

The Canadian League

Official Publication of
The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Volume 97/No. 3/Fall 2021

Printed in Canada

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

OFFICERS

Spiritual Advisor: Most. Rev. Stephen Jensen
Bishop of Prince George

President: Fran Lucas

President-Elect: Shari Guinta

1st Vice-President: Betty Colaneri

2nd Vice-President: Cathy Bouchard

Secretary-Treasurer: Marie Rackley

Past President: Anne-Marie Gorman

Spiritual Development: Cathy Bouchard

Organization: Shari Guinta

Christian Family Life: Dorothy Johansen

Community Life: Faith Anderson

Education and Health: Margaret Schwab

Communications: Betty Colaneri

Resolutions: Rolande Chernichan

Legislation: Glenda Carson

Laws: Anne-Marie Gorman

International Relations: Fran Lucas

PRESIDENTS OF PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

Alberta Mackenzie: Judy Look

B.C. & Yukon: Sharon Geiger

Manitoba: Janet Brunger

Military Ordinariate: Allison Klemen

New Brunswick: June Brown

Newfoundland and Labrador: Judy Hodge

Nova Scotia: Joline Belliveau

Ontario: Colleen Perry

Prince Edward Island: Marilyn Gay Garvey

Quebec: Rosa Lam

Saskatchewan: Chantal Devine

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kim Scammell

C-702 Scotland Avenue

Winnipeg, MB R3M 1X5

Tel: (204) 927-2310

E-mail: info@cwl.ca Website: www.cwl.ca

EDITORIAL BOARD

National Chairperson of Communications:

Betty Colaneri

National President: Fran Lucas

Executive Director: Kim Scammell

The Canadian League is published three times a year by The Catholic Women's League of Canada. Material may not be reprinted, in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Subscription rates: Annual national per capita fee of \$13.00 includes subscription rate of \$3.00. Non-members, \$8.00 per year. Agreement number 40007536
ISSN-0384-630

Printed in Canada

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	2
From the National Spiritual Advisor	2
Highlights from the 100 th and 101 st National Annual Meetings of Members	3
Oral Reports	7-28
2021 New Life Members	28
Introducing	31
Honouring the Gift of Service	32
In a Consultative Capacity	33
A Moment in Time	34
A Prayer of Hope for the 2022 CWL National Convention, Kelowna	35
Congratulations 2021 Bursary Recipients	35
Happy Birthday	36
Congratulations	37
Letters to the Editor	37
Is it Time to Get Out of our Boat and Walk on Water?	39

NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF DIRECTORY

Executive Director: Kim Scammell. executivedirector@cwl.ca
(national executive and policy) (204) 927-2313

Senior Accounting Clerk: Valroy Anderson. accounting@cwl.ca
(orders, payables, per capita fees) (204) 927-2315

Executive Secretary: Amanda McCormick. communications@cwl.ca
(recording/corresponding secretary, resolutions, social media) (204) 927-2314

Project Coordinator: Kerri Sylvester. projects@cwl.ca
(implementation committee) (204) 927-2318

Office Assistant: Marion Wong. officeassistant@cwl.ca
(archives, bursaries, insurance, council records) (204) 927-2310

Membership Coordinator: Belinda Limqueko-Mag-uyon membership@cwl.ca
(membership renewals, member records, years of service) (204) 927-2316

All other inquiries should be sent to. info@cwl.ca
for forwarding to the appropriate respondent. (204) 927-2310

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fran Lucas, National President and Chairperson of International Relations

“There are those who seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge; that is curiosity. There are those who seek knowledge to be known by others; that is vanity. There are those who seek knowledge in order to serve; that is love.”
(St. Bernard of Clairvaux)

My impression is that members are seen in the first and third group in the above quote but with a few twists. Curiosity is manifested by asking oneself, “What do I do now with that knowledge?” In the third sentence, the love component is shown by the multitude of actions members undertake, some very successful and others less so. The important part is members act giving support or hope to someone or something. They are never fully aware of how impactful those actions are, many times very much so.

The 100th and 101st annual national conventions in August became partially virtual national annual meetings of members due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Members are aware of the many reasons for the need to go virtual plus the heartaches and disappointments from that change. The business covered and words of inspiration from His Eminence Gerald Cardinal Lacroix were two signs the League fulfilled its meeting mandate, updating members while giving hope and guidance. The presentation on *The League of the Future—Year 3* is a key resource for all members to see and can be viewed at [youtube.com/watch?v=lw_ggWpvN3k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lw_ggWpvN3k). Meeting virtually across Canada gave members the opportunity to unite in faith and resulted in very positive evaluation comments as they look forward to the 2022 national convention in Kelowna.

Whoever thought virtually would be the way members would be in convention? I am sure it is safe to say absolutely no one! When I think of the years of planning that took place for the 100th anniversary celebration that could not take place in Montreal in 2020 and plans for the 2021 national convention in Toronto, I offer my

sincere thanks to those provincial councils and members for their hard work. Referencing the earlier quote, members' love to continue to serve and serve well gave the League an annual meeting of members. All these have been history-setting events that immediate National Past President Anne-Marie Gorman and I will not soon forget. Passing on the torch virtually was strange to say the least, and receiving my president's pin by courier was very unusual, but the latter definitely put a smile on my face on opening the package. Love for the League trumped everything else. The pin being pinned or arriving in the mail made no difference. Full disclosure, I do look forward to the national executive/board's next in-person meeting, praying for that to happen in October, when Anne-Marie can do the official pinning.

The League is nearing the wrap-up of its national theme, *Care for Our Common Home* though members will continue to actively promote and have initiatives locally and globally to ensure protection of the Earth.

As members continue their “Olympic gold medal work” as Cardinal Lacroix called it and all that the strategic plan has to offer, the board is hearing the excitement from councils readying to start up this fall! Although throughout the past months some councils continued to meet virtually and make things happen, many did not. It is truly encouraging to hear the plans of councils from being busy to doing very little to seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. Their love and curiosity have carried members through 18 months of a different sort of activity. The thought of being busy again is exhilarating! Keeping members in my prayers, I wish you all every success. †

FROM THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ADVISOR
Most Rev. Stephen Jensen, Bishop of Prince George

Only days after the national annual meeting of members in August that replaced the League's in-person convention, the liturgy of the church presented members with an amazing coincidence. In a wonderful way, it tied together their sacramental life and their hope that is

exemplified in Mary, the patroness of the League.

The 15th of August was the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. As one of the great feasts of the church, when it falls on a Sunday the texts for the solemnity replace the usual readings and prayers at mass. That happened this year.

This is an unusual year in another sense, too. In year B of the three-year cycle for Sunday readings, Catholics set aside the Gospel of Mark for five Sundays to hear the sixth chapter of John's gospel. In this famous discourse on the bread of life, Jesus gradually unveils His greatest gift, the holy Eucharist.

On the Sunday before August 15th, Catholics heard the Lord say, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh" (Jn 6:51).

If August 15th were not a Sunday this year, the gospel for the day would be the continuation of John's sixth chapter. In the passage Catholics did not read this year, Jesus says, "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day" (Jn 6:54).

The feast of Our Lady "interrupted" the usual cycle of Sunday readings, but in a wonderful way it also illuminated the words of Jesus in John's gospel. The mystery of Mary's assumption body and soul into heaven is a sign of hope for the future and the fulfilment of the Lord's words, "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day" (*ibid*).

As she was conceived immaculate, Mary was preserved from sin from the first moment of her existence through the merits of her Son. That meant she was also preserved from the effect of original sin, which is death as people experience it now. For Mary, physical death was the moment of "resurrection of the body and life everlasting."

It is wonderful to contemplate Our Lady sharing in the mass in the days after Pentecost as the apostles obeyed Christ's command, "Do this in memory of Me." She who was always united to God must have experienced holy communion in a way beyond imagine.

As members persevere in efforts to live their baptismal vocation, both as individuals and together in the League, God nourishes them with His word and His Son's body, blood, soul and divinity in the holy Eucharist, in anticipation of their own personal resurrection to Easter life forever. Through this greatest gift Jesus draws Catholics into communion in His life and mission and the sacramental life strengthens them to take their part in building the kingdom.

Mary's assumption reveals what God will do for all, the "great sign" of His providential design for the future (Rev 12:1). Members turn to her with confidence to ask her intercession for the future of the League. †

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 100TH AND 101ST NATIONAL ANNUAL MEETINGS OF MEMBERS
Cecile Miller, Life Member and Guest Journalist**

Praise and thank God from whom all blessings flow!

In preparing for this role of guest journalist, I was reminded of something I learned in the Christopher Leadership Course—the five "Ps"—"Prior Preparation Prevents Poor Presentation." Add "prayer" and as National President Anne-Marie Gorman quoted from Julian of Norwich, "All will be well. All will be well." And so it was.

I will not attempt to relate all the prior preparation, but suffice to say, there was an abundance of it. From the selection of the platform (GoToWebinar) for the national annual meetings of members (AMMs), the organizing of all the intricate details of running not one but two annual meetings and planning for all the necessary technical support, etc., all was orchestrated well in advance and fine-tuned with a choice of three training sessions for the voting delegates and three for all the other attendees.

The first session on Monday began with an opening prayer. At 8:40 a.m. (CDT), 6:40 a.m. on the west coast and 10:40 or 11:10 a.m. in the east, madam president, from her home in New Brunswick, called the 100th AMM to order and welcomed all registered members from coast to coast to coast, as well as one from the United States.

Madam president gave a few opening remarks and thanked the members for their presence. National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Stephen Jensen (Prince George), in his opening remarks, reminded all that many precedents had been set in 2019 as well as many opportunities to use technology which God's gifts made possible. He wished all a great experience. Archbishop of Quebec and Primate of Canada Gerald Cardinal Lacroix said he was "honoured to greet members of the Catholic Women's League." He noted the Olympics in Tokyo had ended the previous day, and that members' persevering commitment in everyday life is worth more than gold. He encouraged all to be protectors of creation, one another and the environment and asked members to renew their spirit of service, ending his remarks with, "May you continue to be a great blessing to our country."

Anne-Marie acknowledged the presence of many members of the hierarchy and introduced the national executive/board. She then acknowledged the honorary life members. As each executive and honorary life member was named, her picture was shown for all to see.

National Secretary-Treasurer Janet McLean read the notice calling the meeting. This was followed by the credentials report. There were 97 voting and accredited delegates registered. A motion was made to accept the report. What followed was a slight problem with the use of the icon for virtually raising and lowering one's hand. The icon to be clicked showed a hand with an arrow. If the arrow was green and the arrow was up, that meant that the member's hand was down. If the arrow was red and pointing down, that meant her hand was up. It was a bit confusing, but after a few motions, this was no longer a problem.

National Past President Margaret Ann Jacobs read the standing rules, and on motion they were adopted. The approval of the agenda followed.

The next item on the agenda was the national president's detailed and comprehensive report of activities for 2020.

Deferred decisions such as the one necessary regarding the 2020 annual general meeting were ratified and the minutes of the 2019 national convention were approved.

Janet gave the secretary-treasurer's report (2019) in which she made an impassioned plea for the acceptance of the proposed per capita fee increase.

Executive Secretary Amanda McCormick presented the registration report which showed 216 registered voting and accredited delegates, 295 members, 10 hierarchy and other clergy for a total of 522 registrants.

Immediately following the adjournment of the 2020 AMM, the recognition of the 26 new life members from 2020 and 2021 took place. It was a modified service with a PowerPoint presentation of a picture of each life member as her name was called.

Session one ended early, a further testament to the skill and expertise of all those involved in ensuring its smooth operation.

Following the lunch break, the afternoon session began with a prayer "In Praise of Nature" in keeping with the national theme *Care for Our Common Home*.

Madam president called the 2021 national annual meeting of members to order. Similar to the first session, there were opening remarks and the notice calling the meeting. The credentials report showed there were 139 voting and accredited delegates taking part in the deliberations. The standing rules were adopted, and the agenda was approved.

Janet read correspondence and reported on the pre-convention meeting stating that any matters to be considered would be addressed by the respective chairperson.

Each provincial president then gave her report, including the Military Ordinariate president who gave her report from her home in the United States. Madam president remarked on the great work that was accomplished in spite of the pandemic, and that all reports were very positive. She gave her report and so did Bishop Jensen. (These reports are included in this issue.)

The registration report, given by Data Entry Clerk Katrina Stratton, showed that there were 216 voting and accredited delegates, 10 hierarchy and 296 members registered.

Again, the meeting ended early with a closing prayer taken from *Together We Pray* by Carmen L. Caltagirone.

Tuesday, August 10th, the feast of St. Lawrence, deacon and martyr, began with Morning Prayer from *Shorter Christian Prayer*.

Following the credentials report which showed 150 voting and accredited delegates had signed on, reports from the board were delivered. Some of the key points included:

National Secretary-Treasurer Janet McLean

- Membership numbers steadily decline by about 4,000 per year.
- The vote on the per capita increase is to be submitted by March 2022.
- The estimated cost of the continued implementation of the strategic plan is close to \$1,000,000.

Executive Director Kim Scammell

- There were many difficulties keeping the office running effectively while dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- These challenges did not hinder the dedication and commitment of the office staff in completing tasks and keeping operations running smoothly.
- She introduced the “tech crew” that insured the AMMs ran as they should and in a timely manner: Amanda McCormick, Kerri Sylvester and Katrina Stratton.
- Also present at national office was parliamentarian Life Member Becky Kallal.

National First Vice-President and Chairperson of Spiritual Development Shari Guinta

- Annual National Day of Faith would be the third Sunday of September (September 19th this year).
- October 1st would be the National Day of Prayer for Canadian Home Missions
- Ecological rosary
- A member prayer calendar
- Contributions to Catholic Missions In Canada were \$21,175.

