

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Danielle McNeil-Hessian**  
National President

When I began this article I was in Ottawa for the annual government meetings where the League delegation presented resolutions, past and present, to elected officials and members of the bureaucracy.

On the journey with me were National Chairperson of Resolutions Barbara Dowding, National Chairperson of Legislation Judy Lewis and National President-elect Velma Harasen. We were an impressive group if I may say so myself. Our personalities complimented each other and we were able to support each other in our responsibilities.

I am pleased to report that the delegation met with a number of cabinet ministers and government officials as well as Senator Callbeck from Prince Edward Island. As national president, it was with a sense of pride that I experienced the warm welcome extended to the delegation by all. The League is indeed respected by elected officials and it was very gratifying to be made so aware of the high regard in which the League is held. There is an in-depth report of the visits in this magazine.

The delegation took the opportunity to raise the League's opposition to Bill C-384 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (right to die with dignity)* everywhere it went. The debate on the bill has been postponed but one thing was clear: while the individual members who were visited may have been against the bill, the topic will continue to be reintroduced in one form or another. League members will need to continue to express their opposition to euthanasia and assisted suicide.

While there, I took the opportunity to visit and tour the Crowne Plaza Ottawa Hotel, the site of the 2010 annual national convention where the League will celebrate 90 years as an organization. Excitement is mounting as the convention committee, led by Diane Curley, continues to plan and to add the finishing touches for the meetings and celebration. Committee members have gone out of their way to ensure that this will be the best convention ever. There is more information available in this magazine.

In October I was fortunate to attend the 2009 Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) Plenary Assembly as an observer. Each year during the plenary a letter is written to His Holiness, the pope. The following excerpt is from the letter:

"The agenda for our meeting will provide a special focus for theological reflections on the presbyteral ministry. In

addition, assisted and inspired by your recent Encyclical, there will also be reflections on the mission and activities of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and *Peace*, the leadership role of Bishops in life issues, and the challenges as well as opportunities provided by new communications media." The letter strengthens and reaffirms the commitment of the CCCC to Pope Benedict XVI.

There was an update on sponsorship opportunities and the needs of refugees by Mr. Carl Hetu, national secretary of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, and Dr. Martin Mark, of the Office for Refugees of the Archdiocese of Toronto. They indicated a need to raise awareness of the persecution of Christians in the Middle East as well as to create opportunities to welcome displaced Christians to Canadian communities.

The papal nuncio, who has been reassigned, was presented with a beautiful Aboriginal sculpture in honour of his service in Canada.

The primate of the Anglican Church, Archbishop Frederick Hiltz, was a guest speaker. He quoted Pope John XXIII as saying, "Whenever I see a wall between Christians, I try to pull out a brick." He encouraged a joint meeting between the Canadian Anglican and Catholic bishops.

Another guest speaker, Dr. Richard R. Gaillardetz of the University of Toledo in Ohio, was invited to assist bishops in reflecting on the *Year for Priests* and in preparing their own diocesan celebrations. His presentations focussed on the impact of the Second Vatican Council on the priesthood and its reality today, and on the relationship between the ministerial priesthood and the priesthood of the baptized. The presentations were thought-provoking and after each session I was fortunate to participate in workshops that were designed to reflect on the presentations.

This fall, three members of the national executive were given the opportunity to visit the developing world as a means of witnessing the impact of organizations the League supports in the name of social justice. National Chairperson of Community Life Mary Nordick was part of a delegation from the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and *Peace* that visited projects in Africa. National Chairperson of Education and Health Cecile Miller and Velma Harasen went with the Coady International Institute to visit projects in India and Nepal. What they witnessed has changed them

forever. They truly have cause to reflect on what it means to be a woman of [peace](#) and [hope](#) living in Canada.

2010 marks the final year of the League theme. As followers of Jesus Christ, it is my [hope](#) that He will be in our midst as we strive to be *Women of Peace and Hope* and to lead others to Him. I have received many examples of activities and prayer services that have been created using the theme and I look forward to receiving many more in 2010.

In this age when many demands are put on the time, treasure and talents of volunteers, maintaining and recruiting new members is an ongoing challenge for organizations. To assist in membership drives, promotional material has been sent to all parish councils for use within the parish.

Thank you to all members who have taken on leadership roles for the coming year and thank you also to members who continue to support their parish, community and country through service in the League. Once again, I will take this opportunity to remind you of the challenge to increase membership by 10% over the next two years. There is one year left to meet the challenge as we strive to bring [peace](#) and [hope](#) in our families, parishes, communities and country. †

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## LEAGUE SISTERS'S ATTIRE THROUGH THE AGES ON DISPLAY AT ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION

For 90 years, faith-filled and style-savvy League sisters have gathered for annual national conventions. Imagine the changes in fashion over that wonderful span of time! To bring this image to vibrant life, provincial council presidents drew date slips at a recent executive meeting to choose a decade to represent in costume. Fun-loving members are called to honour their province's decade by pulling out a poodle skirt, busting out a bustle, or donning a fine feathered hat. Props are encouraged to typify your province's decade as well, from parasols to MP3 players.

More information will be forthcoming from your provincial president.

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## BLESSED MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA PARISH COUNCIL

Halifax, Nova Scotia

On April 25, 2009, Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta Parish Council celebrated Our Lady of Good Counsel feast day with mass. Members participated as lectors, ushers, greeters and choir members. They read the prayer of the faithful which included prayers for [peace](#), the armed forces, palliative care patients and their caregivers, and first communicants. They brought up the gifts. All hymns were chosen by the leader of song along with the chairperson of spiritual development.

Members sat together and each wore a special ribbon attached to their CWL pin. The ribbon consisted of a plain blue ribbon with an overlay of a transparent ribbon that had butterflies on it. At the top of the ribbon was a small yellow bow and a white dove.

A collection was undertaken for sundry items that the palliative care unit at the local hospital needed.

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## SACRED HEART PARISH COUNCIL

Davidson, Saskatchewan

Sacred Heart Parish Council is pleased to welcome twins Kara and Krista as new members. The dynamic duo joined their mother, Norlaine, grandmother, Elaine, and great grandmother, Molly, to complete four generations of active CWL members.



Left to Right: Molly Reich, Elaine Reich, Norlaine McIvor, Krista McIvor, Kara McIvor.