

Goal 1:

Lisa Henry

Members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada grow in faith by sharing, witnessing and developing leadership skills to create positive change.

"God is looking for ordinary people through whom He can do extraordinary things." (author unknown)

Leadership and organizational transformation sees what's possible and then takes the steps to inspire and unite people to create it. Spiritual leadership calls members to ask God where He wants them, knowing He will provide what is needed to accomplish it in His name. The League wants to be a leader of change by developing and taking women to build up His kingdom.

Implementing the strategies for this goal is an extremely delicate and complex process. A new capacity, vision energy and potential will be created and realized by inviting members to grow as leaders, experience meaning through service and contribute significantly to the organizational change.

The committee will incorporate new strategies,

structures and processes to provide focus, momentum and the support needed to thrive and remain relevant, while maintaining the very sacredness that defines the League and makes it uniquely different from all other faith-based organizations.

Over the next five years, the working groups for this goal will:

- Increase opportunities for spiritual development
- Increase membership
- Remove structural impediments to participation and action by increasing flexibility throughout the organization
- Increase the capacity and efficiency of leadership
- Increase the number and readiness of members to hold office
- Increase effectiveness of communication

Holding true to a clear mission and vision of the future, the committee's work is to provide transparency about the goal and gather members together to fulfill the strategies. ✚

Goal 2:

Sr. Susan Scott

The Catholic Women's League of Canada addresses and supports Catholic social teaching through advocacy. All things are connected!

The roots of faith lie in Hebrew scripture and its ongoing story of God's fidelity and justice. The central, foundational story was the release of the Hebrews from bondage and slavery, endured for generations in Egypt. "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24).

What is this "biblical justice" that connects all things?

According to the Questions God website "Justice is, first and foremost, a relational term — people living in right relationship with God, one another, and the natural creation. From a scriptural point of view, justice means loving our neighbor as we love ourselves and is rooted in the character and nature of God."

World Vision states, "The Bible makes social justice a mandate of faith and a fundamental expression of Christian discipleship. Social justice has its biblical roots in a triune God who time and time again shows his love and compassion for the weak, the vulnerable, the marginalized, the disenfranchised, the disinherited — you get my point. 'For Christians, the pursuit of social justice for the poor and oppressed is the decisive mark of being people who submit to the will and way of God,' writes Tim Dearborn in *Reflections on Advocacy and Justice*."

As baptized followers of Christ, members take up His

passion for fulfilling God's reign, dedicating ourselves to justice, the pillar of His ministry. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners" (Is. 61:1).

Over the next five years, working groups for this goal will create tools to:

- Increase members' knowledge of Catholic social teaching
- Increase the number of members trained to lead advocacy efforts
- Increase collaboration with faith organizations and governments

Members are called to advocate for the voiceless, or in the words of St. Teresa of Avila, "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours." ✚

Goal 3:

Outreach and Service; All life valued with dignity and respect

Jacqueline Nogier

There are many analogies that could be used to describe the League and its role within the Catholic church in Canada. These analogies show the visible and invisible witness through actions.

The League is the tip of the iceberg that the larger community sees when members bear witness to Jesus' love for humankind, the roots of trees that give nourishment and stability to parishes and dioceses. No matter what kind of analogy is used to describe the League and its role within the church and society, the organization must stay grounded in the faith which gives purpose and then becomes the impetus for action.

The League must continue to "foster a culture where all life is valued with dignity and respect." There are many ways this will be accomplished through the strategies in Goal 3 during the next five years. Misconceptions about the League will be addressed and the diversity of councils and members embraced. An environment where all members will be actively engaged will be created,

including new members looking for a challenge, long-term members currently less active and homebound and where all Catholic women feel compelled to join. Parish councils will be encouraged to engage members in short term outreach and service projects.

The first strategy will be to enhance members' spirituality by focusing on the spiritual and social aspects of being a League member. The committee hopes to develop and deliver spiritual programs by reviewing existing spiritual programs, creating a list of prayer sources that members can easily access, creating new copyright free spiritual programs and creating a workshop to assist members in becoming more comfortable developing their own spiritual programs.

It is key to focus on staying relevant to the ever changing society, foster a sense of connectedness and belonging within the League, return to the organization's roots and centre on faith and action. †

Goal 4:

Address critical issues

Sharon Ciebin

"Give yourself fully to God. He will use you to accomplish great things on the condition that you believe much more in His love than in your own weakness" (St. Mother Teresa).

The Catholic church in Canada and the lives of thousands of women have been enriched by the League, a respected advocate in the defense of human rights and dignity of God's people. This organization's mission and structure has empowered women to accomplish great things. Women join the League for various reasons, are its greatest asset, are enabled to grow in God's grace and bring the face of Christ to a hungry world.

The national executive/board has the responsibility to set the organization's mission and values. In the last 99 years, the League has undertaken numerous studies to ensure its policies and programs support the vision which resulted in major structural changes to the *Constitution & Bylaws*.

The League is at the implementation stage of the latest study. To date, over 4,000 members shared

why they are proud to be a member, what should be emphasized and promoted, and identified the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the League. The roadblocks, or critical issues, to the envisioned future created goal four.

In the next five years members, working in teams called working groups, will plan and create procedures to mitigate issues that challenge the success of the mission. The areas being addressed include:

- Provide valid options in structure and meetings
- Address the lack of participation and engagement, disparity in engagement levels and competition for members and prospective members time
- Address the perception of the League, its marketing and promotion
- Address the lack of training of members and the resistance to taking on leadership roles
- Improve the use of technology, communication methods and tools.

Members' expertise and passion for the League are needed. Opportunities to join a working group will be posted annually in March. Please consider joining a team and become part of the journey. †