National President-Elect and Chairperson of Organization Fran Lucas

- Fran and the provincial presidents-elect developed the Executive Orientation for all levels of the League.
- Enhancements were made to the membership database. A number of them will be released in time for the new membership year this fall.
- Sixteen manuals were being updated.

National Chairperson of Christian Family Life Pat Deppiesse

- Check out the brochure *Annulments Today—Merciful and Just*
- Total contribution to the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition (EPC) was \$9,203. A motion was adopted to extend the temporary voluntary fund for EPC to July 31, 2022.

National Chairperson of Community Life Marie Rackley

- \$17,934 was raised in partnership with Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA). Another \$10,020 was donated specifically to support Christians in the Holy Land.
- \$11,985 was donated to Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.
- February 22nd is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day (Canada).
- September 21st is National Day of Prayer for Christians in the Holy Land.

National Chairperson of Education and Health Faith Anderson

- The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) will launch a palliative

care kit for parishes on November 21st. A motion was adopted to establish a temporary voluntary fund to support the cost of the kit.

- \$13,543 was donated to the Coady International Institute (Antigonish). A video was shown highlighting the League's monetary commitment to the institute and expressing the gratitude of the administration and students who benefitted. Honorary Life Member Irene LeFort was featured in the video. More than \$800,000 has been donated by members over the years!

National Chairperson of Communications
Doreen Gowans

- *The Catholic Register* will be producing a special edition in celebration of the League's 100th anniversary.
- A team has been chosen to review the national website under the guidance of the new chairperson of communications.

National Chairperson of Resolutions Cathy Bouchard

- Suggested setting aside 15 minutes of each general meeting for letter writing and inviting members of parliament/legislative assemblies to speak to parish councils.

National Chairperson of Legislation Betty Colaneri

- Chairpersons of legislation were invited by Betty to become "CWL Special Agents T.A.G. (tracking actions of government)".
- Betty noted the royal assent of Bill C-7 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)* "will not deter our ongoing diligent fight for palliative care as the dignified choice."

National Past President and Chairperson of Laws Margaret Ann Jacobs

- The 100th anniversary special edition of *The Canadian League* was published.
- There have been many changes in the League and many, many more are on the horizon.

National President and Chairperson of International Relations Anne-Marie Gorman

- Anne-Marie was unable to travel to any meetings of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) but attended virtually three webinars hosted by WUCWO.

The complete reports of these hard-working chairpersons can be found in this issue of *The Canadian League*.

Chairperson of the Centenary Committee Betty Colaneri reported that when members were asked to plant a tree for the League's centenary, she had hoped for 100 trees to be planted. So far, at least 327 trees have been planted, and noted that it is not too late to plant one if councils had not done so already. She announced The Gratitude Project (Generosity, Resilience, Amazing, Time and Talent, Inspiration, Thanks, Understanding, Dedication and Exceptional, all anchored in faith) which will run through 2021 to July 2022. Betty asked members to extend gratitude to all who helped their community in any way during the pandemic. There is a postcard and more information on the national website (cwl.ca).

The prayer to end the morning's session was the League Prayer.

Session three of the 2021 AMM began at 1:00 p.m. (CDT) with a ceremony to archive resolutions.

B.C. & Yukon Provincial President Sharon Geiger and Life Member Nancy Simms, proudly wearing their pashminas (wrapped in the arms of Mary), the convention fundraiser, extended an invitation to all to attend the 2022 national convention in Kelowna next August. It will be the first time that Kelowna will host the national convention. They were very excited, especially to actually see and hug all who come!

The next item on the agenda was a presentation by the implementation committee. Life Member Sharon Ciebin, Lisa Henry, Life Member Jacqueline Nogier and Sr. Susan Scott enthusiastically shared what has been accomplished and what is planned for the future

of the five-year strategic plan. The progress of some of their work hinges on the results of the proposed instructed votes, such as the reduction of standing committees from eight to three, streamlining of all levels of the League and simplifying procedures and reporting. A guide was completed, nine video vignettes were developed, and an Instagram account was opened. Much work was done on the principles of Catholic social teaching. Some of the toolkits, workshops and resources to watch for include:

- Seventeen copyright free prayers/programs, workshops will be ready this fall.
- Three ready-made adaptable toolkits and two projects on faith, service and social justice will be available this winter.
- Resources for well-balanced meetings will be ready in December.
- National Day of Faith mentioned earlier in this report will take place on September 19th.
- Embracing Diversity: Tools for Council Use is available online.

Fran Lucas announced the national theme for January 2022 to December 2023 as *Catholic and Living It!*

The second last item on the agenda was the approval of the minutes of the 2020 national annual meeting of members (held the previous day!). All registered members had been sent the minutes by e-mail.

The registration report showed that 513 had registered for the 2021 national annual meeting of members.

The prayer service to remember deceased members and spiritual advisors was held virtually and was well done. As the name of each provincial council was read, a hand placed a red rose in a vase to commemorate deceased members and lastly, a white rose was placed to honour the spiritual advisors who had passed away.

Before the meeting adjourned, the national election was held. Again, the whole process was well orchestrated with National Past President Margaret Ann Jacobs conducting the elections. Eleven candidates had let their names stand, and

all positions were filled. The installation took place immediately, all virtually. Newly elected National President Fran Lucas will receive her president's pin, and immediate National Past President Anne-Marie Gorman will receive hers when the board is once again able to meet in person!

Bishop Jensen celebrated the closing mass in Prince George.

The 2020 and 2021 national annual meetings of members have been adjourned and what can be said about them? There was an absence of pomp and pageantry usually associated with the closing mass, no sound of 800 plus members raising their voices in song at the Eucharistic celebrations, no hugging or greeting friends, no long waits at the airport, no lost luggage, no jet lag, no feasting—BUT there was prayer, “seeing” members virtually, organization down to the last detail, a wonderful feeling of pride in all that was accomplished over the past two years, a spirit of fellowship among participants, and a deep appreciation for all those who wisely took pains (and a lot of hard work and effort) to not only organize but to see that these meetings ran smoothly from start to finish. These meetings were not the regular national conventions, but they certainly came in a very close second. So, begin The Gratitude Project with a big thank you to God for all the gifts which were used to bring about this success and to all who played major and minor roles, using all their God-given time and talent in the process. Yes, praise God from whom all blessings flow! †

ORAL REPORTS

National President Anne-Marie Gorman

Fredericton, New Brunswick

I have sat in the wheelhouse of this giant ship for a third year and marvel at the resilience of so large a boat full of hardworking women whose efforts have kept the ship afloat through fairly rough seas, while managing to navigate the waters with a high degree of poise and care, all the while retaining dignity. It was not easy. “For whatever was written in former days was written

for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.” (Romans 15:4)

It is quite common to conclude a president’s term by giving a travelogue of the places she’s been and the people she’s encountered with a sprinkling of the most pressing issues of the year. I believe God’s plan was much more pertinent to the theme of *Care for Our Common Home* than mine. The pandemic has kept us home, given us many opportunities to reflect on our lives, our spiritual underpinnings, and showed us that this is still most definitely God’s world.

As I reviewed my notebooks from January until this week, I saw that there were more letters, meetings, questions requiring thoughtful consideration and answers. Interactions with presidents allowed me to see how the provincial councils were bolstered by the creativity, tenacity and inability to allow adversity to keep them away from their membership. Inclusion was an integral part of the year. Technology, of which I am at best a neophyte, and while acknowledging that it uses the earth’s resources too, made it possible to keep the lines of communication open and business conducted.

While I didn’t physically travel, I was able to attend two Ottawa development days, WUCWO Day, a webinar on *Laudato Si’*, and Toronto Development Day with a TED talk by Pope Francis. In February, the organization was learning that councils already were making plans to celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21st. I virtually attended webinars on Bill C-7 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)*, three on palliative care, two hosted by the de Veber Institute and one by Clinical Nurse Specialist Simone Stenekes, a CWL centenary committee meeting, table officers’ meeting, winter board teleconference, and a Lenten Retreat with Dr. Anne Jamieson.

Four webinars for national executive/board education began in April and concluded in June, with thanks to presenters from the steering

committee, honorary life members Barbara Dowding, Margaret Ann Jacobs and Danielle McNeil-Hessian, former provincial presidents Pauline Krupa (2015-2017) and Ingrid Lefort (2015-2017), former Vancouver Diocesan President Roxanne MacDonald (2015-2017) and I, all under the organization of Kim Scammell. I had a Zoom chat with Archbishop Christian Lepine (Montreal), chairperson of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops’ newly initiated standing committee for life and family; a governance forum hosted by the Canadian Society of Association Executives led by Dr. David Weiss; 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care with Thunder Bay Diocesan Council; Dr. Josephine Lombardi’s film, *The First Lady and Her Successors*; Arise, Shine! The Ingathering of the Dispersed in a Post-Pandemic World; DirectVoteLive training; a North Bay, Ontario regional event, “Hope will See Us Through” with Sr. Linda MacIsaac; Toronto Diocesan Council’s 100th anniversary celebration; national bursary committee meeting; and virtual provincial annual meetings for New Brunswick, B.C. & Yukon, and Ontario. The aforementioned are just some of the events and activities from the ship’s logbook on the journey.

The ship changed course on more than one occasion in order to get to a port where members would be able to greet and hear about the voyage. A decision to hold partially virtual annual meetings of members was made only on April 13th, what we call “Plan C”, after consultation with all presidents and ship’s officers. When the wind changed, the boat made adjustments. In the reports, you will read of the many adaptations made, which will demonstrate that this huge ship is in good hands. Sturdy and competent, shipshape, though slightly battered, as captain I know that the Good Lord was steering this ship right along with me on a course that, as Bellelle Guerin said, “... will [continue to] arise fair and beautiful, strong and proud,” but only with all my shipmates having courage and keeping the faith. ✚

National Spiritual Advisor
Bishop Stephen Jensen
Prince George, British Columbia

This past year, we experienced restrictions of all kinds on travel and in person gathering brought on by the global COVID-19 pandemic. So much of the League's activities at the national level were curtailed.

Nevertheless, some undertakings were possible, and I'll mention just three things. In September last year, I gave her an online presentation to about 500 members of the League on the topic "Women in Mission."

In this past year, I wrote articles for the fall, winter and spring, the issues of *The Canadian League* magazine, and like the rest of the members of the national executive/board, I attended the fall, winter and spring meetings of the board, online, rather than in person.

I am looking forward to actually being together with leadership soon, and that is my short report for the last year. †

National Secretary-Treasurer
Janet McLean
Dorval, Quebec

Members are an amazing group of women! Despite the COVID-19 pandemic which has turned our world upside down, secretaries and treasurers continued to be of service to their councils. Whether this meant taking notes during online meetings, writing handwritten letters to keep in touch with isolated members, or collecting and remitting council membership fees, I was truly impressed by their efforts.

Throughout 2021, the day-to-day duties required by the national secretary-treasurer were performed by Executive Secretary Amanda McCormick and Senior Accounting Clerk Valroy Anderson, despite the fact they were required to work at home until recently. They do an outstanding job to keep things running smoothly. I worked closely with Executive Director Kim Scammell on financial and investment matters, and particularly on the budget for 2021, which was presented to and

approved by the national executive/board at the fall 2020 online board meeting. During the budget preparation, it was evident that a national per capita fee increase would be necessary to maintain the League's financial viability in the coming years. League revenue has dropped yearly as membership numbers have steadily declined by about 4,000 annually.

While various cost-cutting measures have been implemented and price increases for some services have taken place, rising costs, including the projected costs for the implementation of the strategic plan in the next three years, could not be met without serious cuts in services or an increase in the per capita fee. In fact, my oral report at the 2019 annual national convention indicated it was increasingly difficult to meet current costs with a \$13.00 national per capita fee. Set in 2012, by 2019, it only had the purchasing power of \$11.34.

A motion to increase the national per capita fee by \$12.00 was discussed and agreed to by the national board in November 2020. Originally, it was expected that the instructed vote on this motion would take place in 2021 so that it would be voted on at this 101st national annual meeting of members. However, the worsening of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to make in-person parish council meetings impossible, so the period to hold the instructed vote on the motion was extended until March 2022. This means the motion will only come to the August 2022 national annual meeting of members and, if adopted, the new per capita fee would be effective for the 2023 membership year. If your parish council has not yet conducted its instructed vote, you still have plenty of time to do so, and I would urge you to approve the increase.

In 2021 I reviewed monthly investment and financial statements, and I thoroughly reviewed the 2020 audit papers and 2020 audited financial statements prepared by Scarrow & Donald before presenting them to the national board at the March 2021 online teleconference for review and approval. Revenues amounted to \$1,112,467 and expenditures were \$1,153,345, which left an

excess of expenditures over revenues of \$40,878. Investment income of \$180,082 left revenues over expenditures of \$139,204. However, it should be noted that the investment income included an unrealized gain on investments of \$152,375, so the actual net cash received was \$27,707.

Major discrepancies in 2020 as compared to the budget are the following. Membership fees were \$22,659 below budget. Income from product sales and the corresponding expenditure for product sales were down as most councils were inactive for nine months of the year, so few supplies were ordered. There was no convention registration revenue and only minimal convention costs. Parish councils were required to pay for general liability insurance, so \$36,018 was generated to offset the insurance expenditure of \$43,198. Miscellaneous revenue of \$47,838 was received in government assistance because of the pandemic. League development of \$197,788, including \$166,875 for strategic planning, was well below budget as expected major marketing expenses were not incurred. Also, promotional and development fund expenses were down. National executive expenses of \$38,950 were well below budget as only one national board meeting was held in person; all other meetings were held virtually. Other national executive expenses were also minimal because of the pandemic. While the net financial results for 2020 look good, it was not a normal year!

