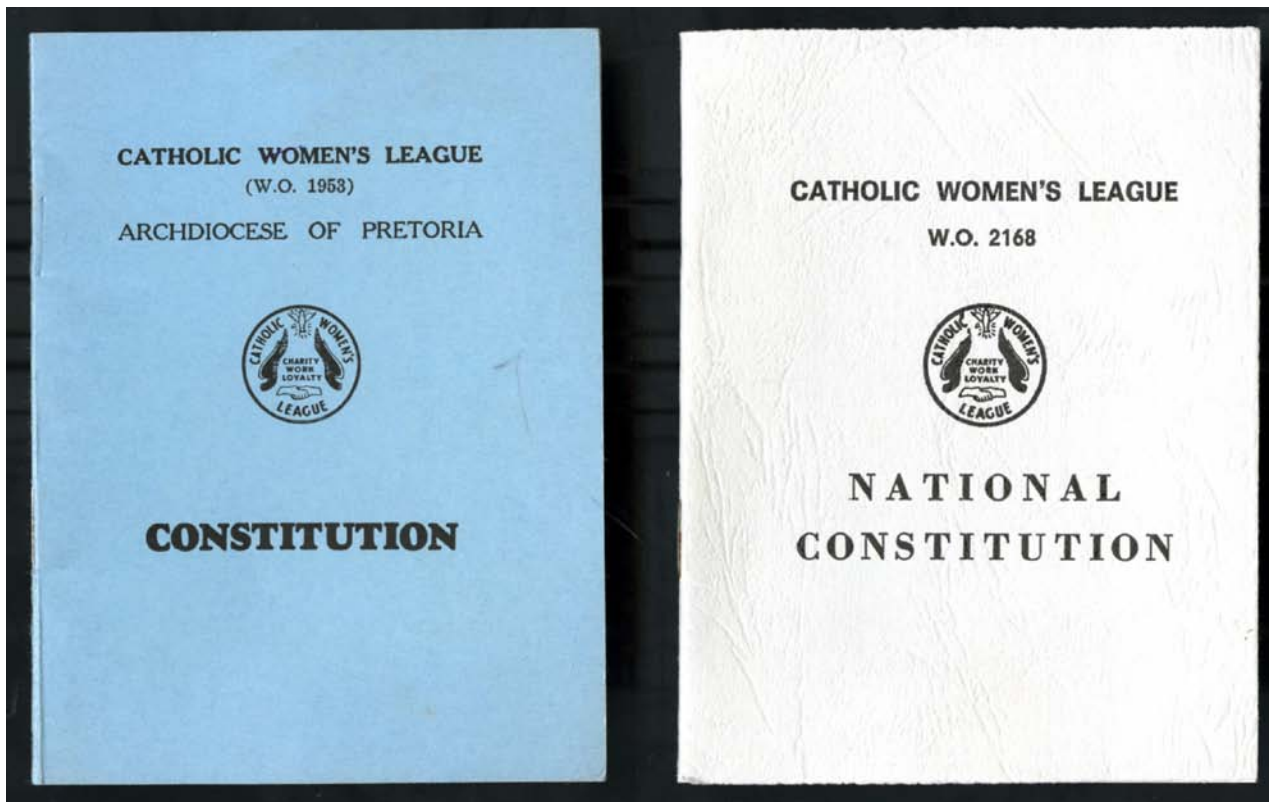


**UNISA LIBRARY MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTION**

Accession 103

**Catholic Women's League Papers  
1932-2002**



Compiled by  
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Revised and updated by Marié Coetzee  
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## **PAPERS OF THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA (1932- )**

The Unisa Library Archives received the papers of the *Catholic Women's League of Southern Africa* from the National Council in Port Elizabeth, by the kind offices of Mrs Medea Evans (Hussey), who was a former national president of the League in the late seventies and eighties. After the completion of the first inventory in 1997, the Archives received a number of additions (about 3 linear metres) to the collection from several donors. The Catholic Women's League Archives now comprises 10,1 linear metres consisting of minutes, correspondence, pamphlets, press cuttings, publications and photographs. The papers reflect the deep involvement of the Catholic Church over many decades in the development of social welfare, especially with regards to women in South Africa.

