



# THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Winnipeg, Manitoba—November 17, 2018—The national executive of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, with almost 80,000 members across the country, met November 16-17<sup>th</sup> for its annual fall executive meeting. Every Canadian province and territory was represented at the national table, including the Military Ordinariate.

Two issues affecting the church in Canada were the primary discussion items on the agenda. The first was the status of the review being conducted by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) into the project partners of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP), and the second was the response of the CCCB to the most recent sexual abuse allegations emanating out of Pennsylvania and its impact on the clergy and the lay faithful.

The League strongly endorses the mission of the CCODP as the Canadian bishops' agency which supports partners in the Global South that address unjust social, political and economic structures. While anxious to see a conclusion to the review, the League is also aware of the needs of members and councils to disburse their charitable donations. Therefore, the national executive has determined that while the investigation is ongoing, CWL parish councils should not collect donations on behalf of CCODP, but instead redirect donations to any of the other national voluntary funds that support development work, either within Canada or abroad. The current collection held in trust will be immediately forwarded to CCODP. The national executive believes this is a temporary but necessary measure while the audit continues, so that the CCODP can effectively support communities that strive for justice and peace in the Global South.

The League stands firmly in support of the clergy in Canada at this time of crisis within the church and seeks to offer encouragement to those victims of abuse and to all clergy whose reputations have been adversely affected by the sexual abuse scandal. The bishops of Canada have responded to the crisis in a fulsome manner. They have updated and expanded guidelines for the protection of minors, mandated the establishment of a permanent resource committee on the safeguarding of pastoral environments, approved the publication of a supplement which would clearly outline the existing reporting mechanism with respect to complaints of sexual abuse or misconduct against a bishop, and will be represented in February 2019 at the invitation of Pope Francis to discuss the crisis. The League will continue to encourage members to uphold the church along with the clergy and other lay faithful in a spirit of solidarity and co-responsibility.

The League's implementation committee, struck to create the League of the future as envisioned through extensive consultations over 18 months, met for an orientation session and to determine how progress toward the envisioned future would be measured. The national executive is pleased to announce the names of the committee members: National President-Elect Fran Lucas (Edmonton, Alberta), Life Member Jacqueline Nogier (Snow Lake, Manitoba), Alberta Mackenzie Chairperson of Community Life Sr. Susan Scott (Stony Plain, Alberta) B.C. & Yukon Provincial Chairperson of Resolutions Sharon Ciebin (Coquitlam, British Columbia) and Sault Ste. Marie Diocesan Second Vice-President Lisa Henry (North Bay, Ontario.)

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