For the six-month period ending June 30, 2021, per capita fees of \$793,585 represents 61,045 memberships with 59,902 being for 2021. Product sales are still down, but it is hoped that these will increase if councils can return to some semblance of normal in the fall. The \$12,065 shown in bursary donations includes a \$10,000 bequest from the estate of Life Member Georgina Bourque. Miscellaneous revenue is a Manitoba back-to-work grant. Under expenditures, League development of \$62,126 is considerably below budget at the moment; however, the board expects to pay approximately \$240,000 in the coming months

for implementation of the strategic plan. Other expected League development costs include payment of the bursaries awarded, promotional and development fund expenses, and expenses for training webinars. For the six-month period, net revenue exceeds net expenditures by \$319,377. However, at year end it is more likely that expenditures from operations will exceed revenues by approximately \$100,000 to \$150,000.

If a balanced budget is required for 2022, serious cuts and/or price increases will be required. The national executive/board is at a crucial stage in the implementation of the strategic plan and the estimated cost for its continued implementation is close to \$1,000,000 over the next three years. One way to obtain funds (other than keeping all current members and adding another 20,000-30,000 more) is to sell investments to realize some of the gains shown on the books. This will provide immediate access to cash, but it will also erode future investment income. This is why the per capita increase is so vital. An increase in the per capita fee in 2023 will provide the financial stability the League needs to go forward. †

Executive Director

Kim Scammell

Winnipeg, Manitoba

What a change two years can make! In 2019 when I last reported to national council, we were all able to gather in convention in Calgary. Meeting in person in convention is truly a League experience like no other, and we all surely miss the opportunity to become reacquainted. This year, without a capable and enthusiastic local committee to steer the way, much of the planning has been done by the office. From the choice of meeting platform to the choice of voting software to how the proceedings will occur, the staff have discussed and deliberated the best way to have you, the members, able to participate, while still running an efficient meeting that would avoid the strain of sitting in front of a device for extended days. Much of what would normally occur during the processing has been modified and shortened.

The physical office was very quiet in the first six months of the year. From January 1st until June 28th, the Province of Manitoba had restrictions in place against gathering, even in the workplace. Where employees could work from home, employers were instructed to have them do so. The five full-time staff each visited the office on a designated day of the week, but never did they visit the office together. When there, staff would drop off completed work, pick up new work, follow up on inquiries made where the information was stored in the office, mail out supply orders and other mailings, and use the equipment we could not access from home, such as the postage meter. It was not the best situation for staff to be in, but it was what was expected.

I am quite proud to share with you that, despite the lack of conveniences and ability to collaborate, League staff did an amazing job of keeping up with work, as the work did not slow down anywhere, except for the order department.

Executive Secretary Amanda McCormick added to her regular duties the roles of social media manager in training, webinar host and moderator, and assistant to workshop development and task forces assigned to develop and review documentation.

Accounting Clerk Valroy Anderson continued to manage the payments and payables as the need to pay the rent and utilities, and provide per capita allotments to provincial and diocesan councils did not cease. Nor did the important role of reconciling accounts and managing the deposits.

Membership Coordinator Katherine Choi processed all memberships by the middle of May as is ideal in any normal year without an office disruption. A proficient coordinator can process 400 memberships per day and Katherine achieved this, all the while responding to members by telephone 1,184 times and by e-mail 5,370 times in a six month period.

Office Assistant Marion Wong ably managed the switchboard from her home office, managing 2,854 telephone calls and the personal follow up

that each required. She also coordinated a number of mailings, updated executive and committee lists and, time permitting, assisted members with archival inquiries.

Assisting me, Amanda, Valroy, Katherine and Marion, and who work on an as needed basis are Kerri Sylvester, Deborah Woodbeck and Katrina Stratton.

Kerri serves the implementation committee assisting with their various meetings and projects. There were ten working groups operating in the first part of the year and nine more were meeting to formulate their action plans.

Deborah was tasked with contacting new members by telephone to greet them and ask them how they learned about the League and what had caused them to join. In a non-pandemic situation, Deborah would be assisting Valroy with orders during his really busy periods and she would be providing switchboard relief in Marion's absence.

Our newest and youngest member, Katrina, added new members and processed notices, when not pursuing her education as a nurse.

Madam president, the office continued to be busy – there was no slowdown. And staff know they were definitely not alone! Members too were very active. Staff know this because it received almost 9,000 calls, thrice as many e-mails, and attended an unprecedented number of meetings. †

Spiritual Development

Shari Guinta

Waterloo, Ontario

The entire year was taken up with the COVID-19 pandemic and this made League work difficult throughout Canada with most councils unable to meet in person. But reports showed that there was creativity and ingenuity when it came to activities for members. Reporting was reduced, however. Although the pandemic made meeting in person impossible, it was still a busy year for me.

Prayer services for the national administrative committee and online national executive/board meetings were created with the parish, the ill and clergy in mind. I prepared and sent five communiques during 2021—many focusing on the Holy Father's intentions. I also prepared articles for *The Canadian League* magazine.

Some creative and touching activities were held throughout Canada, including planting trees to celebrate the 100th birthday of the League with special prayers and blessings.

- A spiritual bouquet was collected and sent to all life members in one province.
- Links from provincial councils for online adoration, rosary, divine mercy chaplet, stations of the cross and Eucharistic celebration involving members and spiritual advisors were shared.
- Those that could attend in person, gathered at mass and others watched online.
- For those that met in person, spiritual advisors attended most meetings.

However, bible and scripture study, the rosary and other prayers were certainly popular.

Resources from the CCCB were used especially regarding Bill C-7 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)* and action to be taken by members. Bishop Jensen was mentioned as some councils used and discussed his recorded online webinar *Women in Mission*. Various online resources were mentioned and the study of *Deus Caritas Est* was one of them.

Councils across the country continued to study *Laudato Si'* and *Care for Our Common Home* and one province reported hosting an ecological rosary. The theme prayer seemed very popular across the country.

Women continue to be involved in their parish and diocese and serve on different boards and associations. We all rejoiced when Honorary Life Member Barbara Dowding from British Columbia was made chancellor of the Archdiocese of Vancouver!

Although varied and creative webinars and workshops were offered, there were remarks regarding the need for training and development.

Pope Francis announced officially through the wording of Canon Law that "laymen" had changed to "lay persons," allowing for official transition for women to proclaim the word and participate in liturgical celebrations throughout the church.

Councils throughout the country continued to support missions. The permanent voluntary fund for Catholic Missions In Canada (CMIC) was supported and articles from the CMIC magazine were read and shared. This year's donation to CMIC is \$21,175.46. Esk-Omi Missions, Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, Catholic Near East Welfare Association, Haiti Missions, missions for the Dominican Republic and the League's National Day of Prayer for Canadian Home Missions were supported.

I am pleased to announce that an annual CWL Day of Faith has been approved for the third Sunday of September each year. This year, the date is September 19th.

Members actively participated in choirs and pastoral councils, as lectors, Eucharistic ministers, ministers of hospitality, finance council members and catechists, in liturgy committees, lay religious boards, prison ministries, shut-in/nursing home ministries, and much more.

Support for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was mentioned often as was Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada and World Day of Prayer. Fellowship of the Least Coin was also substantially supported. Life Chain and interchurch faith activities in support of life were participated in along with prayer vigils. Three unique activities reported from Saskatchewan were:

- attended a Jewish synagogue with the archbishop and a Jewish rabbi
- arranged and attended a blanket ceremony and an Indigenous awareness ceremony
- toured a Muslim mosque and participated in an information tour

Practical and inspirational material received from provincial and national chairpersons and

information on the national website was important.

The pandemic has underlined and spotlighted the fact that members need to keep in touch. It has been a lonely time for many. Not everyone has a computer and mail and telephone calls are still good ways to keep in touch. It was a challenge to reach out to members in new (and old) ways to keep in touch.

Workshops, training, information on preparing workshops and liturgy study were suggested, as was an activity calendar, outlining events throughout the year. A member prayer calendar, where members' names are put on a calendar and the rest of the council prays for them specifically on that day was also suggested. ✝

Organization

Fran Lucas

Edmonton, Alberta

I believe the League of the past months could make for a blockbuster movie! You would all be part of the cast and you each would have your story to add to it. But what genre would you suggest it fall under, comedy, action, sci-fi, animation, drama, family, fantasy, history, horror, mystery or romance? Perhaps a thriller! I personally think it would be a new classification—a mixture of several of these!

The year 2021 began as a continuation of the same things that had happened in 2020. Annual survey reports were summarized, noting a participation rate of 52% by parish councils, down from last year's 68%. We persist and will do it again with further changes to the questions for this year.

My role as liaison between the national executive/board and implementation committee continued, during which time I observed even more of a thrust on work being completed by the working groups. To hear the members' passion and see their desire to deliver only the best products possible was uplifting.

Six months of work with the provincial presidents-elect on an executive orientation for all levels was completed and placed on the

national website on June 14th. Please, everyone—council executives and members—spend time on the 10 individual modules and introduction module that explains the reason for and use of the modules. I think you will be blown away by the depth and detail of the content. The provincial presidents-elect would not settle for only a PowerPoint version of the material; they also chose to provide each module as a recorded delivery! During the pandemic, the months spent in meetings, on e-mails and telephone calls with the provincial presidents-elect was my number one highlight; my second was the June 14th release date. These members have much to be proud of.

Councils have found creative ways to stay in touch with members. One of my favourites is the picking of daffodils, then picking strawberries, and then raspberries by a council in Abbotsford, British Columbia, all of which were fundraisers for them.

Again this year, membership numbers are down. Enhancements are happening on the membership database and a number of them will be released in time for the new membership year this fall.

The "Join" page on the national website now includes a letter generated and sent to the respective diocesan president-elect each time a potential member in her diocese shows interest. The letter includes information on the potential new member and provides direction for the parish council's organization chairperson, along with follow-up for the provincial and national organization chairpersons. Sadly, these steps are not being followed and potential members are lost.

National Life Member Liaison Ann Doucet continued to fulfill her role with informative communiques. Most recently Ann has been securing biographies and photographs of the nine newest life members, which will be included in the fall issue of *The Canadian League*.

Chairing the manuals task force has allowed for close work with National Secretary-Treasurer

Janet McLean, National Chairperson of Resolutions Cathy Bouchard, provincial presidents Judy Look and Rosa Lam, and Life Member Becky Kallal. We have each had “ah-ha” moments as we were faced with writing very clear instruction while we reviewed processes we use infrequently. Sixteen manuals are involved in this process, with the majority near completion.

As time permitted, I discerned on the theme for 2022. This third year, or as I call it “my bonus year,” in this position was a chance to get to really know many members through the working groups, task force committee work and virtual meetings. To delve into old and new areas of the League and observe the skills, knowledge and deep love of the League these members have and share was an affirmation of what the League really is. †

Christian Family Life

Pat Deppiess

North Vancouver, British Columbia

As said in my annual report, Charles Dickens wrote in the first line of his book *A Tale of Two Cities*, “it was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” It seems to me these words are certainly applicable for this past half year with the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Christian family life standing committee touches the lives of everyone: pre-born, youth, disabled, single, married, divorced, seniors, widowed, the elderly, the dying and also religious vocations. Members’ vocation is “to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service”. I am sure every member has done some work covered under this committee during their years of membership.

The League is a pro-life organization and has a beautiful pro-life brochure that outlines the many ways members can be involved in life issues. Councils are encouraged to order one for each member from the national office. Hopefully, as councils get back to normal, members can once again attend the various marches for life across the country to demonstrate support of life at all stages.

We empathize with those suffering because of failed relationships—women who are separated and divorced. Again, the League has a brochure, *Annulments Today—Merciful and Just*. Members need to see the face of Jesus in each wounded soul, offering them understanding and compassion. Please order these brochures from national office and put them in the women’s washroom at the church and make them available in the vestibules. Let us continue our work towards eradicating all violence towards women.

I hope all councils will participate in LifeCanada’s Dying Healed program that trains volunteers in how to reach out to the sick and dying, especially at the end of life when people may be lonely and vulnerable. Even in this time of pandemic, the League managed to collect \$9,203 through the temporary national voluntary fund for Euthanasia Prevention Coalition.

I urge you to become the change that you wish to see in the world and leave you with a quote from Pope Francis from *The Joy of the Gospel*. “Going out to the fringes of humanity does not mean rushing out aimlessly into the world. Often it is better simply to slow down, to put aside our eagerness in order to see and listen to others, to stop rushing from one thing to another and to remain with someone who has faltered along the way.” †

Community Life

Marie Rackley

Saint John, New Brunswick

The community life standing committee has continued to shine in 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic did not dampen the spirit of members for they continued to serve their communities within Canada and support those overseas.

I am happy to report the League, through its permanent national voluntary fund, will send \$10,020 in August to the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, which will support the Holy Land projects. A cumulative total of \$42,957 was collected from parish councils for the *Care for Our Common Home* project, designated for well repair in India and a school

lunch program in Ethiopia. The League's National Day of Prayer for Christians in the Holy Land will continue to be celebrated each year on September 21st.

On February 12, 2021, a press release stated that for three years, the All-Party Parliamentary Group to end Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking has tabled motions urging parliament to recognize February 22nd as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day.

I am pleased to report that the League's partnership with the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace is strong and that the monies received in the voluntary fund from July 2020 to June 2021 of \$11,985 will be sent following the national annual meeting of members. †

Education and Health

Faith Anderson

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Having completed my third year as chairperson of education and health, this extra year has provided the opportunity to explore new challenges such as having virtual meetings with my provincial counterparts.

Another opportunity was the ability to offer a webinar on palliative care. A *Practical Discussion about Palliative Care* webinar was presented on May 8th and drew 684 attendees. Over 200 comments were received requesting information on Catholic resources. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) has been working on developing a palliative care kit for parishes to be launched on November 21st. The kit includes videos, resources and links and will be available on the CCCB website for downloading.

