



The Canadian League



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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 \$25.00 includes subscription rate of \$3.00. Non-members, \$8.00 per year. Agreement number 40007536
ISSN-0384-630

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Top left: National President Fran Lucas, National President-Elect Shari Guinta and National Chairperson of Resolutions Rolande Chernichan pictured at Saint Patrick Basilica in Ottawa, Ontario.

Top right: The League's delegation to Ottawa meets with Ryan Worms, Political Advisor for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Middle right: National President Fran Lucas, National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) President Patricia Voorhes and National First Vice-President Betty Colaneri at the NCCW's 2022 convention.

Bottom right: The delegation meets with the Apostolic Nuncio His Excellency Ivan Jurkovič in Ottawa, Ontario.

Bottom left: Fran Lucas with the Relic of Blessed Carlos Acutis.

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President's Message – Make a Difference

Fran Lucas

National President and Chairperson of International Relations



Undoubtedly, members all thank God for their many blessings as they continue to witness the devastation of humanity and land with the ongoing war against Ukraine, the recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, the relentless worldwide human trafficking (including an increase in trafficking of young men), the expansion of medical assistance in dying, the many individuals affected by illness and lack of food and shelter, and so many other local and world crises. I find myself more and more thankful for even the smallest of graces as I hear and see what is happening around me and across the globe. I walk downtown in my city, not feeling nearly as safe as in the past. It is impossible not to notice the increase of unhoused men and women of all ages, the “closed for business” signs, the plastic bags littering the streets, those suffering from addiction acting out in dangerous ways and racist graffiti demeaning other cultures. Last year, as I travelled to conventions across Canada, I saw similar “big city” problems in communities of all sizes.

So, is it time for a *new* New Year’s resolution? Call, write or visit your local government official to request relief for the homeless situation or another issue in your community. Help local not-for-profits that support unhoused persons by volunteering or donating goods. My recent visit to a member in a seniors’ residence was one of those things I struggled to find the time to do, but having promised her I would be over one day, I finally made the call and went. The rewards for me of that visit left me knowing I had to find more time for this type of action, and that member’s comments confirmed the importance of our hour together. And what a surprise to find out she is a writer—I was delighted when she presented me with

one of her books!

How else can I make a difference? Can I live in a more minimalistic way? Where do I have excess? Do I *really* need the three different bottles of hand lotion, half a dozen tubes of travel toothpaste, six white T-shirts and three pairs of running shoes? I need to do better at using up things before buying more. How about shopping locally to help small business owners to stay in business? Consignment shopping is becoming a popular means of reusing items that are still full of life. With such actions, I might end up with a few extra dollars to give to the food

bank or local emergency centre or to enjoy lunch with a lonely member of my council.

Where am I going with all this? Nothing here is new or should be surprising to anyone. I say this in the spirit of *Catholic and Living It!* and as a reminder of those things that I—and perhaps you—need to think about while on a walk downtown, when attending a parish council meeting or deciding whether to buy

another new sweater. I encourage members to take some quiet time to reflect on the world around them—locally and beyond—and then take that all-important first step to be a change agent in some aspect of their life or that of another.

The Unity Outreach happening across the country will be an opportunity for members to be heard, to share how members can work together more effectively and to help each other to continue to be a League admired by others.

With only months left in my presidency, I look forward to once again travelling to conventions and hearing the many ways in which members and councils at all levels show the world that they are *Catholic and Living It!* †



From the National Spiritual Advisor



Most Rev. Stephen Jensen, Bishop of Prince George
National Spiritual Advisor

The renewal of the League's priorities and structures was advanced over several years through the strategic planning process. Now it is ready to take another step—one that can involve more members at the grassroots level to help develop leaders for the present and future.

The recently released Mentor Members Survey is a wonderful, creative initiative. There is no substitute for experience—no matter how capable and willing someone is, learning from another who has been at the work longer is an irreplaceable advantage. The idea of a more senior member of the League mentoring a newer member has obvious benefits: it can strengthen the relationships that make the League so special and build leadership capacity in effective, long-lasting ways. This is an innovative way to make the strategic plan come alive at the personal and council level.

The survey names various gifts that can strengthen the League at all levels. First, of course, is faith embraced with one's whole being and a Catholic lifestyle that is an authentic witness to that faith. A life shaped by faith is

the greatest qualification for a mentor—it will make her not only a teacher but a witness. Such mentorship is a genuine response to the baptismal vocation to participate in the Lord's mission that He shared with His church: to build the kingdom in this world in anticipation of its full flowering in heaven.

