

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE AUSTRALIA.



The Catholic Women's League of Australia (CWLA) is a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) with consultative (Roster) status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. In March 2013, CWLA National International Secretary Jane Munro and Youth Observer Fiona Basile, from Member Organisation CWL of Victoria and Wagga Wagga, attended the 57th annual session of the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations in New York. The theme of the session was *"The elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls."*

Over two weeks, our representatives attended numerous side events and carried out their role of bearing joyful witness to being women of Catholic faith. Where appropriate they were able to ask questions or raise issues that would provoke conversation and thought. At one session hosted by government ministers from the Scandinavian countries, on the engagement of boys and men in the effort to eliminate violence against women, Fiona asked questions relating to the easy access to pornography on the internet, and the effects this would have on the development of boys and their attitudes towards women. (This question and answer session is posted on the CWLA YouTube channel).

In another panel discussion hosted by a Christian NGO, Fiona questioned the inconsistency between the group's call to take a stand against a culture of death and yet agreed with a woman's rights to chose abortion. Although the question was not answered, it inspired a lengthy and fruitful conversation with several women after the session.

The highlights were attending the side events of organisations that are actually helping people in need at a grassroots level, working in the field, assisting, healing, encouraging and working to make the world a better place.