Councils recognized National Hospice and Palliative Care Week by utilizing the 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care kit. While some councils had members pray in their homes, others organized a virtual event. Thank you and kudos to all councils for taking the time to pray and learn more about palliative care. As Catholics, we are mindful of our beliefs and recognize the need to respect life from

conception to natural death. The palliative care postcard is a good tool to inform the federal government of your concerns.

To recognize the 100th anniversary of the League and its over \$800,000 in donations, Coady International Institute has produced two videos with testimonies from women who have graduated from the Diploma in Developmental Leadership Program. I am pleased to share that \$13,543 collected from councils to June 30th, will be provided to the institute to help women with leadership opportunities. It is wonderful to see that even in very difficult times members have continued to provide monetary assistance to the valuable organizations that the League supports.

The national bursary committee was pleased to award bursaries to six applicants in the total amount of \$5,500. The qualified areas were youth ministry, ministry to patients in palliative care and adult formation, including one applicant from the Catholic Women's Leadership Foundation program. Donations from councils and members to the National Bursary Fund of \$6,960 are gratefully acknowledged. The League received a generous legacy of \$10,000 from the late Life Member Georgina Bourke, which was ear-marked for the National Bursary Fund.

Some councils participated in the *Care for Our Common Home* initiative by planting trees, arranging clean-up of community areas, and eliminating plastic straws, plastic bags and Styrofoam. Since the release of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*, members have been reminded of the ongoing need to care for the planet. Throughout 2021 and 2022, the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform will be launched in stages to be comprised of three elements: *Laudato Si'* plans, practical guidance and community. More information is available at laudatosiactionplatform.org. †

Communications

Doreen Gowans

Kamloops, British Columbia

Communication has many changing faces. It all began when God created Adam and Eve and the snake encouraged Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. The Stone Age people wrote and drew pictures on the walls of their caves, and many years later we used Gestetners, typewriters, photocopiers, computers and much more to spread the good news of the Lord and the League.

Fortunately, we have been blessed to hold national conventions every year since the League's inception in 1920 until 1942 when then National President Mrs. J. A. McCabe had to convene her convention over the airwaves due to World War II. Now, instead of conventions, National President Anne-Marie Gorman had to virtually offer the Summer Speakers' Series in 2020 and the national annual meeting of members in 2021.

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, various means of communication had to change as members no longer could meet face to face. This provided councils with a challenge of how to communicate to members at all levels. Members learned various platforms such as GoToMeeting, webinars, Zoom conference calls, etc. They watched streamlined masses online and accessed spiritual broadcasts.

This was only because members have been in extremely unprecedented times. Now, priests are doing their part to gather their congregations back into the church pews. Members need to reclaim in-person meetings to actively participate in spirituality, education, joy and the fun League sisters offer when they meet in person.

In some cases, we as communicators may be considered the welcoming committee and therefore we may want to encourage councils to consider reestablishing the telephone tree or sending personal e-mail invitations to invite all members back to regular council meetings as soon as possible.

As a way to celebrate the 100th anniversary, *The Catholic Register* has offered to produce a special 26-page magazine in celebration of the occasion. Personal stories and interviews from members, councils and spiritual advisors were requested and received. Look forward to receiving this issue in September. Members who are not subscribers to *The Catholic Register* will have an opportunity to purchase copies for a cost of \$5.00 plus shipping and handling. Those who subscribe will receive a complimentary copy.

Following the national elections, a new national chairperson of communications will work with a team to review the League's website. Under her guidance, the team will be comprised of member of the marketing and communications working groups Lisa Fillingham, former national chairperson of communications and First Vice-President Shari Guinta and myself. Look for new and exciting things to come over the next year.



Resolutions

Cathy Bouchard

Red Deer, Alberta

“Sit with women who sit at the feet of Jesus. The conversations are different. You walk away feeling inspired not inferior because those are the women who know [that being a Catholic woman is a way of life] and not a competition” (Adarra Sherron). Members of the League who work together to create a resolution sit at the feet of Jesus. They are working together to follow God's will to make the world a better place for families, parishes and the larger world. They advocate for God's world of justice and peace here and now and for the future.

It has been a difficult year with the COVID-19 pandemic affecting much of the work of resolutions. While in other years the challenges for resolutions have been different, in this past year the main challenge was not being able to gather. Without being able to meet in person, members have not been able to bring concerns and potential issues to one another's attention. Even resolutions that were considered urgent were not able to be presented so that they could be debated and adopted. One of the rights of

membership is meeting in-person to question, probe and set positions through resolutions. Any resolutions that have been prepared will be deferred to 2022. Deferring resolutions that move through the different levels gives the opportunity to allow for the full participation of interested members.

Councils at all levels have made members aware of the issues addressed in resolutions through electronic meetings, e-mail or newsletters. Members continued to write to federal or provincial governments and sign petitions. Members were most passionate about palliative care, the quality of care in long-term-care homes, pro-life issues, gender identity, youth mental health, abuse of seniors and Canada's commitment to the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

This fall would be a good time to establish a resolutions committee to review and update resolutions that your council has been working on—review the wording of the resolution and the brief. Ensure the research links are still current.

Continue to work on preparing resolutions. Issues of concern in your parish, diocese, province or in the country can be a topic of a resolution. Previous topics of resolutions may need to be updated with newer information and references.

Contact elected members of government to let them know your concerns. Each member makes a difference by adding her “voice and support to this national sisterhood of Catholic women who promote awareness and respond to political and social issues that affect all Canadians”.

If you want to make a difference in the world and in the League, be part of creating resolutions. ✚

Legislation

Betty Colaneri

Niagara on the Lake, Ontario

As doors closed and businesses shut down to brace for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the legislation standing committee stood its ground. Legislation was the lighthouse

that guided Canadians in health and safety. To assist with the raging waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bill C-4 *An Act relating to certain measures in response to COVID-19*, Bill C-9 *An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy and Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy)*, Bill C-13 *An Act respecting certain measures in response to COVID-19 (COVID19 Emergency Response Act)*, Bill C-14 *A second Act respecting certain measures in response to COVID-19*, Bill C-15 *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and Bill C-24 *An Act to amend the Employment Insurance Act (additional regular benefits), the Canada Recovery Benefits Act (restriction on eligibility) and another Act in response to COVID-19* received royal assent.

While members looked for rays of hope, they spent more time working remotely. Though members could not gather facts, collect evidence or conduct interviews in person, they persevered with examining legislation, as well as taking a more in-depth look into government activities. Legislation chairpersons handled the restrictions by educating themselves on existing legislation and its impact on families, society, municipalities, provinces and country.

One bill that created a wave of concern and frustration was Bill C-7 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)*. Members rallied by contacting their local political representative with calls, letters and e-mails, as well as submitting petitions. Unfortunately, Bill C-7 received royal assent, but it will not deter members' diligent pursuit for palliative care as the dignified choice.

Advocacy was proudly on display for the respect and dignity for life at all stages as members spoke out for those in long-term-care homes. The horrific conditions in these homes led to greater participation and desire to become involved not only by members but the community at large. With great fervour, members sent e-mails and letters to their local members of parliament to express their deep

concern. They stressed the need for urgent and appropriate action to be taken.

Even though it was difficult, members turned their attention to using different social media platforms to keep members informed of pending bills, their progress and when to act in a timely manner.

This June 21st was commemorated with the royal assent of Bill C-8 *An Act to amend the Citizenship Act (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action number 94)*. "This enactment amends the *Citizenship Act* to include, in the Oath or Affirmation of Citizenship, a solemn promise to respect the Aboriginal and treaty rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples."

With stay-at-home orders in effect, the opportunity to catch up on new and old friendships was provided. As I sorted through the media information, I found a navigator I had developed a bond with unbeknownst to her. *CTV National News* with Lisa LaFlamme became my source for up-to-date information. One of the highlights was the historical moment when Mary Simon became the first Indigenous governor general of Canada.

At the beginning of our terms, national officers were to list their long-term goals. One of mine was updating the legislation workshop. It is now available for members to use as a PowerPoint presentation or an interactive workshop. Here is something that you probably thought you wouldn't hear: legislation in an interesting, interactive workshop!

I am a proud crew member on the fellowship of The Catholic Women's League of Canada with God as my captain and Jesus at the wheel. Members are my lifesavers. For whenever I felt my spirit sinking, there was a sister in the League to pull me up.

As my final act as national chairperson of legislation, I would like to reiterate, legislation—learning from the past, working for the present, improving the future. ✚

Laws

Margaret Ann Jacobs

Elmvale, Ontario

I am not a lawyer. I am not an archivist. I am not a historian. I am the national past president responsible for League archives and history and the interpretation of the *Constitution & Bylaws (C&B)*, while serving in a consultative capacity.

I have drawn extensively on the expertise of wise ones who have gone before me, the analytical, unbiased knowledge of the office staff, especially Executive Director Kim Scammell, as well as the perspectives of elected representatives from across the country. It has been a challenging as well as educational and rewarding experience serving you.

Much has transpired over this past term. Never before has there been such consultation required in the League with so many new and challenging issues. Monthly virtual administrative meetings became the norm. Requests for guidance and support increased phenomenally as councils responded to the pressures of organizing events and outreach in a pandemic world.

My term began with the adoption of *The Catholic Women's League of Canada Plans Strategically 2018-2022*. This set in motion required changes to the C&B. The national amendments committee composed of honorary life members Joan Chesser, Velma Harasen and Claire Heron, National President-Elect and Chairperson of Organization Fran Lucas and National President and Chairperson of International Relations Anne-Marie Gorman worked diligently with me to reflect the changes submitted by members and the implementation committee working groups for planning strategically. In response to input from you, the members, voting was delayed on these proposed changes until August 2022.

Fortunately, I was able to visit national office pre-pandemic to familiarize myself with the files as well as research information. I was also blessed to have access in my own files to the minutes, annual report books, *The Canadian League* magazines and more recent annual

report summaries to enable the update of League history. I am proud to present *Remembering, Respecting, Recognizing Our Past, History of The Catholic Women's League of Canada 2006-2020* in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the League in 2020. Each parish council will receive a copy in the fall parish mailing.

I regret that working visits to the national office by the archive committee were cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. I look forward to joining the new team as this monumental task of filing is renewed.

I urge past presidents at all levels to actively pursue the update of your histories as soon as you are allowed access to your League files. Too quickly the stories are lost and forgotten. A brochure outlining the archiving process was included in the past parish mailing and is also available on the national website.

I suggest that each member who steps into a role of leadership in the League has great plans for her term of office, plans for change, just as I did. What I have come to realize is that I did not change anything. It was I who changed. We need to remember that God is always in charge.

Are there challenges facing the League today? Definitely! But as I delved through the archives, read past League magazines and annual reports, I found that the basic issues facing the League in the past were not much different than what they are today.

I take consolation in a meditation from *Word Among Us* referencing how Abram put his faith in the Lord “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them” (Genesis 15.5). Abram had to gaze into the noontime sky with eyes of faith and believe that the stars were still there.

We must trust in the Lord even when we may not see how things will work out. The stars are still there even when the sun is shining. The League remains “a vital participant in the church; a valued partner for social justice; a respected advocate at all government levels and connected to the world.” It remains a bright star even in the noontime sun. Have faith. ✚

International Relations

Anne-Marie Gorman

Fredericton, New Brunswick

The League's connection to its sister organizations around the world is through close association with the World Union of Women's Organisations (WUCWO), of which Canada is one of 50 countries in all continents and one of 94 member organizations. In Canada, there are two member organizations, the League and the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada. Marusia Kobrynski as North American vice-president sits on the board of WUCWO. It is encouraging to note also that WUCWO is working with five other organizations that it is hopeful will join by the general assembly to be held in Assisi, Italy in 2023.

While I was unable to attend any meetings this year, in person, WUCWO hosted several webinars for women around the world of which I attended virtually:

- webinar on *Laudato Si'* guided by Fr. Joshrom Isaac Kureethadam of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development
- WUCWO Day celebration with a farewell to pontifical assistant Fr. Gerard Whelan, SJ
- webinar entitled *Women in the Church*, facilitated by Sr. Nathalie Bacquart

WUCWO President General Maria Lia Zervino asks for prayers for the cause of canonization of Pilar Bellosillo, who was president general of WUCWO from 1961-1974. You may find the prayer on the WUCWO website, wucwo.org.

Religions for Peace, organized since 1971, hosted virtual sessions in 2021 and I was able to register for one event. ✚

Alberta Mackenzie

Judy Look

Calgary, Alberta

Since June 2019, Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council has embraced the national theme *Care for Our Common Home*. The provincial theme, *Building Relationships and Effecting Change*, is rooted in three cups of tea—a strategy for

building relationships and accomplishing work around the executive table. The first cup is the idea, the second cup is taking the time to mull the idea, and the third cup is embracing the idea.

When the provincial executive began its two-year tenure, which magically turned into three, it created a provincial focus for Alberta and the Northwest Territories to connect with Catholic partners in education, health, the sanctity of life and the Indigenous community for the purpose of having a strong Catholic voice. Strides were made on three fronts, and it was hoped to make some inroads with Indigenous people at the provincial convention that was to be held in Lac La Biche on June 5, 2020.

COVID-19 had other ideas. All cups of tea were removed from the table—except COVID-19—and all councils in Alberta and the Northwest Territories were thrust into flux. It became impossible to make plans as things were shutting down. Then another cup appeared on the table—a lifeline called virtual meetings. Executives and councils took the opportunity to be involved in retreats, governance workshops, implementation working groups and regular council meetings. The executives at all levels worked overtime, trying to stay connected with their sisters with the result of COVID fatigue.

