



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

MEMO

DATE: April 2, 2021

FROM: Janet McLean, national secretary-treasurer

TO: Parish treasurers

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

It is a privilege to write to you one last time as I finish my term as national secretary-treasurer. Thank you to everyone who completed the annual survey form for treasurers. The information I received helped me to complete my annual report. We are living in challenging times, but we are starting to see light at the end of the tunnel.

As you know, members have been asked to vote on a motion to increase the national per capita fee from \$13.00 to \$25.00, an increase of \$12.00. The deadline for councils to vote on this motion has been extended to March 2022 due to the pandemic. If the motion is adopted, the new fee would come into effect in the 2023 membership year. The motion was made after careful study of the estimated national revenues and expenditures for the next five years and to ensure the financial viability of the League. Without a per capita increase, the League will be in serious financial difficulty by 2024.

Parish councils are the roots of the League, and the national level is what connects these roots across Canada. Each parish council makes a difference in the community in which it is planted, and the national council gives members, as Catholic women, a united voice across the country. Groups of women have worked together in faith, service and social justice whenever parishes have been established. What makes the League different is that 101 years ago, these women's groups realized they could be stronger if they worked together, and so they formed The Catholic Women's League of Canada in 1920. This voice of strong, united Catholic women is needed in today's increasingly secular society more than ever. When members of the national executive/board visit with the federal government in Ottawa, they present your resolutions and concerns. They speak for 70,000 women from across the country. Sadly, they used to speak for a much larger number of women; however, membership has been consistently decreasing for many years.

This brings us to the reason for the proposed per capita increase. While the national board, consisting of 11 provincial presidents and 11 elected officers, are all volunteers, there is a paid permanent staff who run the office on a day-to-day basis and provide many services to both the board and members. The League pays rent and all expenses necessary to maintain an office, produce *The Canadian League*, provide development funds and grants to councils and sell League supplies. The League is a not-for-profit corporation and is obliged to hold an annual meeting of members (i.e., the national convention). In addition, the League is in the midst of implementing a five-year strategic plan, approved by the members, to guide us in the years to come. To perform all these tasks requires money and the national per capita fee provides the funds to make these things happen.

I realize that both your members and your parish council may be struggling financially, and this proposed increase could not have come at a more inopportune time. As treasurer, you can remind members they only have to add \$1.00 a month to their personal budget in 2022 in order to pay an increased fee in 2023. Perhaps you could collect “spare change” at meetings or hold a fundraiser to help offset members’ increased costs. Maybe a parish council in a better financial position could twin with another council to help with membership fees. Members are champions at helping others; this may be a time when they will have to help their own League sisters.

Please help me keep the League a strong, vibrant, committed group of women serving their parish, community and country by encouraging your parish council to vote yes to the motion to increase the national per capita fee.

Thank you for all you do for the League; you are in my prayers.