

Welcome to the League of the Future Year 2

The theme for much of today's presentation was "Saying Yes." A few years ago, the League said yes to planning strategically. A steering committee said yes to the task. Then more members said yes to joining an implementation committee. Fifty three more said yes to working groups. More than 800 said yes to participating in surveys, questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. With still more to do there will be more opportunities for members to say YES to this exciting work of envisioning and crafting the League of the Future.

With the sound track from Star Wars ringing in our ears, Episode II of the League of the Future was launched. National President-Elect Fran Lucas welcomed members and reminded them to request from national office a copy of the strategic planning booklet. After a brief history and introductions of the steering and implementation committees, she began with the CWL Prayer for Renewal, which councils are encouraged to pray regularly.

Sharon Ciebin, lead for Goal 4 which is to address critical issues, introduced us to the affirmation working group. Welcoming, affirming and validating members was identified as the largest single impediment to progress in the League. Strategies are: Include (leave no member behind), Affirm (make members feel welcomed, needed, wanted); and Validate all members. The working group produced the gift of an entire welcome program, adaptable and customized to fit the needs of councils. A short video showcased this welcome program. Some sections of the program were highlighted—welcoming, membership, orientation and companionship.

- Welcome: Women join for many reasons. The reasons are not important; the need to experience warm welcome is. Welcoming takes many forms, is ongoing and continuous by a community. Tips on welcoming are provided in the program.
- Membership: Each member is gifted with talents. A membership information form has been developed for new and existing members.
- Orientation: Members who become knowledgeable become engaged.
- Companionship: Emphasis is on "sisterhood, sisterhood, sisterhood". The audience was asked to reflect on how they have experienced sisterhood, and reminded of the African proverb "If you want to go far, go together."

The Welcome Program is to be released through League channels, with provincial councils receiving the material at the beginning of September for rollout in their provinces.

Lisa Henry, lead for Goal 1, presented the work of the reorganization working group (RWG) and the marketing working group. The RWG formed three subcommittees. One sub-committee dealt with the strategy to reduce the number of standing committees to three to align with the core values of faith, service, and social justice. The committee studied and evaluated existing standing committees. The second sub-committee dealt with the strategies to examine current levels of the League, streamline executive offices at all levels and create distinctive roles for each level, and reorganize. Consultation was a priority as they reviewed current structures, looked at other models, held interviews and proposed models. The third sub-committee dealt with the strategies to simplify procedures and reporting processes, and enhance the role of standing committee chairs from a reporting role to rotating the meeting and program among them. They reviewed current practises, investigated best practices and conducted a 600 person survey. All three sub-committees will present recommendations to the board in September.

The Marketing Working Group was assigned four strategies: increase awareness about League within the church through marketing; market the League as an association that showcases the strength of Catholic women grounded in faith, ready and willing to act; position the League as an organization for all Catholic women that encourages and supports their role and responsibility in the church and society; and transform name, brand, and image to reflect current trends and the envisioned future. The group carried out research, interviews, and assessment of marketing firms and have selected Clark Communications of North Bay to assist the group with its marketing efforts. The first approved initiatives is called “building a foundation” and entails creating a new section on the website, an audit of social media channels, and assessment of current and potential in social media platforms; and using multi marketing channels to deliver further initiatives. The second initiative is story telling vignettes and a 100th anniversary video to tell the story of the League’s achievements. And the final initiative is a full fall marketing campaign titled “If you only knew”.

Year 1 Results: Affirmation Working Group: Comprehensive Welcome package
Reorganization Working Group: Reduction of standing committees to 3. Thorough examination of the levels of the League. Streamlining of executive at all levels Recommendations for instructed vote will go to National.
Marketing Working Group: Research and reporting conducted. Request for proposal completed and marketing agency hired. Marketing initiatives have begun

Year 2 will have six active working groups: Goal 2: Catholic Social Teaching, May 2020-December 2023;
Goal 3: League misconceptions, May 2020-March 2021; Encourage Diversity, May 2020-March 2021;
Tool Kits, May 2020-June 2021; Spiritual Formation, May 2020-May 2021; and Goal 4: Strategic Leadership and Parish Council Options, May 2020-May 2021.

There is still more to do and volunteers are needed for working groups, surveys, focus groups and questionnaires. When given an opportunity, members are asked to respond to requests. There will be a call in the New Year on Facebook, the website and the League magazine. Members were encouraged to check out the progress on a regular basis through the website, Facebook page, communiques, League magazine, conventions and parish mailings.

What is required? Prayer for strength believing we are on the right path, to say yes to Year Two work.

It has been a year of challenges but the pandemic has made us wiser and stronger to take and put forward our strategic plan.

The session closed with a beautiful video *The League of the Future*, which reminded us that we are the eyes, hands and feet of Christ on earth and asked, “How will you say yes?”