

The Catholic Women's League of Canada



Ceremonies Booklet

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Introduction

In 1996, The Catholic Women's League of Canada introduced the *Handbook for Spiritual Advisors*. The handbook contains historical information about the League, the role of the spiritual advisor, and liturgical ceremonies used by CWL councils.

While preparing the handbook, it became clear that a booklet containing the ceremonies would enhance member participation. This led to the preparation of this booklet.

Rather than being a reprint of the *Handbook for Spiritual Advisors*, which contains the entire ceremonies including the set-up and all directions, this booklet contains only the responses used for member participation.

All information contained in this booklet may be photocopied for use by members, or additional copies may be purchased from national office.



Reception of New Members

(Give candles to all the new members).

Opening Hymn

Introduction

Spiritual Advisor: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen**

Spiritual Advisor: The grace of Jesus Christ and the love of God and the companionship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: **And with your spirit.**

Opening Prayer

Spiritual Advisor: Let us pray:

Blessed are You, loving God.

Bless us in our work and our prayer, “For God and Canada,” and grant that our lives may give You glory through our words, our witness, and our worship.

We give You praise, gracious God, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, in the communion of Your Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

All: **Amen**

Scripture Reading

Reflection on the Word of God (or silence)

Invitation to New Members

Chairperson of
Organization: I invite the following new members to come forward.

Instruction

President: We welcome all new and current League members and visitors. We pray that your membership will be challenging and fulfilling.

As Christians, we have been given a great mandate. As expressed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the laity “must assist one another to live holier lives even in our daily occupations. In this way, the world is permeated by the Spirit of Christ and more effectively achieves its purpose in justice, charity and peace.

The laity have the principal role in the universal fulfilment of this purpose.” (*The Church, No. 36*)

As members of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada, we are guided and inspired by our Mission Statement. “The Catholic Women’s League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.”

Chairperson of
Organization:

Today, as never before, the church needs an enlightened and dedicated laity. Through the League, you will acquire greater knowledge about our faith. You will become involved in a supportive community. The Catholic Women’s League of Canada is an organization which will help you grow in your relationship with Christ and the church.

Through the League’s standing committees you will be able to carry on the work of Christ at home, in the community and throughout the world.

Intercessions

President:

Christ cared for us so much that He laid down His life for us, conquered death and thus sanctified our life’s work. May Christ teach us how to love!

All:

Those who belong to Christ will be known by what they do.

President:

While on earth, Christ reached out in compassion and healing to all those in need. May we be inspired by the Holy Spirit to reach out to the needy in our own community and in our world.

All:

Those who belong to Christ will be known by what they do.

President: The mission of Christ continues on earth through each of us. Christ teaches, comforts and shows mercy through all of us who profess His name. May Christ strengthen us to be faithful disciples.

All: **Those who belong to Christ will be known by what they do.**

Symbol

President: You have been given lighted candles as a reminder of the candle you received at your baptism. Let your light shine before all, so that your good works may give glory to God.

Please join in the League promise.

All: **For the glory of God and the good of God's people, I promise as a Catholic woman to honour, invoke and imitate our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel. I promise to be a loyal member of The Catholic Women's League of Canada and to promote its interest and growth in every way. I promise to cooperate with officers in all programs under their direction and to conform to the best of my ability to the bylaws of the organization in all League activities.**

The spiritual advisor then blesses the League pins.

President: Wear this emblem with pride, honour and loyalty.

(The new members return to their places after all have received their pins.)

Concluding Prayer

Spiritual Advisor: In support of one another, and in communion with all the saints in heaven, let us now pray with one heart and one voice. Our Father ...

Blessing

Spiritual Advisor: May God bless us and keep us. **Amen**
May Jesus Christ graciously smile upon us. **Amen**
May the Holy Spirit, Giver of life, grant us peace. **Amen**

Sign of Peace

Spiritual Advisor: Let us conclude our celebration by offering one another a sign of peace.

