



Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate Council
of
The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Care for our Common Home



“The needs of the poor take priority over the desires of the rich; the rights of workers over the maximization of profits; the preservation of the environment over uncontrolled industrial expansion; production to meet social needs over production for military purposes.”

- Saint John Paul II, Address on Christian Unity in a Technological Age, Toronto, 1984

Who we Are

Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate

The Basilica of Our Lady is one of the 122 parishes in the Diocese of Hamilton and boasts 2,600 families in the congregation. Father Ian Duffy rector is our pastor and Bishop Emeritus Matthew Ustryzcki is in residences as is seminarian Louis.....

“The Basilica of our Lady Immaculate has been a place of worship and reflection for over 125 years. The Basilica is constructed of local limestone in the Gothic Revival style. It towers over the Guelph community as a constant reminder of God’s love and a community’s resilience. Designated a National Historic Site, it is the most visited tourist destination in the city of Guelph.

After an intensive five phase restoration spanning many years, the restoration was completed in December 2014. There was a special dedication mass at the Church on December 8, 2014, and it was at this mass that Bishop Crosby announced that our Holy Father Pope Francis had elevated our church to the status of a Basilica in honour of its rich history and the importance of this parish in the Diocese of Hamilton and the City of Guelph.

In the fall of 2015, the Basilica of our Lady Immaculate was recognized for the restoration of the church. The Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals awarded their 2015 Award of Excellence to our Church. This is the largest respected collective of heritage professionals involved in the preservation of our national heritage properties. In November we received the Peter Stokes Award by the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario....” <https://www.basilicaofourlady.com/about/basilica-restoration>

“From the earliest days of the settlement of Guelph, Catholics have played a role in the life of the community. Bishop Macdonell, the Bishop of Kingston, who was responsible for the Catholic Church in Ontario, was a friend of John Galt, the founder of Guelph. He had supported Galt's work with the Canada Company, which was charged with developing much of the land in southern Ontario. When Galt established the new settlement on April 23, 1827, he gave to the Catholic Church the hill in the center of the town. In his Autobiography he writes: "a beautiful central hill was reserved for the Catholics, in compliment to my friend, Bishop Macdonell, for his advice in the formation of the Company." A road was cleared leading up to the hill: Macdonell Street. In the autumn of 1827 Bishop Macdonell was one of the first visitors to the new settlement....

Throughout the parish's history several organizations have assisted in enhancing the material and spiritual welfare of the community.

*In March of 1872 a Conference of the **St. Vincent de Paul Society** was established in the Parish to care for the needy, offering them both material assistance and spiritual encouragement. It has continued this work faithfully over the years, and has recently opened a used clothing and small articles store and a used furniture warehouse.*

*In 1920 Bishop Dowling established the **Catholic Women's League in Hamilton Diocese, and in February of 1921 a branch of the CWL was organized in the Church of Our Lady parish.** During the next several years the parish CWL contributed \$10,000 to the fund for the building of an addition to the Loretto Academy.*

*In 1934 Fr. O'Reilly disbanded the CWL at the Church of Our Lady and established in its place the **Confraternity of the Holy Family**, which was, however, closely associated with the diocesan CWL - so much so that in 1940-41 Miss R. McElderry, of the Church of Our Lady Parish, was Diocesan President of the CWL and its National Secretary. On October 21, 1952, the Parish branch of the CWL was re-established. It is involved in many works of service locally, across Canada, and around the world.*

The Knights of Columbus, founded in the United States by Father McGivney in 1882, has been present in **Guelph since April of 1910, when the Guelph Council of the Knights of Columbus 1507 was established. The Knights met at various places in the city until 1931 when they opened a new clubhouse at the corner of Dublin Street and Waterloo Avenue. They moved to new quarters in 1976, and the old clubhouse became the home of the Guelph Civic Museum. Over the years the Knights have participated in many worthy projects.....**

On October 10, 1988, the parish celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the opening of the Church of Our Lady. This majestic church is the architectural masterpiece of the city of Guelph, and a source of pride for all its citizens. But the parish is more than the church. From the early days of poverty and struggle, through the great missionary era when this parish extended far to the north, to its present situation as a Catholic community in the center of Guelph, the parish has been alive with the spirit of the Gospel.

From any place in Guelph one can see the great stone church on the hill, as we look at it may we keep always in mind the words of Scripture. "Come to him, to that living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:4-5)

<https://www.basilicaofourlady.com/about/history>

Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate Stewardship Committee - Mission Statement: "As the Eucharistic family of Our Lady Immaculate, we believe in the life, death and resurrection of

Jesus Christ. We foster a welcoming and active faith community by sharing our time, talent and treasure.