The archival material includes conference papers, correspondence and reports from Diocesan Councils and branches in Southern Africa, subject files on a variety of issues such as abortion, adoption, Board of Censors and films, divorce laws, national welfare councils (for the Aged, Deaf, Blind, Child & Family, Mental Health, Consumers etc.), Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference and the World Union of Catholic Women's organisations. There are also handwritten letters from Mother Teresa of Calcutta 1972-1973, in which she expressed the hope to visit South Africa "*but please without any publicity*". According to the letterhead of the Missionaries of Charity, to which Mother Teresa belonged, the order's motto is "*as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, You did it to Me*".

The Catholic Women's League archives is a valuable primary source for all researchers interested in gender, religious and social studies as the materials illustrate the many social and emotional problems which affect the lives of women in the twentieth century. The documents also give us an insight into the changing role of women in society. The fulltime housewife of the thirties has disappeared to make way for the career woman-cum-housewife of to-day.

### **HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE**

The League was founded in England in 1897 by Margaret Fletcher. A convert to Catholicism, she was concerned that Catholic women living in these so called "modern society" would grow away from Catholic norms and teachings. The League's objective was to train and to encourage Catholic women to take part in religious, social and civic affairs. During May 1931 the Catholic Women's League was inaugurated in Cape Town with Mrs Donovan as the first president. At one of the first meetings the women were addressed on women's franchise, its significance and responsibility. By 1932 the League had almost 600 members who attended group lectures, held street collections, met immigrants at the docks on arrival, distributed clothing and groceries to the poor, established a shelter for men in Woodstock and reading and recreation rooms for all races. The Johannesburg Branch started in 1932 and the Pretoria Branch in 1938. During the Second World War the Catholic Women's League also assisted with making hospital supplies, knitted comforts for the sailors and soldiers and served many meals in SAWAS canteens.

After World War II, the League was established in many of the Catholic Dioceses in South Africa. Supported by the local Bishops, efforts led to the establishment of a National Council of Catholic Women's League, not only to unite the different Councils, but also to have the status to speak on behalf of Catholic women in South Africa on matters of national importance. The first National Conference was held in 1952 with Mrs AM Shaw as the first national president. In 1997 the National Council changed its area of operation to Southern Africa to include countries within the responsibility of the Southern African Bishops' Conference. The National Council now comprises 20 Diocesan Council members, as well as Namibia and Swaziland members.

## **WORK OF THE LEAGUE**

The work of the National Council continues to demonstrate the concerns of the members of the Catholic Women's League. In recent years it has been part of an anti-abortion lobby. Much work is done in the field of social welfare on the professional and volunteer level and there is close cooperation between it and the national and regional welfare departments. It co-operates with other Christian organisations in projects like the Women's World Day of Prayer, Chrisnet etc. The League was a founder-member of the Consumer Union and maintains this membership.

In 1962 the National Council became a full member of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO), sharing the work and concerns of Catholic women internationally. This involves not only secular concerns like women and child abuse, human rights violations, genetic engineering etc., but also ensures that women are heard at an ecclesiastical level in the Vatican. General Assemblies (World Conferences) are held every four years and the South African National Council also plays an active part in the Africa region.

