Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you today. My name is Catherine McGrath, Board Member Australia for World Union of Catholic Women’s Organisations (WUCWO). WUCWO was founded in 1910 and is made up of five million women from one hundred organisations in sixty countries, from all continents and some island states.

WUCWO’s aim is to promote the presence, participation and co-responsibility of Catholic women in society and the Church, in order to enable them to fulfil their mission of evangelisation and to work for human development.

In 2006 WUCWO was erected by the Holy See as a Public International Association of the Faithful. WUCWO has consultative status with United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), New York; the Human Rights Council (Geneva); the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation) (Rome); participatory status at the Council of Europe, and is an official partner of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) (Paris).

All members of Catholic Women’s League Australia Incorporated are members of WUCWO. Carolyn has spoken of the Resolutions of the General Assembly held last October in Fatima, Portugal, so I will not address these again.

The General Assembly of WUCWO, where all members are invited to attend, is held every four years at a destination chosen by the Board.

The Board is made up of a maximum of twenty seven elected members; Secretary General; Treasurer General; International Representatives all of whom are appointed by President General and up to four co-opted members of like organisations such as Caritas International. The Ecclesiastical Assistant is appointed by the Holy See.

The Board is elected, from nominations previously received, by the Attending Delegates at each General Assembly, for a four year term with the option of a further two terms that is a maximum of three terms. President General is elected by the Members of the Board for the period of that particular Board.

I was elected to the Board of WUCWO, after being selected by the National Council of CWLA Inc, at the General Assembly, Jerusalem 2010. During this particular Board I was a member of the Finance Committee and the Liturgy Working Group. There were about six people in each of these groups. Each Board member is a member of at least one Committee and one Working Group. It so happened that I became the convenor of the Liturgy Working Group which meant that I, along with some participation by other members of the group, prepared all the Liturgy for all Board Meeting Masses and Spiritual times throughout the period of Board Meetings, which usually last for five days.

The Liturgy for the General Assembly, Fatima 2014 I was able to have some assistance from local Liturgy experts by way of CWLA Inc, but as usual when the actual time came things such as venues, times, celebrants and of course the actual Liturgy of the Word, were on occasions altered, but as we all know man proposes and God disposes.

At the General Assembly Fatima 2014 after being elected to the Board for my second term, I was elected Vice President Asia Pacific, which means a member of the Executive Committee for the period 2014-2018.
This now becomes a more involved role as you are not only dealing with your own organisation, but all of those in your Region who have a Board member; those who are members of WUCWO but do not have a Board Member and those who are not members of WUCWO at all. It means spreading the word of WUCWO around the region which is the largest, in geographical terms, of WUCWO. Those in Asia Pacific who have Board Members are: Philippines, South Korea and Tonga as well as Australia. Other Regions are Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and North America, which of course includes Canada.

The next Board Meeting, which is the first of this current Board, will be held in April, 2015 in Rome, Italy. The Regional Meeting of Asia Pacific is to be held in 2016 and the next General Assembly in 2018.

As we all know, most meetings are now conducted electronically and can be held at times that suit most people, sometimes not always an agreeable time for those of us in the Southern Hemisphere, although it is usually timed for about 6.30 am and can be as long as two and half hours.

Each year WUCWO Day is celebrated on 13 May or as close to this date as possible. Women from an allocated region prepare the Mass for the day, with the Readings and Prayers of Intercession. These prayers being said by as many women, around the world, as possible on this one particular day.

WUCWO produces a quarterly magazine called “Women’s Voice” for a cost of $30 per annum and we also have a web site www.wucwo.org

Thank you so much for listening and I hope I have whetted your appetite to learn more about WUCWO now that you have heard a little about WUCWO.


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