It was recognized that all members were craving the physical touch of their sisters and were becoming frustrated with the lack of personal engagement. COVID-19 being a killer then initiated the murmurings of, “Why be a member if you cannot get together?” The question had to be addressed. Changing COVID into an acronym for “Catholic Organization of Vitality, Inspiration and Dedication,” members were reminded that through their work, women in developing countries had a voice through the World Union of Catholic Women’s Organisations (WUWCO), Canadian politicians at all levels were challenged to acknowledge there is a “culture of life,” and council work gave visibility to the poor. They were reminded being a member is a privilege, a gift and a calling. It is a privilege because it comes from baptism, a twofold gift as members become part of a

sisterhood, and the League thrives because of the giftedness of its members and a calling. We are not members by chance. God wants to help bring His presence to the world. Instead of mourning physical touch, members were encouraged to embrace breakout rooms as an opportunity to interact and to meet ladies beyond their own councils. They found praying the Alberta Mackenzie weekly rosary a source of strength and comfort.

All five diocesan councils had successful virtual annual meetings of members, and their reports indicated that the work had not stopped. Yes, there were some councils that had not met, and some councils had disbanded. Still, most were weathering the storm. They looked forward to the fall when they would be able to meet in person, start to implement the Welcome Program, continue to develop the three pillars of faith, service and social justice, and join once more in prayer to celebrate the importance of the organization.

Executives are being asked to place on the top of their agendas the letters “AMDG,” a Latin acronym for “all for the honour and glory of God” and refer to it during meetings: to remind them of what the League is about; to have a study time for the planning strategically document so as to educate members about the organization; to adopt a baby in danger of abortion by naming the child and praying for him or her daily as prayer is the only weapon against abortion; to study Pope Francis’ encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* and make it part of their spiritual program; to learn about Indigenous peoples; and to be grateful—grateful for being a member, for the opportunity to serve, for the sisterhood, for being called to build the kingdom of God, and that God loves us and wants us to be His face in our world. ✚

B.C. & Yukon

Sharon Geiger

Salmon Arm, British Columbia

As your newly elected president of B.C. & Yukon Provincial Council, it is my delight and honour to represent and report on its 126 councils containing close to 8,120 members.

Two of the six diocesan councils had elections, with mostly full executives being elected.

What a year this has been. The provincial executive was lucky to have met in person for the spring meeting in March 2020. On the last day of the meeting, the COVID-19 situation was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. “This will be over pretty soon,” executive members thought and made plans for the provincial convention in Vernon. Little did we know how the year would turn out.

Like other councils, the provincial executive became “techies” and learned to hold virtual meetings. In one diocesan report, a president stated, “Who would have known that we needed to dress like gangsters to go and buy groceries. The presentation of life membership to Sharon Ciebin was filmed and shown at the diocesan annual meeting of members. Members became innovative. Members in remote areas benefitted from “Zoom” meetings by feeling more connected.

Two diocesan presidents created PowerPoints on the Welcome Program and an explanation of the amendments. One diocesan executive composed a *Traditional Catholic Prayer Book*, which can be accessed on the provincial website. Many more newsletters were established to keep councils connected and informed. The provincial past president was asked by the March for Life committee for a two-minute video to promote CWL actions on pro-life issues. This was a learning experience for her.

Since Pope Francis dedicated 2021 to St. Joseph, the provincial chairperson of spiritual development invited all B.C. & Yukon members to a St. Joseph contest. Participation was great, with prizes awarded.

Because of the cancellation of the provincial convention, there were excess funds which were refunded by returning one-half of the provincial per capita fee to the six diocesan councils. A provincial incentive to the next national convention in Kelowna is being planned. The planning committee is working hard for an exceptional convention. †

Manitoba

Janet Brunger

Rosser, Manitoba

League sisters have continued to demonstrate their caring and concern for each other through these trying times by reaching out via telephone and e-mail and in their prayers for those in need.

Earlier this year, members embraced the opportunity to participate in two virtual presentations in lieu of an in-person Day of Celebration due to the pandemic lockdown in Manitoba. The first presentation was hosted by Tim Killoran of Catholic Christian Outreach, speaking on the power of prayer. He touched on how prayer can help others, how prayer can also change us and how we can encounter God in prayer. The second presentation was a one-hour Lenten retreat presented by member Gina Hoe and entitled *I Am Sorry, I Forgive You, I Love You*. Both presentations were very well received, and the evaluations gave high marks to both presenters.

Winnipeg Diocesan Council’s annual meeting of members was held on May 15th, at which it celebrated its 100th anniversary. In commemoration of this milestone event, the council had struck a sub-committee that diligently expended numerous hours to create a coffee table booklet, together with an additional flash-drive with many pictures and articles highlighting noteworthy League events in this diocese over the past century. It was truly a labour of love, resulting in a work of art!

Keewatin-The Pas Diocesan Council’s annual meeting of members was held on May 29th. Elections were held, which resulted in a new executive with Bernadette Benson assuming the role of president.

St. Boniface Diocesan Council’s annual meeting of members was held on June 29th. Regrettably, the election did not result in a full executive. Currently, dedicated life members from St. Boniface Diocesan Council are in consultations to resolve this matter.

The Manitoba Provincial Council annual meeting of members was held on June 26th and all necessary business was covered in a very timely manner.

Currently, members are optimistic that the coming months will bring further easing of restrictions to permit some form of return to normal; that councils will again be able to hold meetings, fundraisers and events that will support the many charities important to our grassroots members. †

Military Ordinariate

Allison Klemen

Rome, New York

The women of the Military Ordinariate Provincial Council live and serve wherever a Canadian Armed Forces family is posted, deployed or retired. Although councils are physically located at 13 active military base chapels across Canada, the reach is global, like the military diocese. At the moment, there is one member who is active in her council all the way from her posting in South Korea. I am joining you today from my family's second posting to the United States. Although I am only two hours from the border, I may as well have been across an ocean during this pandemic—the distance from Rome, New York has felt just as big. Thank God for the Internet and “Zoom”, which allow me and my friend in Korea to join our councils virtually.

This year, through the geographical distancing and the social distancing, through all of the constantly changing restrictions, members have helped each other through cancer diagnoses, lost husbands, lost parents, lost children, illness, high-risk pregnancy, deployments, mid-pandemic relocations, university degrees and more. In addition to accompanying each other through life during this challenging time, most councils found a way to continue to meet. A few councils fully embraced the opportunity provided by technology and met more often than they would have in person. Many councils embraced what they had at their disposal, learned some new skills and met just enough to

get the job done. A few councils struggled but tried to stay connected in their own way.

In February, “Zoom” enabled the provincial council to hold its first-ever virtual new member orientation, which gave the newest members a chance to meet each other and to learn about the League, while being accompanied and introduced by seasoned members of their local council. In April, a multilingual prayer service was held on “Zoom” for the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel.

Most recently, “Zoom” enabled the 53rd provincial annual meeting of members. Attendees were blessed to have Bishop Scott McCaig (Military Ordinariate) with them for the whole day of business and during the virtual evening banquet that was complete with traditional toasts, grace and presentations. The program included recipes that allowed everyone to prepare the same drinks and snacks to enjoy together from wherever they were. New officers were installed during a bilingual mass, of course on “Zoom”, and a small but mighty team for this term hit the ground running.

This has been such a challenging year for most councils, and in military life and civilian life, challenges continue even outside of the COVID-19 pandemic. My goals for this term are to help members manage transition and embrace new ideas, encourage outreach and build some bridges. I had an analog childhood and digital adulthood, and so I have a foot in two worlds. Like many people my age, I hope I can be a bridge, and in whatever small way I can, help foster growth in faith, service and social justice in the military community and beyond. †

New Brunswick

June Brown

Rothesay, New Brunswick

Thirty-seven councils in New Brunswick continue to forge ahead in these unsettling times. While some have done their best to stay connected and get their business done, others have not been able to meet for various reasons. The provincial council chaired monthly “Zoom” meetings to keep in touch with those brave

enough to tackle this new means of communication. Otherwise, councils were kept up-to-date via e-mail and telephone.

Of those councils that kept active, they were able to meet via “Zoom”, in a parking lot or socially distanced in a church or church hall. Although most churches are open, the church halls are not. Following all COVID-19 protocols and staying distanced, some councils were able to hold a yard sale. A couple assisted their parish in a take-out supper — stew and sandwiches were made and distributed through their community. Blessing bags were filled with personal items and distributed to women’s and men’s shelters. A couple of small councils collected their annual dues by braving the elements and visiting members at their front door. Fifty-fifty draws were held to raise money for bursaries. Book sales and bottle drives were held, and Easter remembrances were distributed. World Day of Prayer was celebrated virtually.

The provincial executive met via “Zoom” early in the New Year. Then in May, the executive met in person. Following the business meeting, mass was celebrated, and a social time was enjoyed.

In June, the executive and a few parish council presidents met in person for the annual meeting of members, with others joining via “Zoom”. All pertinent business was conducted, the election and a beautiful prayer service for deceased members were held, and the two-day meeting ended with the installation of officers and prayer service for residential schools. Again, following a beautiful meal and Liturgy of the Word, attendees were royally entertained during a social time filled with humour, lots of laughs and sisterhood companionship. It was good to be together in person.

The provincial executive is pleased to have a full slate of officers. Once the provinces “opens up”, councils will be back to a somewhat normal agenda and be able to meet in person. It will take time for councils to re-organize and get members “back in the groove.” In-person fall regional meetings is anticipated.

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and Holy Redeemer parish councils in Saint John celebrated 100 years of organization in the spring. St. Michael (Miramichi), St. Bernard (Moncton), and Sacred Heart (Bathurst) parish councils will celebrate 100 years this fall. †

Newfoundland and Labrador

Judy Hodge

St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador

On June 5, 2021, I became the newly elected provincial president of Newfoundland & Labrador Provincial Council during its annual meeting of members. What an honour and privilege it is to be of service “For God and Canada.”

In these challenging times with a worldwide pandemic upon us, members are relieved to see the light at the end of the dark tunnel. COVID-19 case numbers are low and borders are open. During the past 16 months, members have kept the faith. They have prayed tirelessly for their sisters in the League, prayed for Canada and the province. Councils have not been meeting regularly. Still, they have been encouraged to continue doing as they have done in the past—plant a tree to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the League, donate to a charity or the local food bank, and send messages of hope and encouragement to their sisters in the League and anyone they feel may need it in these trying times.

At the recent annual meeting of members, while strictly adhering to all COVID-19 protocols, provincial council adopted a theme for this coming year, *Amoris Laetitia—On Love in the Family*. This year is the “Year of the Family,” so it seemed very fitting to acknowledge and pay tribute to families.

I am saddened to report the loss of two respected and loved life members in the past 16 months. Both Ruby Sharp and Agnes Ebbs passed away and are both truly missed. They were both inspirations to the League.

All councils have been kept up to date with the implementation of the strategic plan. They have been encouraged to follow all updates posted on

the website. More information regarding updates will become available at regular fall meetings. I am happy to report that I was involved in creating the Executive Orientation that has just recently become available. It was truly a blessing to work with members from across the country on this project. During the past year, members have been encouraged to take part in various events, namely to celebrate World Oceans Day, plant trees for the 100th anniversary of the League and show their appreciation for essential workers during the pandemic.

Despite the many challenges of this past year, the provincial executive is more than ready to start afresh in the fall—refreshed and rejuvenated to continue good works for communities and the province, “For God and Canada.” †

Nova Scotia

Joline Belliveau

Overton, Nova Scotia

As in the year 2020, the provincial executive started the year with expectations. However, this time it was hoped the COVID-19 pandemic would abate, and in person gatherings could be resumed. With the resurgence of the virus and variants, the province had to re-impose restrictions to bring the virus under control. As this was occurring across Canada, the national executive/board determined that conventions could not be held, but an option for carrying out business meetings partially virtually would be able to take place. With that direction in mind, diocesan presidents and the provincial president met to determine a format that would work best. It was decided to use a consistent format for all meetings. Meeting dates were pushed back from traditional timeframes to provide parish councils, in particular, more time to meet to do their instructed votes for the upcoming elections.

Despite ongoing challenges in meeting as would normally do as an organization, much work continued at all levels. Some councils devised new means of fundraising to be able to continue to support charities and the national voluntary funds. Much energy went to support church

communities, as members joined teams to help with scheduling mass attendance and cleaning and sanitizing. There was also outreach to others, especially those experiencing isolation due to the pandemic. Catholic women rose strongly together to confront the hardships being experienced.

Progressing into spring, more tragedy struck. This time it was related to Indigenous people and the realization of the significance of the deaths of Indigenous children through the discovery of unmarked graves and the trauma experienced by parents who waited in vain for their children to return. As Catholic women, this tragedy struck on many levels: personally, within the province, as faithful members of the beloved church and as Canadians. As with all that is bad and horrible, good often arises if we allow it. We are now talking about the tragic impact of residential schools and colonization on Indigenous people. We can move forward with authentic action that advocates for better living conditions and equality for Indigenous people and others who experience marginalization and prejudice. Canada is an affluent nation, yet many living on reservations do not have clean drinking water. Crowded conditions allow for the easy spread of infections such as tuberculosis and COVID-19. The CWL recognized the need to celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day before the discovery of the lost children. Members were called to invite Indigenous women to council meetings and share their stories. This shows that there was already recognition of the need for respect and inclusion for Indigenous people in this nation.

The need for advocacy is strong and is central to the League’s mission. I call on every member to reflect on Indigenous communities and how we can make a difference. As one person, I am a small voice. As a chorus of Nova Scotia Catholic women, we are a tremendous force. As more than 70,000 Catholic women nationwide, we can be the ultimate voice for peace, justice and faith for those in the world who are so desperately in need of attention and compassion. †

Ontario
Colleen Perry
Gloucester, Ontario

We live in unprecedented times that call for unprecedented measures. 2020 was, to say the least, one of those times. The year began as usual across the province, with retreats, League Development Days and provincial workshops.