MEDEA EVANS  
MARIÉ COETZEE

*PS This updated version of the inventory includes all new records received between 1998 – 2011.*

Marie Coetzee  
Nov 2011

## CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE (10,1 linear metres)

1	Constitution of the Catholic Women's League correspondence and revised editions of constitution	1950-1991
2	Historical information about the League memoranda, correspondence, tape recording of Mrs Medea Hussey's interview with Mrs Agnes Shaw (first national president), pamphlets, press cuttings, albums and scrap-books, photographs and notes	1932-1999
3	<b>Minutes</b>	
3.1	Executive Committee minutes (vol 1)	Nov 1952-March 1965
3.2	1-7th National Conference minutes	1954-1966
3.3	Executive Committee minutes <sup>1</sup> (vol 2)	Aug 1965-Sept 1970
3.4	Management Committee minutes and attendance register	Nov 1968-Aug 1977
3.5	7-12th National Conference minutes	1966-1975
3.6	Management Committee minutes <sup>2</sup> (vol 3)	Nov 1977-March 1984
3.7	Management Committee minutes (vol 4)	April 1984-March 1991
3.8	13-17th National Conference minutes (vol 5)	1977-1987
3.9	17-19th National Conference minutes <sup>3</sup> (vol 6)	1987-1991
4	<b>Biennial conferences</b> <sup>4</sup>	
4.1	First conference, Johannesburg agenda, programme and president's report	1954
4.2	Second conference, Cape Town agenda, programme and reports	1956
4.3	Third conference, Cape Town agenda, programme, report and correspondence	1958
4.4	Fourth conference, Durban agenda, programme, correspondence and working papers	1960
4.5	Fifth conference, Bloemfontein correspondence and working papers	1962
4.6	Sixth conference, Pretoria reports, correspondence, notes and hymns	1964
4.7	Seventh conference, Port Elizabeth agenda, reports and correspondence	1966
4.8	Eighth conference, Johannesburg programme, reports and correspondence	1968
4.9	Ninth conference, Cape Town agenda, programme, correspondence & working papers	1970
4.10	Tenth conference, Durban agenda, programme, report and correspondence	1971
4.11	Eleventh conference, Pretoria resolutions, correspondence and working papers	1973
4.12	Twelfth conference <sup>5</sup>	1975
4.13	Thirteenth conference ( <i>Silver Jubilee</i> ), Port Elizabeth brochures, albums and correspondence	1977

<sup>1</sup> See certificate of registration with the National Welfare Organisations Board , dated 30th June 1958.

<sup>2</sup> Includes photograph of committee members.

<sup>3</sup> Includes mini-conference, 1987.

<sup>4</sup> See also Minutes.

<sup>5</sup> See no 3.5.

4.14	Fourteenth conference <sup>6</sup>	1980
2.15	Fifteenth conference, Cape Town correspondence and annexure	1983
4.16	Sixteenth conference, Durban agenda, programme, reports, correspondence & working papers	1985
4.17	Seventeenth conference, Port Elizabeth programme and correspondence	1987
4.18	Eighteenth conference, Pretoria	1989
<b>5</b>	<b>National Council</b>	
5.1	Correspondence (general) and annexure	1956-1993
5.2	Circulars	1959-1993
5.3	Management Committee correspondence (PE)	1985-1986
5.4	National chaplain	1966-1972
5.5	News correspondent (press officer)	1955-1980
5.6	Organisational charts	1958
5.7	Past President's Advisory Committee	1987-1991
5.8	Resolutions and decisions	1992; 1981-1985
<b>6</b>	<b>Executive Committee</b> correspondence, report and working papers	1952-1969
7.	Diocesan Council addresses	1963-1982
<b>8</b>	<b>Diocesan Councils / Branches in Southern Africa</b> Correspondence, annexure, minutes, & reports	
8.1	Aliwal North	1981-1998
8.2	Bloemfontein	1954-1998
8.3	Cape Town	1952-1999
8.4	De Aar	1964-1998
8.5	Dundee (includes Newcastle & Ladysmith)	1958-1999
8.6	Durban	1953-1999
8.7	Escourt Branch (see Dundee)	
8.8	Eshowe <sup>7</sup> / Empagani / Zululand	1955-2002
8.9	Indwe Branch	1958-1963
8.10	Johannesburg	1954-1999
8.11	Keimoes / Upington	1976-1999
8.12	Kimberley (includes Mafikeng)	1954-1998
8.13	Klerksdorp (includes Orkney, Potchefstroom & Stilfontein)	1968-1998
8.14	Kokstad	1956-1999
8.15	Kroonstad	1955-1999
8.16	Marianhill	1964; 1981-1988
8.17	Matatiele Branch	1963
8.18	Oudtshoorn	1953-1998
8.19	Pietersburg	1963-1998
8.20	Port Elizabeth	1953-1999
8.21	Pretoria	1954-1999
8.22	Queenstown	1964-1966; 1972-1999
8.23	Swaziland	1992-1999
8.24	Umtata	1952-1992
8.25	Umzimkulu (includes Margate)	1959-1999
8.26	Volksrust	1964-1966
8.27	Witbank	1954-1998
8.28	Windhoek	1962-1999
8.29	Zimbabwe	1973-1998

