

Community Life

Date: February 15, 2023



Communiqué #18

Catholic and Living It!

FOR: Provincial Chairpersons of Community Life
THROUGH: Provincial Presidents and Secretaries
CC: National Executive (for information)
National Life Member Liaison
FROM: Faith Anderson, National Chairperson of Community Life

“If violence has its source in the human heart, then it is fundamental that nonviolence be practised before all else within families... From within families, the joy of love spills out into the world and radiates to the whole of society. An ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence between individuals and among peoples cannot be based on the logic of fear, violence and closed-mindedness, but on responsibility, respect and sincere dialogue... I plead with equal urgency for an end to domestic violence and to the abuse of women and children.”
(Pope Francis)

Dear sisters in the League,

As a follow-up to the domestic violence webinar held on February 11th, a question was presented as to what members could do next. The presenter, Pam Hadder, community coordinator at Willow Place, has provided the following suggestions:

- Add permanent information on family violence (what it is and who it impacts) along with supportive links (e.g., ShelterSafe and Women’s Shelters Canada, etc.) on League websites.
- Develop posters with information and tips for churches and community locations. For example, public washrooms offer women experiencing acute abuse a place where they can freely read the information.
- Address the common reasons (stigma, shame, normalization of violence and lack of information on resources) those experiencing violence do not seek help by including the topic frequently in discussions, praying for those affected and specifically mentioning family violence survivors in prayers.
- Listen, believe and show concern for their well-being. Do not judge them. Let them know about resources for support if someone discloses family violence or abuse. (This would also be good content for a poster.)
- Invite speakers with expertise in supporting victims and survivors to meetings. Learn more about resources in the community and make connections.
- Consider a donation drive for International Women’s Day (March 8th), which has become a global undertaking to address gender inequity.

- Align with women- and family-serving charities in the region and ask what their needs are or how to help.
- Hold an annual vigil and/or discussion group on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women (December 6th). This annual observance was initiated after the École Polytechnique massacre. For more information, visit women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/commemorations-celebrations/16-days/national-day-remembrance.html.
- Create a support group for women in the area in partnership with local family violence prevention resources.

The League has a long history of reaching out and helping those in need. This is an opportunity to be *Catholic and Living It!* by being proactive in addressing domestic abuse.

Provincial chairpersons are asked to review the suggestions, act at the provincial level, provide the information to diocesan counterparts, and urge them to forward it to parish councils for further action.



Faith Anderson
National Chairperson of Community Life