Next on the list of mentorship qualities comes education and experience, including that gained from a career, then people skills, facility with technology and social media, writing ability, organizational gifts and experience in offices of the League.

The Mentor Members Survey is a logical next step in realizing the strategic plan's goals by touching members at the grassroots level. So often, people do not see in themselves the gifts that qualify them to help others. Many members have the skills and experience to mentor others, and I encourage every member to consider how she may harness her gifts to build a stronger League now and in the future. †

Resources!

Have you seen the many resources created by the implementation committee's working groups? Visit the League's website (cwl.ca) to learn more!

Manuals

Actively Engaging New Members and Homebound Members
Call to Family, Community, and Participation and Subsidiary
Care for God's Creation Resources
Catholic Social Teaching Resources
Community and Common Good
Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers [The]
Embracing Diversity: Tools for Councils Use
Existing Programs and Courses on Catholic Social Teaching
Guide to Simplifying Meetings
Intergenerational Activity Program
Life and Dignity of the Human Person
Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
Prayers and Spiritual Programs

The Joy of Leadership
Toolkit for Faith
Toolkit for Service
Toolkit for Social Justice
Welcome Program

Promotional

Be a Bridge Through Generations (postcard, poster)
Calendar of Social Justice Events
Connecting all Generations (postcard, poster)
Embracing Diversity graphic
Faith, Service, Social Justice brochure
Many Cultures in Faith (postcard, poster)
One Heart, One Vision graphic
Retreat Centres for Spiritual Development (brochure, bulletin)

Share the Words (52 Reasons to Talk About the CWL)
Sharing the Core Values (postcard, poster)
Welcome Program brochure
What We Do (bookmarks, postcard, poster)

Templates

Newsletter Template
Newsletter Template Notes and Editing Instructions

Workshops

League Misconceptions Workshop
Our Common Home: A Crash Course (PowerPoint)
Our Common Home: Speaker's Notes
Prayer Service Planning PowerPoint
Prayer Service Planning Workshop

Reflections—“A Unique Togetherness We Have”

Betty Colaneri

National First-Vice President and Chairperson of Communications



You hold in your hand the instrument of communication that the League has used since its inception—*The Canadian League* magazine. As the League quietly celebrated its 100th anniversary, the magazine quietly did the same, capturing the historic moment. In 1921, *The Canadian League* was adopted as the “official organ” or official publication of the League and continues to be a vital part of the organization. Its cover, contents and quantity may have changed over the years, but it is the only form of communication that has remained a constant of the League for more than 100 years. The pages gently speak to members as they tell the stories of the past and continue to keep them informed of what is being done across Canada.

As a history buff, I find it fascinating to take a walk down memory lane and pick up *Except the Lord Build the House... A History of Social Concern*. There you can find interesting information and read about the groundwork that occurred to give members what they have today. Did you know Most Rev. Neil McNeil, D.D., then Archbishop of Toronto, founded *The Canadian League* in April 1921? It was the little magazine in 1921 of 5½” x 8½” format that grew to 9½” x 13¼” in 1930, then back to 8½” x 11” in 1939. From 1921 to 1968, members had to choose to subscribe to the magazine. In 1969, the number of subscribers was approximately 25,000. In that same year, the League introduced automatic subscriptions and raised the per capita fee so every paid member would receive the magazine automatically—increasing subscriptions to 100,000. In 1936, *The Canadian League* had a place in the greatest Catholic Press exhibition in history—the Exhibit at the Vatican offered in homage to the Holy Father. The magazine’s printers at the time were the Sisters of Providence from Kingston, Ontario. To commemorate the occasion, that issue was bound in League colours. When the League celebrated its 60th anniversary in 1980, the magazine had a four-colour cover for the first time. The printers at the time donated the cover, as well as the colour photographs featured inside (also a first). The League certainly has come a long way since that first issue!

In the September 1921 issue, the League’s first National President Bellelle Guerin wrote (in what is now referred to today as the “President’s Message”), “*The Canadian League*’s our baby, toddling on its infant feet, it is lisping its first words, we would not dare to call it either literary or learned, but it is ours! We have brought it to life, we will rear it to strength and power, it is our fist united effort, it cannot – must not fail. Through it we will keep in communication with each other, stimulate each other by example, and foster the friendships which sprang up so spontaneously at our Convention in Toronto, amongst all our members, no matter how far they may be apart.”

