



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

MEMO

DATE: September 30, 2019

FROM: Pat Deppiessé, national chairperson of Christian family life

TO: Parish chairpersons of Christian family life

CC: Parish presidents, provincial presidents, diocesan presidents, life members (upon request)

ENCL: *Annulments Today, Merciful and Just* booklet

Congratulations and welcome to new chairpersons of Christian family life. Thank you for saying, "Yes!" A lot of helpful information exists in the *Executive Handbook*, the pro-life brochure and communiqués from national, provincial and diocesan council executives. Do not be overwhelmed! Embrace what can be handled at the parish level and try to inform members of what is happening around the country. Introduce members to something new and important to you. I thank those moving on from this position after serving two (or maybe more) wonderful years! I know you have grown in knowledge and wisdom. Please share all the material you have gathered with the new chairpersons.

The annual report, a compilation of work performed by members throughout Canada, is on the national website under "To Inform." I want to share some good ideas from annual reporting based on the Christian family life portfolio and hope to give new ideas for the upcoming year.

It is an exciting time in the League as we look forward to the results of the strategic planning initiative. You may hear more about the results thus far through presentations made in the diocesan councils. Please be assured all the good work accomplished in parish councils will continue. It is the structure that will change, with the headings of faith, service and social justice. Remember, this is a five-year initiative—so please be patient!

Marriage and Family

Diocesan websites have lists of Catholic counsellors to support clients who want to adhere to the church's teachings on life, marriage and family. Watch local Catholic newspapers for upcoming marriage and family workshops. Especially try to attend a presentation on "Theology of the Body."

Sanctity of Life

Abortion is available in Canada until the time of birth. Following what I thought was a very successful presentation to the provincial government, one member of the legislative assembly stood and asked why were we not talking about abortion! Only resolutions adopted that year were

presented. The delegation's answer was, "Of course we would be pleased to discuss abortion, as members believe in life from conception to natural death!"

At the 99th annual national convention in August in Calgary, the national council adopted Resolution 2019.01 Canada to Honour its Commitment to the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. I urge every parish council to read the resolution and support the action plan.

While not feasible for most of us to attend the March for Life in Ottawa this May, I suggest all councils organize a bus and attend the March for Life in a provincial capital. The more people participating, the more attention brought to life issues and thus more media coverage.

Members are encouraged to obtain LifeCanada's Dying Healed program brochure, *Make Time for Life*. Its purpose is to give volunteers confidence that being at the bedside of a lonely or dying person is an invaluable service. Workshops include important pastoral and practical aspects of what to say, how to listen and how to be with people who suffer illness, disability and loneliness.

Ministry to Youth

A few parish councils reported having a Catholic Girl's League. This is a wonderful way to work with youth in the parish. I encourage investigating and participating in this initiative—these girls are future League members! Because these are parish-based group, this initiative requires the pastor's approval, diocesan insurance coverage and Royal Canadian Mounted Police security checks for all involved.

May I suggest councils get involved with shelters for high-risk youth?

Ministry to Disabled/Seniors/Widowed

Is your parish user-friendly for those with wheelchairs? Members are encouraged to volunteer at local nursing homes in the activity department, to invite seniors to League events and to drive seniors to appointments and shopping excursions. Consider sponsoring a grief and bereavement workshop.

Ministry to Separated and Divorced

In the spring issue of *The Canadian League*, a Christian family life article had information about how, when some marriages just cannot be saved, the church offers help through the annulment process. To assist with this initiative, included in this mailing is the *Annulments Today, Merciful and Just* booklet. Canon Law is consistent throughout Canada. I recommend parish councils order copies through the national website and make them available in the parish vestibule. Request the pastor host an informal presentation on the annulment process, inviting someone from the local marriage tribunal to speak.

Vocations

Does your child or grandchild have an interest in exploring what religious life is about? Why not ask them? Members are encouraged to discuss vocations with their children and invite priests and religious into their homes.

Please make every effort to complete the annual survey. Share all your good works—this is so important! I look forward to reading the results! Remember to "print" before you "submit"!

May God bless you as you continue your work "For God and Canada."

Blessings to all.