Installation or Reaffirmation of CWL Officers

Opening Hymn

Introduction

Spiritual Advisor: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen**

Spiritual Advisor: The grace of Jesus Christ and the love of God and the companionship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: **And with your spirit.**

Opening Prayer

Spiritual Advisor: Let us pray:

Blessed are You, loving God,
You have made a covenant with Your people:
You called us to be Your holy people,
to sing Your praises at all times.

Bless us in our work and our prayer,
“For God and Canada,”
and bless the officers we have chosen
to lead us in the Catholic Women’s League.

We give You praise
through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer,
in the communion of Your Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.

All: **Amen**

Scripture Reading

Reflection on the Word of God (or silence)

Instruction

Retiring Past President

or Spiritual Advisor: Dear people of God, through baptism we are called to work together as members of the Body of Christ. Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit, to bestow upon us gifts of many kinds to

complete God's work on earth and bring us the fullness of grace.

The Catholic Women's League of Canada is an organization rooted in gospel values calling its members to holiness through service to the people of God.

As a League member, each woman uses her gifts and talents to share the Good News of her Christian calling to love and serve God and neighbour in her parish, diocese, province and country. These women are your elected officers of the *N...* executive.

In your presence and with your prayers, we now install (reaffirm) them in their respective offices for the coming year.

Commitment

Past President: *N...*, as past president it is my privilege to present you (once again) with this gavel as a sign of your office as president.

Will you (continue to) be faithful to your call, and help all League members through your faith, love and prayers?

President: I will, with God's help.

The past president presents the president's pin to the president. The president then presents the past president pin to the past president.

Retiring

Past President: As retiring past president, it is my privilege to install (reaffirm) you as the new executive officers.

You have been chosen by the members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada because they recognize in you the gifts of service to the League at the *N...* level. We thank you for your willingness to accept your office.

Will you (continue to) be faithful to your call and help all League members, through your faith, love and prayers?

Officers: I will, with God's help.

For the glory of God and the good of God's people, I promise as a Catholic woman to honour, invoke and imitate our

patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel. I promise to be a loyal member of The Catholic Women's League of Canada and to promote its interest and growth in every way.

I promise to cooperate with officers in all programs under their direction and to conform to the best of my ability to the bylaws of the organization in all League activities.

Retiring

Past President:

May God keep you faithful to these promises and bring them to fulfilment.

Spiritual Advisor:

Members of the League, at this time I affirm (reaffirm) my commitment to assist the executive and members of the League in their work "For God and Canada."

Symbol

President:

Water: May the grace given to each of us in our baptism be shared with all God's people through Jesus Christ.

or *Candle:* Bring Christ's light to the world.

All:

Amen

Blessing of the Officers

Spiritual Advisor:

Blessed are You, O God, Ruler of the universe, and Healer of a broken world:

Look with kindness on these women.

They have been chosen to serve as officers of the N... executive of The Catholic Women's League of Canada.

In Your love and mercy,

Bless † all their works.

May Your glory be manifested in all they do for You and for Your church.

All praise and glory to You, God
through Jesus Christ,
in the love of Your Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.

All: **Amen**

Acclamation

Retiring

Past President:

Dear sisters and brothers (assembled at this gathering of The Catholic Women's League of Canada),

These women have been chosen (reaffirmed their commitment) to serve the church through the N... executive of The Catholic Women's League of Canada. I ask you to welcome their gift (recommitment) of themselves, their faith and trust in God, and their love for the church, the League, and Canada.

Concluding Prayer

Spiritual Advisor:

In support of one another, and in communion with all the saints in heaven, let us now pray with one heart and one voice. Our Father...

Blessing

Spiritual Advisor:

May our Creator God bless us and keep us. **Amen**

May Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, graciously smile upon us.
Amen

May the Holy Spirit, Giver of life, grant us peace. **Amen**

Sign of Peace

Spiritual Advisor:

Let us conclude our celebration by offering one another a sign of peace.



Prayer Service for a Deceased Member

Hymn

Introduction

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen**

Leader: The grace of Jesus Christ and the love of God and the companionship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: **And with your spirit.**

Welcome

Leader: We, the members of the Catholic Women's League of N... parish are gathered here today to commend our deceased sister N... to God. We recall in silence her loving service to others and pray that God will welcome her into eternal glory.

