to those young people who are taking the gospel message seriously. The nominated students must prepare a written submission that describes their involvement with their family, school, community, parish, and other activities. They explain how they use their talents in witnessing Christ to the world.

Recipient: Adam Malik, St. Mother Teresa Catholic Academy, St. Timothy Parish (North York Region)

I am Adam Malik, a 12th-grade student at Saint Mother Teresa Catholic Academy in Scarborough. I currently live with my parents and my younger brother in Malvern, and I am a confirmed Catholic and a firm believer in the Christian teachings. I graduated from my elementary school with honors and have maintained my honor roll throughout high school.

Aside from my educational prowess, I have also participated in many extra-curricular activities and volunteered in opportunities that involve both leadership and the catholic teachings being put into action. During the summer break, I provide service to my community by working as a part-time camp counsellor for my co-op. This includes supervising and entertaining children in my neighbourhood, as well as trying my best to be a good role model for them. I work at my high school and have done so for six weeks every summer for the past two years.

Before I worked as a camp counsellor, I had the opportunity to be a leader to help assimilate incoming freshmen into my wonderful school during the grade 9 summer transition program. Although at the time the pandemic was still an ongoing issue, I did get to connect with new graduates through Zoom meetings as the other leaders including myself, hosted activities like Kahoots and trivia about the school as well as discussed, our own experience as grade 9s.

Apart from my school and neighbourhood, I have also provided service through altar serving at both St. Timothy's and St. Barnabas parish as well as being a Lector in the former. I believe that I take the Gospel message seriously and I make sure that I do not commit any wrongdoings or vile sins that would prevent me from obtaining God's love. I also truly believe that God is present in every living thing, and his artistry is exhibited

through nature on Earth. To value his work, I make sure that I am compassionate and friendly towards everyone and try to be hospitable in my school, parish, and community. I often find myself picking up litter in my high school and like to enjoy the intricate details put into the natural environment of Earth.

I belong to a family of four and I fulfill my duties as a son and a brother. I am a mentor and carer for my younger brother who looks up to me and I put effort into making my parents proud by performing well in school and other extracurricular activities like swimming.

In my school, I am the president of my student council as well as a mentor for SLICE, an acronym for a club that says, "Student Leaders In Catholic Education". I often attend the monthly CSLIT (Catholic Student Leadership Impact Team) and represent my student council in the Catholic School Parent Council meetings. As president of my student government, I help my other council members by understanding the issues that our students face and what activities and school events would help combat their stress. So far, we have hosted an after-school dance-a-thon, helped as masters of ceremonies at the open house and Christmas talent show as well as held a Christmas Cafe for students to hang out after school. As a mentor for SLICE, I helped create an afterschool team-based activity in which we targeted the lonelier students of SMT. I also volunteered my time as a leader for Gr. 9 orientation, am a part of the anti-bullying committee, and have represented my school twice at the annual TCDSB Camp Olympia, trips where every school stays overnight for a weekend.

As for my involvement in the community, I have helped raise money in school for the Terry Fox run and the Angel Foundation. I have obtained my first aid certification, and I am now working towards my national lifeguarding license to help at my community pools during the summer. As for my involvement in my parish, I started Altar Serving back home in Pakistan when I was six years old, and I have continued serving God at St. Timothy's Catholic Church since 2015. Furthermore, I have volunteered as a lector and a guitarist for the choir. I narrated a passion play and the Stations of the Cross back in 2019. Apart from that I have written articles and biblical stories in the church newsletter. Last year, I won an award for the CWL essay writing contest and received the Bishop's Altar Server award for service from the Serra Club. Furthermore, I received a certificate for babysitting and was part of the ME to WE charity club in elementary school, which helped with donations. As I previously stated, I am certified in both first aid and CPR and I am on the way to becoming a lifeguard to help supervise swimmers in the summer.

My future endeavor is to work in the civil engineering field. I would like to attend Carleton University to study this field and I hope to be able to help build infrastructure that will benefit society like houses, roads, and bridges. Apart from my career, I wish to give more of my time serving God through my community and I would love to have an impact on future generations.

As president of the student council, we are planning to host many more events like semi-formal and carnival and as an experienced Altar Server, I strive to guide the younger servers to be more connected to their faith by making them feel comfortable in their Church.

This is just a summary of all my service which I can remember, and I hope to become a good role model in life while strengthening my relationship with God.

MARGARET ANN JACOBS CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S AID FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Each year, through your generous donations, the Toronto Diocesan CWL Council presents a monetary gift of hope to the children, youth and families served by the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto (CCAS). Through its Catholic Children's Aid Foundation Fund, the CCAS raised funds to support programs that create strong and healthy futures for children, youth, and families in the Catholic community of Toronto. Through your council's generosity, they are able to fund a post-secondary scholarship for Crown wards of the Society to realize their academic dreams. The value of the scholarship is \$2,000.

The 2023-24 academic year recipient of the Margaret Ann Jacobs Catholic Children's Aid Foundation Scholarship is Marceline who is attending the Academic Upgrading Program at Sheridan College. To protect her privacy, the Catholic Children's Aid Society has only provided us with Marceline's first name.

ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE CWL SCHOLARSHIP

The Toronto Diocesan CWL Council has been offering this scholarship since 1960 with the aim of promoting higher education for deserving young women. The value of this one-time, non-renewable scholarship is \$3,000. The awarding of the scholarship is based on several factors: eligibility, first choice of college and marks. Financial need is also a consideration. The applicant must be entering the Faculty of Arts and Science in one of the following areas of study: Commerce, Computer Science, Humanities and Social Sciences or Sciences.

The 2023-24 academic year recipient of the St. Michael's College Scholarship is Serena Fanzutti, All Saints Parish, Humber Valley Region.

Thanks to the generous donations of parish councils, the Toronto Diocesan CWL Council received acknowledgement in the University of St. Michael's College Vice Chancellor's Club, which recognizes their most generous and loyal supporters. Donations to the Vice Chancellor's Club are vital to advancing priority programs & projects at the University of St. Michael's College.

On behalf of the Toronto Diocesan CWL Council, thank you to all parish and regional councils who offered the Youth Awards program in their parishes and regions. Through your efforts you supported and encouraged an awareness and positive attitude towards a broad range of pro-life issues.

Andrea Smart
Toronto Diocesan Education and Health Chair
2022-2024

Sub conveners:
Carolyn Meaney (Mary Matthews Public Speaking)
Margaret Arangio (Mary Dobell Pro-Life Poetry)
Irene Szutka (Mary Dobell Pro-Life Essay)
Catherine von Zuben (St. Michael's Scholarship)