I have often wondered what the League’s founders, Bellelle Guerin, Katherine Hughes and all the past presidents would think of how the “baby” has grown over the years. I hope they are as proud as current members are to continue the tradition of its original purpose. We are in the driver’s seat, staring out of the large windshield at the road ahead. We look into the mirrors from side to side for our reflection to remind us how important it is to stay the course of today. From time to time, with gratitude, we take a quick glance into the rear-view mirror to reflect on the past and how far we have come. We take comfort that our GPS (God’s Powerful Spirit) is with us to guide and motivate us on our journey.

This official publication may seem silent as it sits on tables or desks, but it is powerful enough to stand the test of time. Steeped in the roots of the past but driven to continue to tell the League’s story and vision of the future. The magazine you hold in your hands is a tool to communicate who the League is and represents. So proudly pass it along for someone else to read and understand all the wonderful things being done by members across Canada.

It has truly been an honour to have been given the privilege of contributing to the magazine—*The Canadian League*—a link to the past and the bridge to the future. After all these years, it still remains the perfect way to show “...a unique togetherness we have.” †

Resolutions to Ottawa— *Catholic and Living It!* Through Advocacy

Rolande Chernichan

National Chairperson of Resolutions



The League's resolutions were last presented to the federal government in 2018 with a lapse due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Planning for the Ottawa visit began immediately after the 2022 national convention in Kelowna. Resolutions adopted at the 2019 and 2022 national conventions became a top priority to present. Several resolutions that had been previously presented and were still active were also put on the list to be revisited for updates regarding government action.

The appointed delegation of the national executive/board included National President and Chairperson of International Relations Fran Lucas, National President-Elect and Chairperson of Organization Shari Guinta, National Chairperson of Resolutions Rolande Chernichan and National Chairperson of Legislation Glenda Carson, who participated by telephone.

Resolution 2022.01 Enact Federal Legislation to Reduce Food Loss and Waste

It is the League's position that legislation to reduce food loss and waste by the agri-food sector, grocery stores, hospitality industry and commercial institutions is essential to address hunger. A question was raised about the preliminary results of the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council's cross-country targets to align with the United Nations' sustainable development goals by 2030. It was explained that the food policy is relatively new, and Canada was one of the last G7 countries to implement a new food policy. The government initiated the No-Waste Food Fund to maximize growers' productivity and ensure

no food is wasted from farm to table. Mention was made of the need for legislation to remove liability for all those in the food chain who donate food to address hunger and food security and for initiating tax incentives to reduce food waste. A senior policy advisor from the office of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada noted the suggestions to bring forward. The minister intends to introduce a "Grocery Code of Conduct" in 2023 to enhance transparency, predictability and fair dealing in the grocery business. It was asked if foods' best-before dates are being addressed because these also contribute to food waste.

Presently, reducing food loss and waste is the responsibility of the federal department of environment and natural resources. An advisor for the minister of environment took note of the request for an informational video about the effects of food waste on the environment.

Resolution 2017.02 Mandatory Age Verification Mechanisms for Adult Pornographic Websites

The delegation met with a director of policy in Senator Donald Plett's office. The senator had addressed the Senate regarding protecting children from damaging online content and that mechanisms for age verification for accessing programs that depicted explicit sexual activity must take priority. He commended the

League's support for an amendment requiring age verification for pornographic sites. The delegation was advised to watch for a window of opportunity when further action is introduced and to strategically attach League efforts to that.



Shari Guinta, Rolande Chernichan and Fran Lucas outside of the Peace Tower, Ottawa, Ontario, February 2023.



The delegation meets with Member of Parliament Alexandra Mendes, February 2023.

Resolution 2015.01 Increased Early Access and Intervention to Children and Youth Mental Health Services

Early access to mental services and interventions for children and youth continues to be a concern for members despite the government's investment of \$100 million. The parliamentary secretary to the office of mental health and addictions and associate minister of health as well as a legislative assistant for the minister, explained that, in 2019, the government had announced \$4.5 billion for mental health. Last fall, the government also announced \$25 billion (over 10 years) to support shared health priorities, including mental health, in addition to the previously committed \$5 billion (over 10 years, 2017-2027) to address mental health and addictions in provinces and territories. It was mentioned that the Wellness Together Canada website and application (launched during the pandemic) had received over two million clicks during the pandemic. In addition, a new 988 rapid-access number for suicide prevention will launch in November 2023. The federal government's Stepped Care Model also highlighted that a person is entitled to receive the right care at the right moment by the right person.