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<sup>6</sup> See no 3.8.

9	<b>Subject files</b>	
9.1	Abortion versus birthright / Pro-Life correspondence and annexure, reports, pamphlets and press cuttings	1972-1988
9.2	Adoptions report, correspondence and list of committee members	1975-1976
9.3	Apostolic delegation correspondence and annexure	1966-1992
9.4	Badges for diocesan presidents correspondence and annexure	1963-1964
9.5	Board of Censors and films correspondence and press cutting	1962; 1988
9.6	Calendar and prayer cards correspondence and annexures	1964; 1967-1969
9.7	Duties of office- bearers pamphlet	c 1975
9.8	Catholic Africa Women's Federation correspondence and pamphlet	1977-1983
9.9	Catholic Servicemen's support programme / conscription advice service correspondence, reports and pamphlets	1984-1989
9.10	Catholic Women's League: Other countries	
9.10.1	Australia correspondence and newsletters	1966-1986
9.10.2	Botswana correspondence	1982-1983
9.10.3	Canada correspondence and pamphlets	1977-1984
9.10.4	Rhodesia / Zimbabwe correspondence and annexure	1954-1983
9.10.5	United Kingdom correspondence and newsletters	1978-1986
9.10.6	Zambia correspondence conference resolutions and action taken correspondence and annexure	1981-1997 1979-1989
9.11	Divorce Law Amendment Bill correspondence and annexure about <i>judicial separation</i>	1962-1965
9.12	Ecumenical decade for churches in solidarity with women correspondence and pamphlets	1988
9.13	Finances	
9.13.1	Account books	1953-1991
9.13.2	Correspondence: Treasurer	1958-1996
9.13.3	Financial statements	1954-1991
9.13.4	Salary subsidies of social workers	1970-1992
9.13.5	Trust fund (not accepted)	1987-1988

9.14	Fundraising	
9.14.1	Authority for raising contributions as a welfare organisation	1974-1980
9.14.2	Correspondence and statements in accordance with Act 107 of 1978	1988-1989
9.14.3	Gold bracelet competition	1987-1989
9.15	Honorary life-membership citations	1991-1993
9.16	Honorary life vice-president correspondence	1980-1981
9.17	Insurance of president's chain of office correspondence and annexure	1980
9.18	International Year of the Child correspondence, annexure, pamphlets and poster	1979
9.19	Leadership course by Father Paul Nadal, Durban video	1984
9.20	Letters of introduction	1965-1977
9.21	Migratory labour correspondence	1963-1964
9.22	Mother Teresa newsletters, correspondence and press cuttings	1972-1973
9.23	National Newsletter nos 1-70 (incomplete)	1958-2001
9.24	Organisations - affiliated and other	
9.24.1	Chrisnet	1997-1999
9.24.2	National Council of Women	1989-2002
9.24.3	SA Council for the Aged	1989; 1991-1993
9.24.4	SA Council for the Blind	1989-1993
9.24.5	SA Council for Social Work / SA Welfare Council	1989-2000
9.24.6	SA National Council for the Deaf	1993
9.24.7	SA National Council for Child & Family Welfare	1988-1991
9.24.8	SA National Council for Mental Health	1990
9.24.9	SA National Consumer Council	1983-2000
9.24.10	Welfare Liaison Committee	1984-1993
9.24.11	Women's Bureau	1988-1993
9.24.12	Women for Peace	1988-1993
9.24.13	Women's Legal Status	1983-1993
9.24.14	Women's Lobby	1996-1999
9.24.15	Women's National Coalition	1992-1993
9.24.16	Women's World Day of Prayer	1966-1991
9.25	Papal blessing (framed) silver jubilee, Port Elizabeth	1977
9.26	Pope John Paul's visit to Southern Africa correspondence, commemorative items and press cuttings	1988
9.27	Publicity leaflet correspondence and annexures	1963-1965