Prayer

Leader: Loving God, You promised fullness of joy to those who seek Your face. Trusting in Your Word, we pray to You for our sister N... who sought to further Your reign on earth by her service in the Catholic Women's League "For God and Canada." Though we are saddened that she is no longer with us, we entrust her to You with confidence. May she now live in peace, joy and happiness.

We ask this in the name of Jesus who is God. **Amen**

Scriptures

Reflection on the Word of God (or silence)

General Intercessions

Leader: Gracious and loving God, in Your mercy You have chosen us in Christ to be part of Your family. In Christ's name, we pray for our deceased sister, for the church and the world.

Assistant: We pray for our sister N... who was baptised into Your everlasting life. Receive her now into Your eternal embrace.

All: **Hear our prayer!**

Assistant: Give strength to her family and friends who mourn. Help us to bear the burden of sorrow in a spirit of faith and hope.

All: **Hear our prayer!**

Assistant: We pray for all our deceased members who have died in faith, may they be raised up on the last day.

All: **Hear our prayer!**

Leader: Creator God, hear our prayers. Welcome our sisters into paradise and strengthen our hope that we will share in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You forever and ever.

All: **Amen**

Prayers in Common

Conclusion

Leader: May our sister *N...*, who adopted Our Lady of Good Counsel as her patroness through League activities, rest in peace, through the mercy of God.

All: **Amen**

Leader: May God bless us all, through Jesus, our Redeemer, and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen**



Memorial Service for Deceased Members

Hymn

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen**

Leader: The grace of Jesus Christ and the love of God and the companionship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: **And with your spirit.**

Instruction

Leader: We gather tonight as members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada to honour the memory of... [number] members of *N...* council, who have gone from this life to their eternal rest in Christ.

We welcome the family members who are with us to join in the memorial for our departed sisters: ... [read names].

In the world of today, as perhaps never before, the church needs an enlightened and faithful laity. Dedicated members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada live their faith by serving others and thus discover Christ through relationships with others.

The members we honour today openly made a solemn commitment to be witnesses of Christ, carrying out the mission of Christ at home, in the parish and in the whole community.

We recall now their service to others, and we pray that the God of all has joyously welcomed them into the fullness of life, where they rest in peace and love.

Opening Prayer

Leader: Gracious God, to whom mercy and forgiveness belong, hear our prayers on behalf of Your faithful servants whom You have called into the light of Your presence. May they be welcomed joyously into heaven. We ask this through Christ, our Redeemer.

All: **Amen**

Scripture Reading

Reflection on the Word of God

Individual Memorial Rose

Leader: God is the glory and joy of each of our departed members whose memory we celebrate today. A rose, a symbol of life in Christ, will now be presented as a living memorial for each one.



Chairperson of Spiritual Development

(optional): *N...*, we thank God for the gift of ... that You shared with us.

All: **Amen**

Hymn

Closing Prayer

Spiritual Advisor: Compassionate God, Mary, the mother of Jesus, gave of herself completely. Blessed is she who gave humanity to Jesus, and blessed are our sisters who spent their lives serving others in God's name.

We join Mary in proclaiming Your greatness and in thanking You for giving us life through death and resurrection of Jesus. We proclaim Jesus and the gift of Your life-giving Spirit.

All: **Amen**

Leader: Eternal rest grant unto them.

All: **And let perpetual light shine upon them.**

Leader: May they rest in peace.

All: **Amen**

Final Blessing [Form ‘A’]

Spiritual Advisor: May the peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and in the grace of Jesus Christ.

All: **Amen**

Spiritual Advisor: May almighty God bless you, the Creator God, Jesus our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen**

Final Blessing [Form ‘B’]

Spiritual Advisor: May the love of God and the peace of Jesus Christ, bless and console us, and wipe every tear from our eyes: in the name of our Creator God, Jesus our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen**

Sign of Peace

Leader: Let us conclude our celebrations by offering one another a sign of peace.