We continue to grow in the Spirit, loving and serving God and each other. The Stewardship Committee, as a consultative body, promotes Stewardship as a way of life within all aspects of the Parish community.

Stewardship is a conscious effort to help each of us to realize deeply that God has blessed us with many gifts often spoken as, 'time, talent, and treasure' and that we should be willing to generously share them; and that as a community of faith, we should devise ways of giving opportunities for everyone in our Parish to do so."

At 6:00pm on February 2nd 2021 our Pastor, Father Ian Duffy Rector, recited the Angelus prayer at and using the Blessed Sacrament, imparted over our city, a blessing and the protection of Almighty God for all people of Guelph.

We are invested, we desire, and we are called to expand our involvement in our City- Our faith demands it of us as a Parish

Catholic Social teaching **covers all spheres** of life, economic, political, personal, and spiritual.

Inherent dignity of the human person

*The foundation of all Catholic Social Teaching is the **inherent dignity of the human person**, as created in the image and likeness of God. The Church, therefore, calls for Integral **Human Development**, which concerns the wellbeing of each **person** in every dimension: economic, political, social, ecological, and spiritual.*

Solidarity *is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.-Saint John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis 38*

Preferential option for the poor

"This is an option, or a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church appears witness. It affects the life of each Christian inasmuch as he or she seeks to imitate the life of Christ, but it applies equally to our social responsibilities and hence to our manner of living, and to the logistical decisions to be made concerning the ownership and use of goods.

Today, furthermore, given the worldwide dimension which the social question has assumed, this level of preference for the poor, and the decisions which it inspires in us, cannot but embrace the immense multitudes of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without health care and, above all, those without hope for a better future." Compendium of Social Doctrine No. 182

A just society

“A just society can become a reality only when it is based on the respect of the transcendent dignity of the human person. The person represents the ultimate end of society. The social order and its development must invariably work to the benefit of the human person... not the other way around.”

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church No. 132

Common Good

God intended the Earth with everything contained in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should be in abundance for all in like manner.

Second Vatican Council, Gaudium et Spes, 69

“The demands of the common good... concern above all the commitment to peace, the organization of the State’s powers, a sound juridical system, the protection of the environment, and the provision of essential services to all, some of which are at the same time human rights: food, housing, work, education and access to culture, transportation, basic health care, the freedom of communication and expression, and the protection of religious freedom. Nor must one forget the contribution that every nation is required in duty to make towards a true worldwide cooperation for the common good of the whole of humanity and for future generations also.- Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, No. 166

Subsidiarity

“It is clearly laid down that the paramount task assigned to government officials is that of recognizing, respecting, reconciling, protecting and promoting the rights and duties of citizens. Saint John XXIII, Pacem in Terris, 77

The principle of subsidiarity, which was developed as part of Catholic Social Teaching, states:

“What individuals can accomplish by their own initiative and efforts should not be taken from them by a higher authority. A greater and higher social institution must not take over the duties of subordinate organizations and deprive it of its competence. Its purpose, rather, is to intervene in a subsidiary fashion (thus offering help) when individuals or smaller institutions find that a task is beyond them.”

YOUCAT 323 (Catechism of the Catholic Church for youth and adolescents)

Implication of subsidiarity - Participation

“The characteristic implication of subsidiarity is participation, which is expressed essentially in a series of activities by means of which the citizen, either as an individual or in association with others, whether directly or through representation, contributes to the cultural, economic, political and social life of a civil community to which he belongs. Participation is a duty to be fulfilled consciously by all, with responsibility and a view to the common good.” Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, No 189-Saint John XXIII, Pacem in Terris, 77

Peace, fairness and justice

“There is no true peace without fairness, truth, justice, and solidarity”. Saint John Paul II, 2000 World Day of Peace, 13

https://www.devp.org/sites/www.devp.org/files/documents/materials/devpeace_cst_principles.pdf

Faith Communities are a plus to cities

A 2016 article by Mike Wood Daly for Cardus he noted, “Several studies in recent years, both in both Canada and the United States, have considered the contributions that faith communities or local religious congregations make to the cultural, spiritual, and social lives of their surrounding neighbourhoods.² Faith-based organizations help people to explore and cultivate deeply held, centuries-old beliefs; to participate in rituals of meaning; to find comfort in their times of deep pain and sorrow; and to foster relationship in community. Communities of faith and places of worship are where people often gather to find answers to life’s biggest questions and to explore mysteries like, why are we here? where do I belong? and, what is the meaning of life?

