



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

MEMO

DATE: March 26, 2020
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)

In my first parish mailing as past president, a comprehensive list of materials that should be preserved in the parish archives was shared. The second mailing focused on special celebrations and the importance of recording these for posterity, and in the last submission, an issue many parish councils are currently facing—amalgamation and twinning—was addressed.

All past presidents are urged to access the *Handbook for Past Presidents* (an excellent resource), the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* (P&P) (Archive Guidelines..., pages 202-204), the *Constitution & Bylaws* and the *Executive Handbook* (PAST PRES-23)—all of which can be downloaded from the national website. Each council should have a copy of its own. I challenge you to choose one article from any one of these documents to share with your parish council at a monthly meeting.

Now would be a good time to re-evaluate annual reports. Were there questions you answered “no” to or were not sure how to respond? Find out the answers and share them with your council.

Did you know?

- † Archives should be updated and reviewed every two years.
- † Three copies of the archival inventory should be maintained (one copy kept with the archives, one copy in the past president's archival file (with the guideline from the P&P, pages 202-204), and one copy with the current president and noted in the minutes).
- † Accounting records (ledgers only) are retained and may be placed in archives after five years (kept permanently). Cheques and receipts are retained for five years and then destroyed.

- † Each past president is encouraged to write two or three pages outlining the highlights of her term as president and should be accompanied by a photograph of the past president and the executive.
- † Past minutes are archived after six years and should be retained in dated binders or files. These permanent records must be kept forever. Council minutes are kept by the secretary for the current president's term and the previous two terms for a total of six years before being archived.
- † Motion books should be kept in an active file by the secretary.
- † Archives should contain a list of presidents, spiritual advisors, executives, recipients of awards, maple leaf service pins and other pins, correspondence of historical interest, i.e., letters, congratulations, plaques, special services and anniversaries, a record of the charter, dates and names of charter members.

Keep:

- † any items that the local council creates
- † photographs, scrapbooks, etc.—preferably labelled with dates, events and names of people in the pictures and newspaper clippings (photocopied to prevent degradation)
- † selected information from other agencies that pertain to the work of or has content about the League or a member

Discard:

- † duplicates, materials from other agencies and accounting records (receipts, cheque stubs) that are more than five years old. Do keep the annual financial statement/summary and selected financial artifacts that could become historically significant.
- † If in doubt, KEEP IT!

The first and primary role of the past president is to serve in a consultative capacity. As a final challenge, I invite you to take the time to reach out to the parish council president and ask if there is any way you can assist her in her duties. Take the time to mentor other women who may need just a little encouragement to step up and accept a new role knowing that you will be there to support her.