Then the world, as we know it, came to a sudden halt in March 2020. The global pandemic stopped travel and meeting in general. Wave after wave of lockdowns and shutdowns and isolation overwhelmed us all. Conventions were cancelled, and the *Constitution & Bylaws* of this organization were tested beyond any recollection.

Despite the difficulties, or perhaps inspired by those difficulties, members in Ontario excelled at staying connected. The obstacles of the pandemic were used as learning opportunities by learning to “Zoom” and “GoTo” and returning to plain old-fashioned telephone calls. Councils across the province met virtually to pray, exchange ideas and support each other. There were many cards sent. Provincial life members became “prayer warriors.” Every member participated in flooding heaven with prayers and initiated unique ways of reaching out to the lonely and isolated. Monthly and often weekly prayer services renewed personal commitments to faith and encouraged rosary devotions for support and guidance.

Members continued to write letters to their members of parliament, both federal and provincial, regarding euthanasia, conditions in long-term care homes and accessibility to mental health services for everyone. The pandemic brought forth the realization that health services were lacking.

Even though a government visit had not been arranged due to the pandemic, provincial government leaders and individual ministries were reminded of active resolutions requiring government attention by letter writing and phone calls. Members were not silent despite the inability to meet.

Members and their families were impacted as they chatted on computer screens, visited loved ones through windows, were not always allowed in church, teas were on hold and friendly interaction was at a minimum. Through it all, I witnessed God’s blessings in members who kept their councils alive in unique ways by praying for the safety of children, teachers, and those in long-term care. They found creative ways to hold 12 Hours of Prayer, participated in virtual fundraisers, sewed and donated masks, held virtual prayer services, showed *Care for Our Common Home* by planting trees and gardens and donating vegetables. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I read of the kindness of others setting up food stands for people to help themselves to freshly grown produce, neighbours checking on each other, book sharing and sending postcards to put a smile on a friend’s face. The pandemic reminded us how precious life is. I pray that we will remember the good that arose out of the darkness of the pandemic and will continue to be kind to one another!

As the League grows and changes to adapt to today’s changing world, members look forward with anticipation and excitement to bringing their renewed faith, their undying commitment and their love of God and country into the future, whatever that might be. ✚

Prince Edward Island
Marilyn Gay Garvey
Bethel, Prince Edward Island

It is an honour to present my first oral report and to represent the 33 parish councils and approximately 1,700 members in the province. I am happy to say members have persevered through the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic and have still managed to care for their council members and communities during this time. Prayer, the cornerstone of all League activities, took on a new dimension. Members resorted to online and television attendance at mass and virtual rosaries and devotions. When the churches partially reopened, members dedicated themselves to being Eucharistic ministers, lectors, cantors, registering and ushering parishioners, and sanitizing the churches. Other

councils called members and other seniors on their parish registry to check in on them.

Other changes took place for the provincial executive and local councils. All executive members at all levels continued for a third year in their roles. “Zoom” meetings became the new way to do business, and members were kept updated and connected by e-mails, telephone and Canada Post. Members were invited to participate in online programs such as retreats, the national council’s palliative care webinar, On the Spot, etc. The 12 Hours of Prayer was done in members’ homes. Many councils planted trees in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the League. Following the discovery of the remains of Indigenous children at the former residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia, members were saddened and wondered how they could help with reconciliation efforts. Prayers and masses were offered, and all remembered National Indigenous Peoples Day. One council prepared a special reflection with prayers and symbols.

I am very proud of provincial executive members, three of whom were involved in strategic planning working groups. Other members answered survey questionnaires and provided feedback on products and toolkits. Past President Irene Gallant received her life membership (2020), and President-Elect Karen Rossiter is presently enrolled in the Catholic Women’s Leadership Foundation Program.

Fortunately, the provincial executive was able to hold its annual meeting of members on May 7th at Holy Redeemer Church, following COVID-19 protocols. Sixty-eight members attended, and other members watched the live stream from their homes. Provincial reports were read and the election of new officers took place. The spiritual advisor and chairperson of spiritual development gave very meaningful spiritual exercises, and mass completed the afternoon.

The Provincial Subsidy Program of \$200.00 to enable four councils to hold a workshop or retreat following the theme, *Care for Our*

Common Home/Care for Our People continued, while respecting COVID protocols.

I would like to share my goals and plans for the next two years: to minister to senior members, to support them in their Catholic faith, to see the end of life as a journey to God, not as a choice/pressure to choose euthanasia/medical assistance in dying; to be supportive of palliative and home care and most importantly, spiritual care; to invite and encourage younger members and newcomers to join the League using the Welcome Program; to plan for Prince Edward Island Provincial Council’s 100th anniversary in May 2022; to review the new Mission Statement, “The CWL of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service”; and to continue moving forward with the strategic plan and the new Executive Orientation. †

Quebec

Rosa Lam

Ile Bizard, Quebec

During this time, members have become “Zoom” experts. It became the way to go and members embraced the technology to keep the League functioning. At the midterm meeting in March, the Quebec executive asked for the national financial statement for information regarding the proposed per capita fee increase. When councils start meeting in person, there will be the opportunity to explain to members the financial situation of the League.

The task force for the review and revision of handbooks and manuals kept my agenda very busy. It is important work for the League, and I am happy to contribute to this effort. I also attended very informative governance sessions. It was good to know how the League’s work is done.

On June 19th, the Quebec provincial annual meeting of members was held in the hall of St. Luke’s church in Dollard des Ormeaux, a hybrid meeting with 10 members in person and 25 virtual attendees. It was one-day long, with a packed agenda. A new president of St. Jean-Longueuil Diocesan Council was welcomed. For

in-person attendees, a delicious Vietnamese lunch was served.

St. Luke Parish Council's Spiritual Advisor Fr. Bertrand Montpetit was scrutineer for the national elections nominations. He presided over the closing mass and the new life members ceremony, blessing new life members Linda Chisholm, Evelyn Meaney, Anna Bawer-DiLallo and myself.

Provincial executive members sent many communiques that are approved before sending them to the councils. One executive member was hospitalized a couple of times, and I helped with the duties during that time.

Working with the provincial presidents is very enriching. To listen and discuss problems across the country and propose solutions for the good of League members was a good experience. †

Saskatchewan

Chantal Devine

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Despite the directive that resolutions would not be entertained at this year's annual meetings of members, one council felt that an exception should be made due to the urgency of their message. Following the shocking news of the 215 unmarked graves in Kamloops, British Columbia, the resolution submitted at the 73rd provincial annual meeting of members asked that the federal government fulfill the requests entitled *Missing Children and Burial Information*, numbers 71 to 76, inclusive of the *Calls to Action* included in the 2015 report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. A letter asking for immediate action on this resolution was sent to the national president.

All three diocesan councils held an annual meeting using the hybrid format where a few members met in person, and the rest joined virtually. Prince Albert Diocesan Council had an election and was able to fill all but three positions on the executive. After serving a three-year term, Saskatoon Diocesan Council was able to fill all positions on its newly elected executive. The president of the Regina Diocesan Council was unable to fulfill her third year in

office, so her position was assumed by the president-elect. All Regina diocesan executive members were re-affirmed for another year.

The statistics for the year ending December 31, 2020, showed the number of councils in the province only decreased by one. Three councils disbanded, one council reactivated, and one new council formed. Its formation was largely due to the enthusiastic encouragement of the parish priest, provincial spiritual advisor Fr. Peter Nnanga MSP. Interestingly, this was the only new council established in Canada in 2020! On December 31, 2020, there were 5,622 members in Saskatchewan, 245 members fewer than on January 1, 2020. One hundred and seventy-five new members were welcomed into the League during a year of pandemic, and 71 members were reinstated. I am happy to report that in the Regina diocese, 53 new members joined the League after their parish priest, former provincial spiritual advisor Fr. Francis Hengen, spoke on the benefits of belonging to a faith-based organization.

When I began my term as president two years ago, one of my goals was to start the first Catholic Girl's League (CGL) in Saskatchewan. This was accomplished in October 2019 at Holy Spirit, my home parish in Saskatoon. St. Joseph's Parish Council (Moose Jaw) followed suit and started the first CGL in the Regina Diocese this past year. In honour of the League's centennial, the Moose Jaw CGL assisted the members of their parish council in planting a hardy Burr Oak tree to provide shade to the Memorial Bench for the Unborn and Infant Loss in the Sunset Cemetery in Moose Jaw.

I was saddened by the loss of Life Member Mildred Young this past year. Saskatchewan did not have any new life members in 2020.

The provincial council purchased 5,000 of the Pornography Hurts and 5,000 of the palliative care postcards. These postcards will be given to the three diocesan councils, and diocesan presidents will ensure the distribution to their parish councils. The Pornography Hurts postcards will be mailed to the prime minister

and members of parliament in September. In October, the palliative care postcards will be mailed to the prime minister, the federal minister of health and the provincial minister of health.

At the onset of the pandemic, provincial council purchased the GoToMeeting application, which has proven to be an invaluable tool in helping members stay connected. Not only is it used for virtual meetings and workshops, but also for a weekly CWL rosary. The rosary is also prayed each Monday evening on Facebook live on the provincial council's Facebook page.

In 2020, the three Saskatchewan graduates from the Catholic Women's Leadership Program were Shannon Granger, Rachele Ng and Janette Rieger. I would like to recognize the members who donated their time and expertise on the working groups of the strategic plan, Connie Crichton, Janette Rieger, Margot de la Gorgendiere and Linda Maddaford, and for her work on the resolutions committee, Susan Melchiorre. The work of the League continues because of exemplary women such as these. They reflect the love and commitment of the League that can be found in the heart of each parish council member in Saskatchewan. †

2021 NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Ann Doucet, National Life Member Liaison (2018-2021)

Congratulations and welcome new life members—this is an important milestone in your League journey. Once again, this momentous event is marked in the second year of a pandemic without the beautiful ceremony typically celebrated at the annual national convention. However, I am sure the nominating councils that selected you for this honour celebrated this milestone in very meaningful ways for each of you. Life membership is an honour and a privilege, and a responsibility bestowed by national council on members for their outstanding service and who fulfill the required criteria. Be assured of the welcome and the prayers of your League sisters who recognize in you those important qualities.

Anna Bawer-DiLallo from Our Lady of Good Counsel (Candiac, Quebec) is currently provincial second vice-president and chairperson of resolutions and legislation. Anna has been a member for 22 years and has held executive positions at the parish, diocesan and provincial levels. At the parish level, Anna has held the role of chairperson on a variety of standing committees. She is a Eucharistic minister and member of the liturgical and fundraising committees.

At the diocesan level, Anna worked on revising the policy and procedure manual and animated a palliative care workshop, all while supporting her parish council in resolutions and legislation. At the provincial level, she has animated an interactive resolutions workshop and CWL Jeopardy workshop.

Anna is trilingual, holds a graduate degree and has worked for 35 years as an educator at the elementary, secondary and continuing education levels. She is organized, resourceful and supportive of her League sisters.

The DiLallo family, Anna, her husband and her two daughters were installed as members of the Diocesan Order of Merit of St. Jean Longueuil in 2017. In addition, her daughters are members, and one is the president-elect of their parish council.

Anna feels privileged and honoured to become a life member.

Linda Chisholm, a 28-year and third-generation member, serves at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Council (Chateauguay, Quebec). Her daughter, a fourth-generation member, continues the spirit of service "For God and Canada." Linda joined the League after marrying and moving from Ontario to a small French town in Quebec. She holds a bachelor of science degree and serves as a minister of holy communion in her parish.

Linda is currently Quebec provincial past president. Her proudest accomplishments as a member were the two resolutions that she wrote - the first to grant rights to live-in caregivers and the second to restore funding to the Canadian

Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. She is also proud to have made efforts to open up communication and build paths of friendship with First Nations women through workshops including a blanket exercise, the Native Women's Association of Canada's Faceless Dolls Project and a town hall where the chief from a local reserve and the executive director of the Native Women's Shelter of Montreal came to speak at a convention. Linda has been focused on removing the stigma attached to mental illness during her years as president at various levels and as chairperson of education and health.

Sharon Ciebin is a retired banker who lives in Coquitlam, British Columbia. Married to Terry, she is the mother of two adult children and has two grandchildren. Sharon has served in her parish and diocesan councils in many leadership positions and is in her second term on B.C. & Yukon Provincial Council. She is a past president of Vancouver Diocesan Council. While she has created and facilitated many courses over the years, the one that stands out for her is *Catch the Fire!*, which Sharon and her team have delivered 13 times.

Sharon has supported her parish community serving in the ministries of religious education, Squirettes leadership, lector, Eucharistic minister and Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults coordinator. Additionally, she is a founding member of her parish council, St. Claire of Assisi Parish Council (Coquitlam). She has recently been active as a sacristan, a member of the board of Talitha Koum Society, a member of the Archdiocese of Vancouver's anti-human trafficking committee and works with one refugee family.

Sharon credits the structure and vision of the League in providing her with opportunities to make a difference in Canada and the world, which included a brief and representing the League at the federal government's justice and trafficking committee hearings in Vancouver in 2018.

Rosa Lam, a member of St. Luke's Parish in Montreal, Quebec, and a 32-year member of the League, is a retired computer science professor. She has three children, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. In her first year as a member, she became secretary and has held an important role ever since. Rosa has served the Montreal Diocesan Council in several portfolios, including as chairperson of the spiritual development, communications and organization standing committees and president. At the provincial level, she has served as chairperson of the communications, spiritual development and organization standing committees, as first vice-president and treasurer and is the current provincial president. As a national executive member, Rosa is on the task force to revise the League's national manuals.