Even for people who would not describe themselves as people of faith, these communities act as incubators for commonly held social values. Similar to the way the arts are known to positively influence communities, the impact of local worshipping communities on the culture that surrounds them is felt and is of benefit to both participants and those who are not directly involved.

In 2006, Imagine Canada published *Understanding the Capacity of Religious Organizations: A Synthesis of Findings from the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations and the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*.³ In it, the authors assert that “religious organizations are well-established institutions with stable revenues. The key strengths of religious organizations appear to be their local community focus, and the strength that they draw from dedicated donors, volunteers and staff.”

<https://www.haloproject.ca/toronto-report/>

I noted, once when I was a community editorial writer with the Guelph Mercury, at the time of the discussion regarding the Wellbeing Project and, more recently to Mayor Cam Guthrie, that the faith community appears to be unconsciously excluded from the think tanks regarding important City issues such as the Wellbeing Project, the homeless task force and the Housing and Homelessness Alliance which formalized an alliance between 30 local organizations about 14 months ago.

I note this only because we desire greater involvement and now is as good a time as any to remind City Council of the fact that there is also a spiritual side to every human being and aside from material assistance and our community offers this necessary help if requested as well as our friendship and kinship.

We have watched over the years as the “Plan of Wellbeing for Guelph” was launched in 2011, the “Place called Home Project” in 2014 as well as the Poverty Reduction Strategy – Realizing

our Potential 2014-2019 unfolded and were pleased to read the mayor's homeless task force report in 2019 which resulted in five priorities;

- Develop permanent supportive housing to house 15 chronically homeless individuals with complex needs, with 24/7 staffing to support residents with addiction, mental health, or chronic health issues.
- Re-open a supported recovery room, which would meet sleep and recovery needs for clients for up to 72 hours. It would be staffed by a registered nurse, addiction counsellor, and peer worker.
- Fund the Welcoming Streets outreach worker who supports individuals and businesses in Guelph's downtown by educating, empowering, and connecting them to services and supports.
- Re-start an addiction court support worker program, which provides an addiction counsellor for people who are in bail court and connects them to services and supports.
- Implement system and service improvements such as expanding service hours to evenings, weekends and holidays; including peer supports in service delivery; and involving end-users in the design of services.

<https://guelph.ca/2019/02/mayor-releases-homelessness-task-force-report/>

Mayor Cam Guthrie presentation – Guelph City Initiatives

We know via a presentation by Mayor Guthrie to our community in recent months, of the amazing success that these initiatives have had and continue to bring to our City with regard to assisting those who are living on our streets and also to bringing greater understanding from our community to the plights of many of the people who are challenged in life, by lack of permanent or even temporary accommodation. We commend the City and the task Force for this great work. We have nothing but praise for these initiatives and will pray to see them grow and prosper the lives of those in Guelph who sorely need this support.

Welcoming Street Initiative

Two social workers walk the streets of downtown Guelph daily, getting to know the people living on the street and the businesses. They build up a trust with the people, create relationships with them and when and if they are ready, connect them to the assistance they require. They help the businesses understand the challenges of those living on the street and to not be afraid of them and to have more patience with the situation and learn how to deal with the folks that they may find asleep in the doorway of their business etc.

Supportive Recovery beds at the Drop In centre

5 beds were assigned in space above the Drop In so that people could sleep in safety. A registered nurse cared for them and the folks experienced a "safe place" to sleep – in some cases people have slept for three days because they have been so exhausted. Meanwhile their clothes are cleaned they are fed and assisted with any health or other problems while all involved can help figure out what is needed.

Court Support Worker

Petty theft by those with addictions – non violent crimes to obtain the funds people need for drugs are common. These people are not hardened or violent criminals but the ones who might break into cars etc. for the money they need to purchase the drugs they require. This programme funds a support-worker for them instead of them going before a judge. The support-worker assesses the needs and the result is either the person gets sent to rehabilitation or gets the necessary counselling. Over 100 interventions have been made so far and the courts, police and offenders themselves are very grateful for this assistance.

These portions of the official public assistance cost \$750,000 of which the City paid half. The initiative has been a “game-changer” in Guelph, which we consider money very well spent.