9.28	<i>Put Christ back into Christmas</i> campaign correspondence and annexures	1959-1970
9.29	Refugees correspondence and annexures	1956-2001
9.30	Regional rallies minutes, correspondence and annexures about catholic education	1960-1961
9.31	Society for the Propagation of the Faith correspondence and annexures	1958-1970
9.32	Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference	
9.32.1	Correspondence, circulars and brochures (general)	1977-1993
9.32.2	Commission of the Laity correspondence, annexure, reports & pamphlets	1976-1993
9.32.3	Department Home & Family Life correspondence	1978-1993
9.32.4	Department of Catholic Action minutes, correspondence and circulars	1958-
9.32.5	Inter-Diocesan pastoral consultation correspondence and reports	1979-1992
9.32.6	<i>Internos</i> (incomplete) newsletters and correspondence	1982-1989; 1992
9.32.7	Justice of Peace Commission correspondence, annexure and newsletters	1977-1993
9.32.8	Lay apostolate correspondence, annexure, workshop papers and press cuttings	1967-1987
9.32.9	Prison ministry, prison fellowship & wounded perpetrators correspondence, <i>Faros</i> newsletters and pamphlets	1982-1999
9.32.10	Publications <i>Rev JE Brady : Princes of his people the story of our bishops 1800-1951</i> <i>Apostolic letter of John Paul II on the dignity and vocation of women</i>	c 1954 1988
9.32.11	Roman Catholic Military Ordinate correspondence and annexure, minutes, pamphlets and press cuttings	1978-1991
9.32.12	SA Council for Catholic Social Service correspondence, annexure, pamphlets, reports, conference papers and newsletters	1964-1995
9.32.13	Women's Desk / Umbrella body for Catholic Women's Organisations/ Women's Network correspondence, reports, pamphlets, press cuttings and notes	1985-1991
9.32.14	Youth Department <i>Contact</i> (newsletter incomplete)	1983-1986
9.33	Southern Cross (Catholic Newspaper & Publishing Co Ltd) correspondence and annexures	1961-1979
9.34	Special projects correspondence and annexures	1979-1980
9.35	Theme papers "Apostles in action" / "You are my witnesses" notes	1982-1983
9.36	<i>Trefoil</i> Magazine correspondence and annexures	1954-1990



9.37	United Nations statements by RSA representatives	1999
9.38	Welfare organizations (see also 9.24) Correspondence, annexures, policies, newsletters	1956-2001
9.39	World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO)	
9.39.1	Correspondence; Gugu Mtombeni	1954-2000
9.39.2	Circulars (incomplete)	1963-2002
9.39.3	Conferences (Africa region)	1981-1999
9.39.4	Newsletter (incomplete)	1955-2001
9.39.5	Statutory Assemblies	
	Rome: conclusions	1957
	Dar- es- Salaam (M Hussey's papers)	1974
	Bangalore (M Hussey's papers)	1979
	Nova Scotia	1983
	London ( E Moore's papers)	1987
	Mexico	1991
	Austalia	1996
	Italy	2001
9.40	Youth affairs Survey of attitudes to religion; pamphlets	1985-2000