Rosa has been instrumental in organizing a biannual multicultural festival at St. Luke's Parish for the past several years. Her gift of connecting others through faith is a true blessing for the League. Travelling is Rosa's hobby, and she has travelled extensively throughout the world. Her most recent trip (before the pandemic) was to China, where she toured 16 cities. In Beijing, she visited the 1,000 year old Lam ancestral family temple located at Shizhui village, Xinhui district in Guangdong province.

Evelyn Mills Meaney is a member of St. Edmund of Canterbury Parish in Beaconsfield, Quebec, where she has volunteered in several capacities for more than 40 years. In September 2003, Evelyn joined the League, not knowing what was really involved. In January 2004, she was elected president of the council. At that point, Evelyn found the League's *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* and the *Constitution & Bylaws*, which became her bibles. She then continued for another term. Evelyn served on the Montreal Diocesan Council from 2010-2016 as treasurer, secretary-treasurer and president. At the provincial level, she served as treasurer and secretary-treasurer.

After retiring from her job at Spar Aerospace, Evelyn volunteered at the Lakeshore General Hospital, sitting on its board, where she enjoyed

12 years serving on several committees. She also sat on the board of directors of construction operations of the West Island Palliative Care Residence, where she was involved in making breakfasts for the patients and as receptionist. With God's help, Evelyn promises to promote the League in its interests and assist in its growth.

Angela Pellerin has been a member of Holy Family Parish Council (London, Ontario) since 1991, serving in various positions. She is currently the recording secretary and chairperson of membership for the council. Several years ago, Angela received the maple leaf service pin for volunteering in the parish and community. Past volunteering efforts include as an Akela (leader) for her son's Cub Scout pack, parent volunteer for the Royal Canadian Army Cadets, Neighbourhood Watch liaison and co-op housing representative for her co-op. Angela has served as an altar server, bible study facilitator, Eucharistic minister and choir member, and on the social justice committee, prayer shawl ministry and hospitality team.

Angela served as secretary and chairperson of the London central committee before being elected to the London Diocesan Council, where she served in various positions for 21 years and received her life membership at the 2021 virtual annual meeting of members. In addition, she was privileged to serve on the Ontario Provincial Council's social justice committee. Now retired from the insurance industry where she was a chartered insurance professional, Angela enjoys spending time with her grandchildren, reading and knitting. She feels blessed to serve her League sisters and meet so many members from across Canada at conventions.

Emma Rose Rayburn was raised in the small village of Monkland with her six older brothers. This small community, along with her parent's influence, was the perfect background to instill in her love for all things community-oriented. Emma has been a parishioner of St. Anthony's, St. Michael's all her life. In September 1992, she and Kevin were married at her home parish, and they continue to be involved in many ministries.

Emma enjoys many hobbies and has turned scrapbooking, card making and quilting into her little business called Auntie Em's Scrapbooking and Quilting. The League has been Emma's blessing in disguise. Upon joining, she was quite content attending meetings and even said "yes" to being St. James' Parish Council (Maxville), chairperson of organization. However, her first convention was the game changer! The more Emma learns, the deeper she falls in love with the League, its work and the many blessings received. Plus, she now has more sisters than she could ever have dreamed. Her mantra has been, "If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you!" Emma is happy to report she is enjoying the challenge of her position on the Ontario Provincial Council as chairperson of spiritual development.

Lynne Rowlandson, a 43-year member, was born and raised on a farm in St. Lina, Alberta, as one of 14 children. She is a registered nurse, graduating in 1970 from the Misericordia School of Nursing in Edmonton. She retired in 2013.

In 1970, Lynne moved to Ontario and has been married to Daryl since 1972. They are the parents of a daughter and son and have six grandchildren. She is an active member of Holy Trinity Parish Council (Englehart, Ontario). She has served on several committees as chairperson and as an executive officer at the parish and diocesan levels.

Lynne has helped organize, facilitate and present *Catch the Fire!* workshops, assists with monthly luncheons for seniors in the community, and volunteers with palliative/hospice care, the Annual Terry Fox Run (40 years) and at a long-term care home in Englehart. She truly enjoys working with the elderly in the community. Lynn also belongs to a quilting guild that provides comfort quilts to people receiving a cancer diagnosis, dialysis patients, nursing home residents and fire victims. She received her maple leaf service pin in 2012. Faith, family and friends are very important in her life, and she gives credit to the many mentors who have helped her on her journey in faith and the League.

Alice Uvanile was a member of St. Agnes Parish (Thunder Bay, Ontario) for many years, where she was active in parish activities and held various positions on the CWL parish council. Having moved to the other side of the city, she is currently a member of St. Anthony of Padua Parish Council (Thunder Bay). She has served for 11 years on the diocesan council and two terms on the provincial community life sub-committee. Alice worked on three provincial conventions and helped facilitate the *Catch the Fire!* program.

Alice promotes the League to others whenever she can, telling them about the good works it does “For God and Canada.” Encouragement is given to members to take positions on the executives of their councils. She is always eager to help a council or mentor someone who is new or experiencing challenges.

Always aware of the difficulties of the homeless and marginalized, Alice has taken clothing and other articles to different organizations. She has a keen interest in the First Nations peoples as there are many in her area and hopes to volunteer in that field. The League has been an important part of Alice’s life. †

INTRODUCING

Sharon Geiger

B.C. & Yukon Provincial President

Sharon joined the League in 1976 in Mackenzie, British Columbia and has been an active member since. She has held almost all executive positions between the parish, diocesan and provincial levels and was elected as president of B.C. & Yukon Provincial Council this year.

In 1985 she moved to Salmon Arm, where she chaired the annual bazaar and helped organize diocesan conventions. The last one in 2020, of course, was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In her parish council, Sharon is involved with the archives, which is an ongoing process. The facilitation of *S’Mores* workshops has also been part of her activities in the League, as well as giving presentations on leadership and resolutions, and workshops on spirituality. At

the annual national convention in Charlottetown, Sharon was proud to defend the resolutions from B.C. & Yukon Provincial Council.

One of Sharon’s highlights in the League has been the presentation of resolutions to the provincial government.

Sharon received her maple leaf service pin in 2011, and in 2017, Kamloops Diocesan Council gifted her with a life membership which she accepted with honour.

Sharon was born in Kamloops and raised in Oliver. She received her teaching certificate in 1973 from Notre Dame University in Nelson. She taught for three years in the public school system in Mackenzie. When she moved to Salmon Arm, she became a full-time mom of four and a volunteer (organizing many activities both in and away from school) until her children left home. Sharon and her husband are kept busy with their children and 12 grandchildren, who are the love of their lives.

Sharon has worked with the youth in her parish and organized retreats for them. She compiled one of the church directories for the parish and currently works at St. Joseph’s Parish in Salmon Arm as a pastoral associate. She coordinates a faith formation for the children program, facilitates and teaches the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults program, facilitates an adult education program and has facilitated the Catholics Returning Home program. She has also directed a choir at the church for many years and has helped with many church activities.

Sharon loves the League and looks forward to working with her provincial team and meeting other members throughout B.C. & Yukon and across Canada. †

Allison Klemen

Military Ordinariate Provincial President

Allison grew up in a military family and is from “everywhere.” She was born in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia and moved soon after to Kingston, Ontario; then to Ottawa; overseas to Hamburg, Germany; back to Ottawa; and Severna Park, Maryland, where she graduated from high

school. She joined the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and attended the Royal Military College of Canada. She played on the women's soccer team and graduated with a bachelor's of arts degree in military psychology and leadership. She was released from the CAF in 2003 and continued to serve as a military spouse through another seven postings to Comox, British Columbia; Edmonton, Alberta; Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; New Maryland, New Brunswick; Montgomery, Alabama; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and her current location of Rome, New York. She currently works for Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services as a military family services coordinator. She and Josh, her husband of 18 years, have five children ages four to 16. Allison is a cradle Catholic who leads her family in faith and whose love for the church grew out of the graces of marriage and motherhood.

Allison joined the League at the base chapel at 19 Wing Comox, newly posted, pregnant with her first child, and looking for a way to contribute. Far away from her mother and grandmothers, she appreciated the love and support she received from her council. In her first year of membership, she agreed to let her name stand for first vice-president without any understanding of the League and became the council president by the following year. She has belonged to five other base councils since then and is grateful for the friendships she has made with her sisters in Comox, CFB Edmonton, 12 Wing Shearwater, CFB Gaagetown, 17 Wing Winnipeg and CFB Kingston. She has really enjoyed travelling and attending conventions, including national conventions in Calgary, Winnipeg, Charlottetown, Regina and Halifax. Other highlights of service include visiting St. Alexander Parish at Sagkeeng First Nation, sitting at the table as a guest of the Manitoba Provincial Council as it presented resolutions to the premier, and developing and delivering a workshop on interreligious dialogue at a Military Ordinariate provincial convention. In addition to president-elect, she has held the provincial level positions of chairperson of the spiritual development, education and health,

Christian family life and community life standing committees.

Allison's goals as Military Ordinariate President are to help councils manage transition and embrace new ideas, encourage outreach, and foster growth in faith, service and social justice in the military community. She hopes to build stronger connections with women in the Protestant Chapel Guild and the US Military Council of Catholic Women. She is grateful for the challenge of leadership and honoured to be representing the Military Ordinariate Provincial Council on the national executive/board. †

HONOURING THE GIFT OF SERVICE

Implementation Committee

The implementation committee of the strategic plan is pleased to congratulate and thank the members of five working groups for the successful completion of 14 strategies. The enormous dedication and tireless efforts of these talented women will assist the League in realizing its envisioned future. Thank you for your work in helping the League grow and evolve so that our sisterhood can thrive.

Goal 1: Members of the Catholic Women's League of Canada grow in faith by sharing, witnessing and developing leadership skills to create positive change.

Reorganization Working Group

Collaboratively, sensitively and painstakingly, these members reviewed and challenged the structural norms and presented recommendations that will serve as the foundation for the League as members begin to build and enhance the fundamental work that the League does in Canada. This group comprised working professionals who devoted more than 680 volunteer hours and resources to this project.

Strategies covered:

- Reduce the number of standing committees to three to align with the core values of faith, service and social justice
- Streamline executive officers at all levels and create distinctive roles for each level

- Examine the current levels of the League
- Simplify procedures and reporting processes
- Enhance the role of standing committee chairpersons from a reporting role to rotating the meeting program

Members: Jean Ashdown (Edmonton, Alberta), Marilyn Blew (Burnaby, British Columbia), Margot de la Gorgendiere (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan), Honorary Life Member Barbara Dowding (Port Moody, British Columbia), Life Member Irene Gallant (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island), Nelly Kelders (Bright’s Grove, Ontario), Sue Lubowitz (Newmarket, Ontario), Christine Mason (150 Mile House, British Columbia) and Life Member Linda Squarzolo (Sudbury, Ontario)

Goal 3: Through outreach and service, members of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada foster a culture where all life is valued with dignity and respect.

Encourage Diversity Working Group

The encourage diversity working group has successfully created and posted advertisements on Facebook and in *The Canadian League*, showcasing members’ cultural and generational diversity. The group has created a calendar of Canadian cultural celebrations that will enable parish councils to learn more about the people in Canada. These women have tracked more than 225 hours during their work.

Strategy covered:

- Embrace diverse cultures and ages

Members: Philiz Goh (Toronto, Ontario), Gerda Hazenberg (Yellowknife, Northwest Territories), Hilarion Mitchell (Brampton, Ontario) and Victoria Oppertshauser (Kelowna, British Columbia)

Toolkits Working Group

The toolkits working group members have tracked 375 hours during their work. As a result, they have successfully created ready-made, adaptable toolkits on the topics of faith, service and social justice. These toolkits will be available in November.

Strategy covered:

- Create ready-made, adaptable toolkits for use in parishes

Members: Life Member Pat Crossman (Kentville, Nova Scotia), Maureen Fadum (Surrey, British Columbia), Lauri Friesen (Grande Prairie, Alberta) and Christine Mason (150 Mile House, British Columbia)

Spiritual Formation Working Group

The spiritual formation working group members have logged 628 hours during their work. They have worked tirelessly on multiple projects on behalf of the implementation committee. These include 17 copyright-free prayers and programs, a poster, postcards and bookmarks on the importance of well-balanced meetings, a pamphlet emphasizing the social aspect of the League and a presentation to teach women how to create their own prayers.

Strategies covered:

- Develop and deliver spiritual programs at all levels
- Provide opportunities to increase women’s spirituality as a core objective
- Focus on the spiritual and social aspects in councils
- Emphasize small Christian community model of “pray, reflect, act”

Members: Louise Beggs (Stittsville Ontario), Theresa Duncan (Calgary, Alberta), Sharon Malec (Lethbridge, Alberta, † 1947-2021), Con Marks (Winnipeg, Manitoba) and Marjorie Robinson (Calgary, Alberta) †

IN A CONSULTATIVE CAPACITY

Margaret Ann Jacobs, Honorary Life Member (2018-2021)

The first duty as past president is to serve in a consultative capacity. The challenge I have discovered in reading annual reports is whether this service is solicited or rejected. There is a delicate balance in offering or soliciting advice—too little is unproductive and too much is overstepping. With this delicate balance in mind, I am issuing two appeals, the first to executive members, the second to all members.

Executive members, I appeal to you to be available to serve in a compassionate, supportive, compromising and affirming manner. Remember the promise you made at your installation ceremony, "... 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 League 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."

Members, I appeal to you to support your executive as they endeavour to promote the interests and growth of the League. Members elected these women to represent them. Have faith they are doing their absolute best to represent members and reflect their views and wishes.