Permanent Supportive Housing

The Basilica of Our lady Immaculate has had a long partnership with the Drop-In Centre and acknowledge the following efforts of the Drop In Centre sine 1985

- 1) The centre itself at 23 Gordon, providing food and company to the homeless
- 2) A hub for different supports for the homeless, such as nursing and social work
- 3) Homeless shelter and supportive housing, such as The Dwelling Place, a women’s shelter and support location; and Yorkhaven, a permanent supportive housing initiative created by Sr. Christine.

Over the years, homelessness has increased and vacancies in Guelph have decreased, making it harder and harder to find affordable accommodation, especially for people on social assistance. There has been change in addictions, with alcohol a constant, but cheaper, longer-lasting substances like crystal meth and fentanyl coming to the fore in recent years. With the Covid 19 pandemic, beginning in March 2015, homelessness became highlighted. The Drop In Centre met with downtown partners Royal City Church and Hope House. All of them were providing meals, but Drop In Centre decided to focus on tackling homelessness in other ways, while continuing to have staff check in on regulars.

The Drop In moved of a number of homeless clients, first to the Holiday Inn and then to Loyola House with 24/7 support, like social work and nursing. There are currently 40 people living at Loyola House and some respite beds. There is a Warming Centre. And the “recovery centre” at the Drop-In Centre on 23 Gordon which is now open from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. for overnight respite where they can sleep, shower and eat. Staff have been redeployed, with a “diversion worker” helping with rapid rehousing. Some volunteers who are members of the Basilica Catholic Women’s League are involved in providing meals there. There is also a “housing stability worker” responsible for helping the more chronically homeless through “Housing First” program. There are also 70-80 people without permanent housing staying in local motels.

The Parkview initiative represents an effort to provide permanent supportive housing. Sister Christine saw the need for overflow housing back in 1985 and started the long-standing relationship with Parkview and she first inquired about buying the Parkview back in 2012. One important item regarding the Parkview Motel is and trying to clear up the misconception that Parkview will be a shelter without supports. They will pick 32 people who they have assessed as benefiting most from permanent supportive housing. The Drop-In Centre wants to support solutions to homelessness and be part of the national “Build for Zero” Homelessness, a goal for

2023, because homelessness “is too hard on our communities.” There are about 150 people in Guelph who are homeless in a chronic way, ranging from six months to many years and for a multitude of reasons, and the Centre is familiar with most of them. She was asked how that compared to other cities Guelph’s size, but did not have figures at hand to respond.

We understand that it takes more than just having a place to live to resolve those issues, including 24/7 support and Gail Hoekstra has spoken to us about the need to “create community.” “We created community at the Drop-In Centre and we want to do at Parkview.” The project received a significant donation from Grace Frank, a late parishioner of the Basilica, and plan is to call the Parkview centre “Grace Gardens.” Architects and planners have come up with plans to make the site more beautiful and safe, with lighting and gardens and there is a pot of federal funding available for projects like this that promise to solve homelessness and find quick turnaround within a year and converting motels and modular homes are the preferred approaches.

The federal government appears to favour the Parkview project for those reasons, but obviously nothing is certain yet. We understand that on Dec. 21, 2020 an application for federal funding was handed in by the Drop In Centre in conjunction with the City of Guelph and Wellington County. We understand the political and funding complications involved between the city and country and would like to acknowledge the Mayor’s task force on homelessness and the local MPP Mike Schreiner help and support to the Drop In Centre during this process.

There are two other permanent supportive housing projects proposed for Guelph: Kindle, in the Willow Road area, and Wyndham House for youth and all organizations are supporting each other. The Drop In Centre has used the Loyola House initiative as a kind of pilot project to see if nursing and social work support on site can make a difference. Gail Hoekstra has told us that she has witnessed “miracles happening”, describing a woman with mental health and addiction issues living on the streets for four years who has been healthy and stable since discharge from hospital. “My heart is so happy,” Hoekstra said

Purchase of the Parkview Motel is being sought by the Drop In Centre as the Parkview Motel has been used for “emergency shelter” by the Drop In centre since 1986. This purchase would see the motel moving from an “emergency shelter” to a “supportive housing” facility. Over the years there has been a lot disturbance at the Parkview Motel because of some individuals housed there under the emergency shelter program. The move to “supportive housing” would see 32 individuals housed, supervised and assisted in common living practices 24/7.

More recently we know that the Drop In Centre has opened its facility to accommodate 15 people on a first come basis for a safe sleeping spot overnight. Space where they can rest, eat, shower, have their clothes cleaned, their stomachs filled be ready to face another day on the street. We are heartened by the amazing Ministries at Hope House and the Royal City Mission, by the Kindle Project, the Wyndham House initiative also regarding accommodation and of course the project dear to our hearts at Parkview Motel or “Grace Gardens” as it will be called, if funding is received from the Federal Government grant available, and by-law changes are made to enable work to start.

