



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

MEMO

DATE: September 30, 2019

FROM: Shari Guinta, first vice-president and national chairperson of spiritual development

TO: Parish chairpersons of spiritual development

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

As mentioned previously, I encourage having prayer services before meetings and offering workshops, retreats and programs for members and parishioners. Like Lent, Advent is rich with prayer services and beautiful retreat offerings from which members could benefit.

Although many council meetings begin with mass, I encourage planning at a minimum an opening and closing prayer or reflection for all meetings. Consider using the many prayers and services offered as League resources on the national website. **Ask members what they want.** At the end of each year or the beginning of a new year, I suggest offering members a questionnaire to quickly and easily complete. Consider asking questions such as:

- Do you attend all or most council meetings? Do you attend only a few?
- Do you see value in having opening and closing prayers/services/programs at meetings?
- Would you be interested in a yearly retreat? Lent? Advent?
- Are you interested in guest speakers on a spiritual topic? What topics might you suggest?
- Can you name some speakers you would like to hear or have heard?
- Other suggestions for a spiritual program.

Refresh members' memory on programs offered the year before, by naming the speakers and retreat topics and ask if members found them enjoyable and worthwhile. Seek input from the membership and plan for the year. Members have resources you may wish to use and ideas for spiritual programs and enrichment.

In preparing prayers for meetings, it is a good practice to use those present to participate in the proclaiming of the prayer or program. As chairperson of spiritual development, it is not necessary for you to read the entire presentation—include members in it. One topic I would suggest is for councils to concentrate on *Care for Our Common Home*, the national theme. It would be good to pray the rosary with this intention.

I hope you have a relationship with your diocesan/provincial counterpart and can ask for resources and advice for spiritual questions and resource ideas. I would like to see diocesan/provincial

workshops offered to parish councils when possible. Parish councils should maintain a Book of Life for deceased members and send the names of deceased members to national office. It is important to respect the memory of deceased members and to be accurate in reporting their name and information. Please try to maintain a respectable Book of Life for display at meetings, Eucharistic celebrations and other services.

Dates to remember:

- World Mission Sunday, October 20th
- All Saints Day, November 1st
- All Souls Day, November 2nd
- Advent begins December 1st (first Sunday of Advent)
- National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples, December 12th
- Octave of Christmas, begins December 25th
- Feast of the Holy Family, December 29th
- Our Lady of Good Counsel Mass, April 26th

“Vigilant prayer is the wisdom to discern, recognize and hold God as He passes by our side” (*A Year With Pope Francis Daily reflections from his writings*).