Blessing for the Book of Life

Prayer of Blessing

Leader:

Ever loving and gracious God,
we thank You for the gift You gave Your church
in the people whose names are inscribed in this *Book of Life*.

You called them
to be salt of the earth
and a light to the world.

In their families and in this parish
they let their lights shine before all
so that their good works
gave glory to You,
and were an example and encouragement for all of us.

As we hold close to our hearts
the memory of those who are inscribed in this book,
we ask you to bless † this *Book of Life*
and to bless those members of
The Catholic Women's League of Canada
who we honour in this book.

We ask this blessing through Jesus Christ
and through the intercession of our patroness,
Our Lady of Good Counsel.

All:

Amen



Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel – April 26

Opening Hymn

Opening Prayer

Leader: Loving God, You know that our thoughts on earth are full of fear and uncertainty; through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, from whom Your Son took flesh and blood, send us the Spirit of Counsel to teach us how to know Your will and to guide us in all we do.

Grant this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

All: **Amen**

Gospel Acclamation

Leader: Alleluia. Jesus manifested His glory and His disciples believed in Him. Alleluia. [use only if sung]

Our Lady gave herself wholeheartedly to God's loving plan.
The Lord be with you.

All: **And with your spirit.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: **It is right and just.**

Prayer after Communion

Leader: Ever present God, we have shared in Your mysteries on this memorial of Our Lady, Mother of Good Counsel. Grant that we may learn what is pleasing to You, and receive salvation from Jesus Christ, whom You gave to us as our Wonderful Counsellor through the cooperation of the Blessed Mother.

All: **Amen**

Closing Hymn

Installation of a Spiritual Advisor

Leader: N..., you have been invited to serve the [parish of/diocese of/province of/national church in Canada] as spiritual advisor for the [parish/diocesan/provincial/national] council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada.

May you be inspired by the Holy Spirit in offering support, encouragement and guidance to the officers and members of the League.

The Catholic Women's League of Canada is an important work in the mission of Christ's church in Canada. May your collaboration in League activities bring growth and blessing to the members and their communities.

Creator God, sustain all CWL spiritual advisors with Your divine grace and grant them peace and joy in serving You. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel.

All: **Amen**

Rite on the Occasion of the Election of Officers

Instruction

Chairperson: Members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada:

The moment has arrived at this convention to elect the officers who will serve this organization for the next two years.

The election process will take place in the context of a prayer service.

In the community of disciples, Jesus reminds us that authority is a call to serve: "The greatest among you must become the slave of all, and servant of all."

Several members have presented themselves to serve on the [name appropriate level] executive of The Catholic Women's League of Canada. Those who will be elected to office will be called upon to unite themselves in a special way to Christ, the servant of all.

Prayer

Spiritual Advisor: Jesus, our Redeemer, You promised that You would be present with those who gather in Your name.

Show us the ones You have chosen to lead The Catholic Women's League of Canada at the [name appropriate] level. Help us to receive Your choice with trust and faith.

All praise and glory to You, God, through Jesus Christ, in the love of Your Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

All: **Amen**

Elections Process

Concluding Rite

Chairperson: Let us listen to the instruction of Jesus for us, as recorded in the Gospel of John: (John13:12-17)

Immediate

Past President:

When Jesus had washed their feet and put on His clothes again, He went back to the table. “Do you understand,” He said, “what I have done to you?”

You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. If I, then, the Lord and master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other’s feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.

I tell you most solemnly, no servant is greater than the master, no messenger is greater than the One who has been sent.

Spiritual Advisor:

Creator God, we extend our hands toward these, Your servants, seeking Your gifts of unity and peace.

Through Your Spirit, You prompted each one to offer herself for the service of the League at the [name appropriate] level.

May those chosen to lead, and those who offered themselves so generously, be filled with gratitude and praise for the gift of Your Spirit, the gift of Your church, the gift of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada and the gift of each one present here. We ask this through Christ, our Redeemer.

All:

Amen

Sign of Peace

Spiritual Advisor:

Let us conclude by offering one another a sign of peace.

Ceremony for the Presentation of Service Awards

[A service award may include pins, certificates and/or other awards.]

