



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

MEMO

DATE: March 26, 2020
FROM: Faith Anderson, national chairperson of education and health
TO: Parish chairpersons of education and health
CC: Parish presidents, diocesan presidents, provincial presidents and life members (on request)
ATT: Participation Survey for *Care for Our Common Home* Initiative

Catholics are privileged to have an opportunity each year to participate in the 40 days of Lent. During this time, we are asked to observe the three pillars of Lent—prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Observing these pillars allows us to reflect and prepare for the Easter celebrations. During Lent, just as Jesus did, Catholics do not concentrate on themselves but rather service to others. Members have a unique opportunity to live this faith through service and action. Many opportunities to make a difference in your life and the lives of others are listed below.

Parish councils are encouraged to participate in the “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” service. In Pope Francis’ homily, where he reflected on a story of healing a leper, he stated, “‘If you will...’ is a prayer that ‘gets God’s attention’. ‘It is a challenge,’ he said, ‘but also an act of confidence: I know that He can do it, and so I entrust myself to Him’” (Vatican Radio). Pope Francis encourages Catholics to repeat this phrase often. Believe in the power of prayer and begin with, “If you will....”

In 2018, *The Framework on Palliative Care in Canada* was initiated and developed. The four priority areas for action in the framework are as follows:

- palliative care training and education for health care providers and other caregivers;
- measures to support palliative care providers and caregivers;
- research and the collection of data on palliative care; and
- measures to facilitate equitable access to palliative care across Canada

Employment Insurance Family Caregiver Benefits are available to help families care for a critically ill child (up to 35 weeks) or adult (up to 15 weeks).

The *Action Plan on Palliative Care: Building on the Framework on Palliative Care in Canada*, published August 20, 2019, states, “Most Canadians living with life-limiting illness wish to remain independent and receive the care they need at home or in their community. Improved access to palliative care in a variety

of health care settings is critical to making that happen. That is why the Government of Canada has made palliative care a priority.” A letter-writing campaign could be held during the “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” service to request the federal government honour its commitment to make palliative care a priority.

Pope Francis asks Catholics to participate in celebrating *Laudato Si’* Week, May 16-24, 2020. The week marks the fifth anniversary of his encyclical, *Laudato Si’, On Care for Our Common Home*. A short video is available at laudatosiweek.org/.

***Care for Our Common Home* Initiative survey:** Climate change is recognized by many as a real threat to the earth’s environment and has received a lot of publicity. Councils are invited to participate in this initiative to become aware of issues and be involved in caring for our common home. See instructions on the enclosed memo.

Mental Health Week is May 4-10, 2020: Councils are encouraged to utilize the Mental Health postcard available at cwl.ca to express concerns. The Canadian Mental Health Association indicates, “Mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians at some time through a family member, friend or colleague...In any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness.”

Catholic Relief Services (United States) and the National Council of Catholic Women (United States) have partnered together to produce *Water for Life Discussion Guide*. This resource facilitates discussion and discernment on water through biblical readings, questions for discussion and concrete ways to conserve water. A short video is available at crs.org/resource-center/crs-and-national-council-catholic-women-water-life.

World Catholic Education Day is May 21, 2020. Special days or weeks are dedicated throughout Canada to celebrate Catholic education. Check with your diocese for the specific days or weeks. On this day, Catholics around the world pause, reflect and pray on the gift of Catholic education. In Red Deer, Alberta, Catholics are wearing blue for this day. Let us have a BLUE DAY across Canada in support of Catholic education. Many councils offer bursaries to Catholic students—a bursary certificate is available at cwl.ca. Are there other tangible ways councils can assist Catholic schools? Brainstorm with members to find out!

With spring around the corner, members are encouraged to participate in the *Care for Our Common Home* Initiative as a way to beautify the community and do their part for the environment and climate change. Collectively we can make a difference in our communities and country.