



# The Catholic Women's League of Canada

## MEMO

**DATE:** September 30, 2019

**FROM:** Margaret Ann Jacobs, national past president and chairperson of laws

**TO:** Parish past presidents

**CC:** Parish presidents, diocesan presidents, provincial presidents and life members (on request)

Dear League sisters,

There is much excitement and enthusiasm regarding strategic planning for the envisioned future of the League. What you need to know is this initiative was undertaken especially for members working at the parish level. So, it is imperative your voice be heard. If not you, then do find someone in the parish council who can be the information channel and keep posted on current activities. Encouragement and support will be necessary to make the changes required to ensure a vibrant League council in the future.

Many parish councils experience challenges as dioceses are reconfigured and parishes are closed, twinned and amalgamated. There is a real challenge facing parish councils as these changes take place. How we respond to these innovations may well determine the future success of our endeavours as members and missionary disciples.

As national chairperson of laws, my input is often sought in the deliberation of procedures to be followed. As past parish presidents, your guidance and insight will be required. I offer some suggestions as you work with the parish council president and chairperson of organization to ascertain the best steps forward.

At the parish level, the following issues seem to require remediation:

- † the closing, twinning, amalgamating and clustering of parishes and the resultant impact on parish councils;
- † councils that have chosen to become inactive;
- † councils that have chosen to disband;
- † councils that are reactivating.

I urge you to fully investigate all options before any action is taken.

1. Access the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* pages 52-57. There may not be an answer for your particular issue, but the framework for responding to challenges the council may be facing will be addressed there.
2. Contact your counterpart at the next level of the League—regional, diocesan, provincial. If they do not have an answer for your queries, they will certainly make further contact up the chain of responsibility.
3. Pray the Lord will show you what He is blessing and not merely bless what you are doing or think needs to be done.
4. Keep an open mind and heart. Maintain a positive sense of hopefulness. Trust that the Spirit will inspire your League journey.
5. Focus on transparency in all communication. Cooperation, compromise and sincerity are great assets.
6. In all League undertakings, cherish the dedicated, selfless, often visionary gifts of members who created a legacy for the parish council. By keeping the history and archives up to date, you honour the work of so many League sisters who have gone before you, creating a foundation that was strong, resilient and life-giving.

Remember,

**“The role of the past president is consultative and advisory. Others will draw on her experience when trying to make the best decisions for the council.”**

*(Executive Handbook, PAST PRES-23)*