Opening Prayer

Spiritual Advisor: Loving God, the women of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in the [parish/diocese/province] of [name], are filled with gratitude and joy as they gather in Your name. We thank You loving God for calling us to share in Your mission. You have bestowed powerful gifts upon all members and empowered them to share in service through mutual support of one another.

[blessing of service awards]

All powerful and ever living God, we thank You for the many and diverse gifts that continue to be shared by League members toward the building of Your reign, enabling them to carry on the work of Christ at home, in the community and throughout the world.

Scripture Reading

Reflection on the Word of God (or silence)

Instruction

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 5 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: Like Ruth in the Old Testament, may you find your faith grow and become richer as you serve the church with your sisters in Christ.

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 10 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: Like Mary, Mother of Jesus, may your "Yes" to God continue to shine forth in every dimension of your lives, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 15 years to come forward [call by name]

President: Like Therese of Lisieux, may you remember and model the "little way" so that you will be a witness for all those seeking justice

through gentleness, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 20 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: Like Faustina, may you be an example of mercy to all as you live your life for others, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 25 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: Like Catherine of Sienna, may you give enlightened leadership for the growth of the church and God's reign, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 30 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: Like Marguerite Bourgeois, may you have the courage to work for needed improvements in the community which will be for the greater glory of God, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 35 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: Like Marguerite d'Youville, may you continue to be charitable in your service to God and Canada, thus being a beacon of hope for the disadvantaged, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 40 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: Like Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, may you respond with love to the image of Christ in the sick and suffering, the lonely and abandoned, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of

Organization: 45 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: Like Kateri Tekakwitha, may your diligence, patience and devotion continue to assist you in your service to the League and the church, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 50 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: Like Teresa of Avila, may your spiritual life flow from a deep and intimate union with God as you pray for others, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 55 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: Like Anastasia, may your continued strong faith and prayer life give you strength to move the lives of those both bodily and spiritually imprisoned, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 60 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: Like the great women whom you have known personally in The Catholic Women's League of Canada through the years, may your love of God continue to be an example to all, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 65 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: May the vision of our foundress, Bellelle Guerin, continue to burn in your hearts so that "[the League] will arise fair and beautiful, strong and proud before the eyes of the world", for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 70 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: Like Teresa Benedicta (Edith Stein), may your life of service in the cause of the faith, be a “light undimmed” for those women who follow in your footsteps and on whose shoulders they stand, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 75 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: May your love of God and the League continue in prayer as an example for all League members, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Chairperson of Organization: I invite those members who have served the League for a total of 80 years to come forward. [call by name]

President: Like the mother of Mary, (traditionally known as St. Anne) who by her nurturing led Mary to respond to God’s request with faith, may your nurturing of the League demonstrated by your devoted service be a model to new and long-serving members, for this we pray:

All: **O God, empower us!**

Concluding Prayer (in these or similar words)

President: In support of one another, and in communion with all the saints in heaven, let us now pray with one heart and one voice.

All: **Our Father ...**

Blessing

Spiritual Advisor: Living God, Your Son’s resurrection calls all people to a new and glorious life in You. Grant that we may bring this Good News to everyone through lives of joyful witness and service. We ask this blessing through Jesus Christ, our Risen Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

All: **Amen**

Sign of Peace

Spiritual Advisor: Let us conclude our celebration by offering one another a sign of peace.

League Promise

For the glory of God and the good of God's people, I promise as a Catholic woman to honour, invoke and imitate our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel. I promise to be a loyal member of The Catholic Women's League of Canada and to promote its interest and growth in every way. I promise to cooperate with officers in all programs under their direction and to conform to the best of my ability to the bylaws of the organization in all League activities. Amen



League Prayer

We humbly pray You, O God our Father, to bless The Catholic Women's League of Canada. Bless our beloved country, our homes and families. Send Your Holy Spirit upon us to give light to our minds and strength to our wills that we may know and fulfil Your great law of charity. Teach us to share with others at home and abroad, the good things You have given us. This we ask through Our Lord Jesus Christ and the intercession of our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel. Amen



Mission Statement

The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.



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