Resolution 2015.02 Ban Microbeads in Personal Care Products

The delegation expressed appreciation for the government having enacted *Microbeads in Toiletries Regulations* that came into force in 2018 and inquired about ongoing monitoring and cleanup of microbead pollution in freshwater lakes and rivers since the

regulations came into effect. A political advisor to the minister of environment and climate change responded that the department is very strict in protecting lakes and rivers.

Resolution 2013.01 Building Relationships and Partnerships with Canada's Indigenous Peoples

Appreciation was expressed for the government's support in making Pope Francis' historic visit to Canada in July 2022 possible. A question was raised about where the greatest success had been achieved in strengthening relationships with Indigenous peoples. The director of operations from the office of the minister of Crown-Indigenous relations advised that going to Indigenous communities and meeting people where they are, has made the most significant difference. The minister's focus going forward is on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and the 231 Calls for Justice identified in *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*.

Resolution 2002.11 Responsible Internet Use for Children

A consistent concern of the League is that Canada appears to be lagging in funding research and developing tools to protect children from damaging online content. A question was raised about the government's support for regulating online spaces and requiring Internet companies to regulate age verification and other tools to protect children from access to pornography sites. A policy advisor to the minister of Canadian heritage and a regional advisor for Quebec responded that an expert panel had been appointed after consultation on many fronts. The work for developing legislation is ongoing, and the goal was to bring it forward as soon as possible. The government aims to create an independent regulator to focus on the administration and enforcement of the legislation.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB)

A one-hour meeting with the assistant general secretary and the director for evangelization and catechesis provided an exchange of information on various topics. The League was thanked for donations supporting the CCCB's *Horizons of Hope: A Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care* initiative and for its interest in participating in the program. The delegation thanked the CCCB for helping to realize the visit to Canada by Pope Francis. The League was advised to source the CCCB website regarding four pastoral letters, "That We May Walk Together," which provide a broad framework for the follow-up to the papal visit and other educational resources relating to building relationships with Indigenous peoples. It was reported that the five-year

National Reconciliation Fund initiative was on track, and \$9 million of the \$30 million target had been collected. The national synthesis for the *Synod on Synodality* is also on the CCCB website. The delegation provided a brief report on the League's strategic plan, citing the success of working groups and the 5-year implementation plan being on track.

Apostolic Nuncio

The delegation was invited to a lunch meeting with the Apostolic Nuncio to Canada His Excellency Msgr. Ivan Jurkovič, First Secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature Msgr. Antons Prikulis and Fr. Andrew Taylor. The nuncio asked several questions about the League, its structure, objectives and resolutions. He also inquired about what the League was doing for Ukraine and whether food loss and waste was a global issue. His Excellency expressed great honour in having had the privilege to welcome Pope Francis to Canada. He explained feeling very blessed to have been assigned to Canada and noted his deep gratitude for the beautiful setting of the nunciature in Ottawa.

The Opposition Party

The delegation met with the member of parliament (MP) for Sherwood Park-Fort Saskatchewan on behalf of the leader of the opposition. The delegation was advised that with its large membership, parliamentary committees should hear from the League on a full spectrum of issues to bring a Catholic voice to politics in general and also through meeting with individual MPs. He was informed that the League had presented a brief on human trafficking, is updating its position papers and is very interested in being made aware of topics of government action that align with League objectives and being a voice concerning them. A priority for the League has been euthanasia, and he urged support for a bill that advocates the one-year pause regarding euthanasia for mental illness to be permanent. Responsible Internet use and the issue of minors accessing or appearing in pornography were discussed, as well as their access to mental health using



The delegation meets with Jerome Cote, Senior Policy Advisor for the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, February 2023.

medical services and in partnership with pastoral care. A national initiative for palliative care was discussed briefly. Many challenges remain regarding economic reform and flexibility for Indigenous relations and reconciliation to occur autonomously. The League was affirmed for prioritizing building Indigenous relationships, especially since negative perceptions about Catholic-Indigenous relationships are among the most significant barriers to evangelization.