During these troubling times, executive members and members are struggling; compassion, support, compromise and affirmation are very much needed. Abiding by the bylaws is challenging, particularly when many cannot meet in person and must wear masks and social distance when able to meet. While virtual meetings have allowed some councils to stay in touch, it is difficult for members who are technologically challenged or have limited Internet capacity. Prayer has been the unifying factor across Canada. While members' voices may not be raised in unison, they are joined in united prayer for the benefit of the League, church, communities and the world. "... For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end." (Hebrews 3.14)

Hold firm my dear sisters. You will be expected to make many decisions in the upcoming months, decisions that could change the League's future. As such, the input and support of members from all levels is required so that their views—members' views—are heard and reflected in this great organization.

Members' support and cooperation are essential as the organization attempts to address the

proposed amendments to the *Constitution & Bylaws* and a possible national per capita fee change. Everyone's cooperation and respectful dialogue is needed to decipher the best way forward for the League.

"Attend to the pleas of your people with heavenly care, O Lord, we pray, that they may see what must be done and gain strength to do what they have seen." (Collect for Mass for the First Week of Ordinary Time) †

A MOMENT IN TIME

Christa Grillmair, Victoria Diocesan Past President

Members have been celebrating the League's 100th anniversary. Many stories have been published about the League's achievements—the various resolutions that have affected change and the countless activities, physically and spiritually, that have helped people in parishes, communities and the country.

However, 2020 was not a typical anniversary celebration. Canadians are in the midst of a pandemic that has paralyzed the world and literally brought people to their knees.

But isn't that a good thing?

On my wall in the bathroom, clearly visible every time I step out of the shower, is a wall plaque that states, "When life gives you more than you can stand... kneel."

There has been a lot of kneeling happening this past year. But is this time much different from what members have endured throughout the past 100 years? They have overcome wars, depressions, famines and pandemics and have had to deal with many social issues.

The current pandemic has had a dramatic effect on all members. Canadians have been asked to shelter-in-place and avoid social contact to help reduce the spread of the virus. Many people have lost their jobs, and life as they knew it has changed. The need for works of mercy continues to be greater than ever, and members have looked for new ways of connecting. Catholics cannot participate in mass as a full community and now worship in small clusters or attend

virtual services. Teachers are struggling to develop online courses and some children are home-schooled by parents who graduated long ago. Seniors are isolated. People have virtual medical appointments, limit their shopping and look forward to the delivery of groceries and pizza. There are few places to go, so some people get dressed up to take the garbage out. Some hope that they will be able to go back to normal. But what is that normal they want to go back to?

For me, this time has forced me to shift my focus. I have often become frustrated with the demands this virus has put upon me. But I have also had many opportunities to step back and come up with new plans. I am adhering to social distancing and wear a mask in public places. I may not be able to visit family and friends, but I have connected more often with them through telephone calls or social media and have developed new terminology for connecting—“let’s Zoom” is now a common expression! I am reading more than I have in years. I am not so much focussed on filling my calendar as I am in seeing what the day brings.

Now, do not get me wrong—though I am making the best of it, I look forward to once again attending mass on Sunday with all of my friends. I want to see my sisters and have League meetings and go to conventions. I want to be able to travel and safely get on a plane to visit family. I pray every day that the vaccines will be made widely available to help eradicate COVID-19, and I pray that all those near and dear to me stay healthy and safe.

2020 shook me, along with the rest of the world, into the awareness that this is one world, connected as human beings. If a virus can spread this quickly and infect millions in a matter of months, can members not do the same by spreading kindness and compassion?

Let that be the new normal. ✚

A Prayer of Hope for the 2022 CWL National Convention, Kelowna

Father in Heaven, nothing surpasses Your Goodness.
Your Goodness is steeped in Love and Your Love gives us Hope.
This Hope gives us Faith, and our Faith helps us Love.
We pray that Your Love will make us Good.
As we prepare to bring our CWL sisters together,
Send Your Spirit to guide this Convention Team and our National Council.
Bless the 102nd National Catholic Women’s League Convention,
That Your precious daughters will reconnect with each other and draw closer to You.
Help us to navigate this earthly wilderness and to do Your will.

In Your vineyard O Lord, we long to be:
Rejoicing, relaxing, praying and playing,
Laughing, learning, serving and savouring.
Abba, Father, from these long months of isolation and angst, deliver us.
We hope in You O Lord, that we may come together in 2022,
And through Our Lady of Good Counsel,
We will be blessed as we labour and live in Your Vineyard.
Amen

CONGRATULATIONS 2021 BURSARY RECIPIENTS!

In 1988, the League received two generous donations in response to the call for lay formation in Pope John Paul II’s exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*. In light of the expressed desire of the League to encourage members’ service “For God and Canada,” the national executive agreed by motion that these donations be used to establish a bursary fund.

The bursary fund is used to provide financial assistance to members pursuing studies, courses, seminars, conferences, workshops and diploma/degree programs in areas of spiritual growth, adult faith formation, youth ministry,

ministry to patients in palliative care, ministry to shut-ins, parliamentary procedure and literacy tutoring.

Bursary applications are available upon request from national office or can be downloaded from cwl.ca.

Congratulations to Christine Coyle, (Windsor, Ontario), Marilyn Olsen, (Ottawa, Ontario), Sarah Cleyn, (Ottawa, Ontario), Christine Taylor, (Renfrew, Ontario), Pamela Benko, (Spruce Grove, Alberta) and Tina Claxton, (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan).

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Congratulations to the following centenarians!

Mafalda (Folly) Markle

103 years old on April 1, 2021
St. Patrick Parish Council
Sudbury, Ontario

Norma Roche

102 years old on April 2, 2021
Holy Angels Parish Council
St. Thomas, Ontario

Kay Schell

102 years old on May 27, 2021
St. Michael Parish Council
Calgary, Alberta

Lina DeBray

101 years old on November 21, 2020
St. Bernadette Parish Council
Surrey, British Columbia

Dorothy Kerr

101 years old on July 3, 2021
Our Lady Help of Christians Parish Council
Wallaceburg, Ontario

Ann Beda

100 years old on April 18, 2021
St. Peter Parish Council
Thunder Bay, Ontario

Frances Cottreau

100 years old on February 25, 2021
St. Ambrose Parish Council
Yarmouth, Nova Scotia

Juliette Cyr

100 years old on March 20, 2021
Annunciation of the Lord Parish Council
Ottawa, Ontario

Verna Daub

100 years old on April 1, 2021
St. Mary of the Purification Parish Council
Mount Forest, Ontario

Vivian D'Eon

100 years old on May 8, 2021
St. Ambrose Parish Council
Yarmouth, Nova Scotia

Aleta Gauthier

100 years old on June 17, 2021
St. Ambrose Parish Council
Yarmouth, Nova Scotia

Cecile Inglis

100 years old on April 14, 2021
St. Mary Parish Council
Prince George, British Columbia

Lena Jeannotte

100 years old on March 10, 2021
Our Lady of Sorrows Parish Council
Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan

Marie Leon

100 years old on July 1, 2021
St. Kevin Parish Council
Welland, Ontario

Betty McTeer

100 years old on May 28, 2021
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Council
Grand Bend, Ontario

Josephine Meurs

100 years old on March 20, 2021
St. Joseph Parish Council
Victoria, British Columbia

Denise Thompson

100 years old on May 20, 2021
Holy Name of Jesus Parish Council
Kirkland Lake, Ontario

Ida Toms

100 years old on March 1, 2021
St. Joseph Parish Council
Salmon Arm, British Columbia

Palmira Vincentine

100 years old on July 6, 2021
Sacred Heart Parish Council
Guelph, Ontario

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to councils celebrating
anniversaries!

100 Years

Our Lady of Mercy Parish Council
Sarnia, Ontario

Peterborough Diocesan Council

Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Council
Trout Creek, Ontario

St. Columban Parish Council
Cornwall, Ontario

St. Francis Xavier Parish Council
Camrose, Alberta

St. James Parish Council
Eganville, Ontario

St. John Chrysostom Parish Council
Arnprior, Ontario

St. Joseph Parish Council
Corunna, Ontario

St. Joseph Parish Council
Stratford, Ontario

St. Mary Parish Council
Barrie, Ontario

St. Paul The Apostle Parish Council
Coniston, Ontario

Toronto Diocesan Council

Winnipeg Diocesan Council

95 Years

Holy Cross Parish Council
Fort MacLeod, Alberta

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish Council
Thorold, Ontario

St. Joseph Parish Council
Kentville, Nova Scotia

St. Theresa Parish Council
Rosetown, Saskatchewan

90 Years

Our Lady Help of Christians Parish Council
Wallaceburg, Ontario

75 Years

Star of the Sea Parish Council
White Rock, British Columbia

**NATIONAL COUNCIL REGRETFULLY ADVISES
THE PASSING OF LIFE MEMBERS:**

Elsa Drummond
Vernon, British Columbia

Agnes Ebbs
Conception Bay South, Newfoundland and
Labrador

Margaret Jones
Kapuskasung, Ontario

Carol Richer
Morrisburg, Ontario

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I too, feel the necessity to write concerning the national per capita fee increase that has been put forward for discussion. I think that the most points against this recommendation were covered in excellent form in the letter from Roxanne McDonald from Vancouver.

First & foremost though, I believe that all members should have access to the Annual Financial Statement(s) outlining total funding received and all expenditures, in detail, so they know exactly where their money goes and the costs associated with the various expenditures, much like shareholders. Who knows, you might get some helpful advice from experts within the CWL to cut some corners!

Secondly, no one can predict where we will be two years from now, never mind ten years from now, so where in the financial statements can we do with spending less!

Thirdly, there is only one situation that will clear everything up. It is the same for every individual, every business and every charitable organization in the world, & that is they must all work within their budgets. Essential services in our own

homes—utilities, taxes, telephones, food, rent and the list goes on, have increased on a regular basis, but we all have to revise our budgets and make decisions we'd rather not, but have to, in order to balance the budget, and so it will need to be for our Catholic Women's League of Canada. Constant increasing for per capita fees is not an option when many seniors are having to go without as it is and many people in general, are also suffering because of layoffs, businesses closing etc. It's not a pretty picture but it is life.

It goes without saying that the work of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, its councils, its national executive, associates and its volunteers has to be one of the most worthwhile organizations in the world, but we are in a sign of the times that needs to be carefully planned and adjusted in order to continue on. It won't be easy, it may well be disappointing in many areas, but I feel it is the 'common sense' attitude to take.

With the greatest respect and best wishes to you all for a happy, healthy and safe future, I am,

Sincerely, Maureen Franze

Dear Editor,

On page 19 of the Spring 2021 edition of *The Canadian Magazine*, it states: "The next issue (fall 2021) of *The Canadian League* magazine will only be available online at cwl.ca. Should you require a print copy, please request one from your parish council."

I was very disappointed to read the decision to publish the 2021 Fall issue as an on-line edition only. I am writing to earnestly request that you reconsider this decision.

We are currently in the process of trying to educate members on the benefits of belonging to the League and to promote those benefits to the greater Catholic community in order to grow our membership. At the same time, there is an instructed vote on the table stating that looking to the future we must increase our national fees by \$12.00 per year. Taking away one of the benefits—the mailing of *The Canadian League* magazine—and asking parish

councils to print copies for those who cannot access it online, puts the burden on the councils at the same time as they are trying to justify the fee increase.

For the majority of our members, receiving our magazine in the mail is the 'one and only way' these dues paying members from across Canada are connected and receive information from other levels of the League. It is critical that we ensure the magazine is delivered directly to members' homes—especially those in rural and remote areas of our country, those that are shut in or do not have the ability to access online. This is even more important during these unprecedented times when separation and isolation from members, even in our own parishes, makes connection very difficult or non-existent. The magazine's physical presence on kitchen tables, in living rooms and coffee tables across the country is an excellent opportunity to promote our League. It is a very useful marketing tool for evangelizing and recruiting members as it highlights our stories of faith, service and social justice.

The League magazine 'reaches out' and 'touches' each and every one of our members, it connects all of us to the big picture, it says I belong, I matter, I am the Catholic Women's League and this is my magazine, delivered to my door. Members already have the option to receive it digitally which is great. We only have three issues a year, and even if one edition is available on line only—I would be concerned that 'out of sight' turns into 'out of mind'.

I realize this decision was most likely a financial one. However, during the past two years, there have been no national conventions and no or very little travel costs for the national board saving us an estimate of \$250,000 per year (according to the *2019 Statement of Revenues and Expenditures*). I understand that we have a fiscal responsibility but taking away a benefit, at the same time as asking for an increase is poor timing and may result in less support from members.

I hope that the (new) national board will review

this decision and find a way to continue to provide our national magazine in print to members.

IS IT TIME TO GET OUT OF OUR BOAT AND WALK ON WATER?

Mary Ryan, Member of St. Mary Magdalene Parish Council, Fredericton

If ever there was a time for members to consider getting out of our boat and walk on water, the time is now. Even within the powerful sentences found in the League's resolutions, nothing it has focused on has come even close to connecting to the horror and terror found in *Canada's Residential Schools: The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. In the face of such cruelty, it takes more than words and knowledge to have our witness as Catholic women believable. What does that mean? What will it take?

Perhaps we can consider our need to stay true to the truth of our inadequacy in witnessing the best version of ourselves as women of faith. Could we also include our need to connect to our failure in hearing the loud cry of the Indigenous families

Sincerely, Terry Mae Sinclair

living in Canada, who counted on our strength to crush the indignities and discrimination they continue to face?

Walking on water was not easy for St. Peter. However, it should be easier for us, having experienced the faithfulness of the Lord during the past 100 years in journeying with us, often seated with us in our boat.

Under the patronage of Our Lady of Good Counsel, also known as the Star of the Sea, perhaps, if we are not ready to leave our boat and walk on water, we could row our boat toward those who need to know we belong together.

The need for us to believe we all belong together, as members of the human race and children of God, could well be the most important message addressed in the reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. †