Parkview Motel change to a “Supportive Housing Project”

Over the last three years our community has striven to educate its members on the causes of homelessness, its effects on the individuals and the many different experiences which define homelessness. We have invited speakers to present us with the facts of homelessness in our country, province and our city and we have been shocked at the diverse nature of those who resort or sometimes choose to live on the street. We were especially moved by the effect of homelessness on the Indigenous community as expressed to us by Jessie Thistle. We know that the greatest need for many who spend most of their time living on the street is accommodation and that this is recognised as the biggest barrier to ending homelessness.

Permanent Supportive Housing is the answer to improve the lives of those living on the streets, we are reliably told that this is informed by the evidence and is cost effective. We know that the Parkview Motel, will undergo an amazing transformation that will see residents, pay for their accommodation in a self-contained, private studio home and that 32 people who are long-term friends of the Drop In Centre and known well by staff, are choosing to live at the new residence if all goes well. We also know that the recipients of this accommodation will be covered by the Landlord Tenant Act, will have 24/7 assistance and oversight, be connected to community services, helped with education and employment and will be in a safe environment where they can build a community amongst themselves and within the greater community. The plans for the outside of the Parkview Motel will really enhance the beauty with new landscape and common areas for socializing.

We are aware that some citizens in Guelph have grave concerns regarding this project because of the previous history of the Parkview Motel as a “temporary shelter” location. While most of our parish community does not live in this specific area, we have asked many questions of The Drop In Centre staff regarding this history and the difference between a “supportive housing project” and “temporary shelter” and now know that it is like night and day. We have been assured that the Drop In Centre has committed to this project in good faith and that those who are choosing to be considered as tenants are well known to them and understand what a benefit it will be to them, and they wish to improve their lives.

Almost twenty years ago, I was Chair of the Committee to bring a Pregnancy Home to Guelph, and also say with humility and pride that I became the Founding President of Michael House, now a well-established pregnancy home and transitional housing site in Guelph. We went through a very similar situation because there were neighbours who rightly felt threatened by what they did not quite understand. There were concerns of parties going on all night, boyfriends turning up at all hours of the day on motorbikes and carousing in the facility, of drug use and general mayhem.

However, once we had the opportunity to inform the neighbours that there would be 24/7 oversight, curfews and strict rules and answered every concern that was raised, we began the wonderful journey of Michael House that has now been handed on to others. So many young women have been assisted to get their lives back on track, helped, supported and networked to other local agencies, if needed, and the work goes on to give the helping hand that some people need.

We believe the transformation at Parkview Motel will bring about not only transformation of the hotel site but also in those who are blessed enough to live there, and transformation in the community within the local area and to our beautiful City itself. As a faith community the Stewardship Committee, the St Vincent DePaul, the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Women's League and our Pastor are eager to see how we may become more involved in this project and any other that might develop in the future and we express our willingness to become more involved in any alliance regarding poverty, homelessness or addiction in Guelph. We hope at some point that a Detoxification Centre might be another helping hand offered to those who need it in Guelph and are working alongside the ASNOW Alliance to look into the possibilities of such a centre in our City. We are so grateful, that Guelph is a City which lives and breathes the parable of the Good Samaritan and does not allow society to dictate who is our brother and who is not.

We understand, that the Parkview site, is located within a transit route, has a range of commercial businesses including grocery stores and that the purpose is to convert the Parkview Motel into 32 supportive housing units, five of which will be accessible and the site has access to municipal roads which are a pre-requisite for such a project. We are reliably informed that a "crime prevention environmental design" has been used with surveillance a key factor for ensuring safety.

For our part we will continue the amazing works of charity that we have been involved in throughout our parish history and know that we can confidently lend our fervent support to the transformation of the Parkview Motel into a Supportive Housing Project, and we urge the Mayor and City Council to allow whatever re-zoning or by-law change necessary, to see this project enabled and completed. We wish to see our City as, "The one who had mercy"

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate

Pastor Ian Duffy Rector

Stewardship Committee

Knights of Columbus

St Vincent de Paul

Catholic Women's League

Mrs Jakki Jeffs

President

Catholic Women s League

Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate

The Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10 25-37

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

²⁷ He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’^[a]; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’^[b]”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii^[c] and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “**The one who had mercy on him.**”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Mrs Jakki jeffs
President