Government Liaisons

The delegation met with the MP for Saint-Lambert (assistant deputy speaker and assistant deputy chair of committees of the whole), who had generously offered to liaise the scheduling of meetings. The delegation expressed its appreciation for the efforts made by her and her assistant to coordinate the meetings with the offices of ministers. Several resolution topics were discussed, and assurance was given that the League conveys good news to its members about government action regarding resolutions.

The delegation also met with the MP for Provencher. He was thanked for arranging reserved seating for the delegation in Question Period and for his pro-life stance in government. Members' concerns brought forward through resolutions were briefly discussed. He affirmed the League and stressed the need to restore the family unit, noting that many societal problems stem from the breakdown of families.

Throughout three days of meetings, the League's delegation felt the prayerful support of members in that they had been well received and all dialogue had been fruitful. The delegation was pleasantly surprised and appreciated that, in several instances, the designated officer to meet on behalf of a minister was also Catholic. The League received several commendations for members' volunteer work and advocacy. The delegation left Ottawa convinced the League's advocacy through resolutions is valued and necessary to bring Christian perspectives and values to elected government officials and legislation. The delegation embraced its role as ambassadors for Christ, and its visit to Ottawa was a witness to being *Catholic and Living It!* †



The delegation meets with representatives of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, February 2023.

Charismatic Catholic Women's League

Cathy Bouchard

National Second Vice-President and Chairperson of Spiritual Development



As part of the Unity Outreach, while visiting all the different councils, the facilitators ask—what is your charism or spiritual strength? What is your council's charism?

As baptized and confirmed women, members have been gifted by the Holy Spirit with spiritual strengths. A charism is a divine gift given to a person FOR others. Each member is responsible for strengthening her community by sharing her gifts. Charisms equip people to fulfill their vocation. The League workshops, "A Short Exercise in Discernment" (#802) and "One in the Spirit" (#819), can help members recognize their charisms or gifts. A woman often has more than one charism and develops even more gifts through her life as a member of the League. These gifts may include administration, apostleship, caregiving, discernment, evangelism, exhortation, faith, giving, knowledge, mercy, prophet, teaching, wisdom, communicating and more.

Why should members discover their charism? Knowing their charism or gifts energizes people and focuses that energy. People experience joy and feel like they have a purpose and have found a place of belonging. They are more effective and fruitful and can witness beautiful moments of grace. People are more confident when they work through their gifts. They become grateful when they see the gifts of others and recognize how they can work together. Members can work as a team/body of

Christ, each having a special role.

Members are encouraged to ask themselves: Have I offered my gifts to the council in service to the League? Have I looked at the gifts of others in my council? Have I encouraged my sisters to share and use their gifts? To discern a parish council's charism, look at what it is most successful at—where it experiences joy. What events draw members to share their gifts? Do members see the League as *their* League? What is each member's role in the League as a whole? The League is for every woman, and there is a place for their talents and charisms that works with the amount of time each individual has to give.

We pray for the outpouring of charisms of the Holy Spirit: "...God Holy Spirit, in our lives in this world, we stand in great need of Your charisms. By these, Your gifts, You enable us to make a real contribution to the lives of others, in the Church, in our society in our personal interaction with one another. For all these charisms are to be used for the benefit of others...

O Holy Spirit of God abide with us; inspire all our thoughts; pervade all our imagination; suggest all our doings. Be with us in our silence and in our speech, in our haste and in our leisure, in our company and in solitude; in the freshness of the morning and in the weariness of evening; and give us grace at all times, humbly to rejoice in your mysterious companionship, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen" (*Healing Grace*). †



Members of Saskatoon Diocesan Council.

An Ending and a Beginning

Anne-Marie Gorman

National Past President and Chairperson of Laws



How appropriate that I should be completing my tenure with the national executive/board in 2023, in my home province of New Brunswick, as the five years of the strategic planning process concludes. I have had opportunities to watch the budding of a new era in the League that began with a study by the past, present and future national presidents. A steering committee was struck that would set the agenda for work initiated and completed by literally hundreds of hands, minds and creative spirits to fulfill the goals, objectives and strategies of *The Catholic Women's League of Canada Plans Strategically*. Under the guidance of then National President Margaret Ann Jacobs, the team included Honorary Life Members Danielle McNeil-Hessian and Barbara Dowding (national past president at the time), provincial past presidents Pauline Krupa (Ontario) and Ingrid Lefort (Quebec), Vancouver Diocesan Past President Roxanne MacDonald and me. We were blessed to have the expertise of Executive Director Kim Scammell, who had a background and expertise in strategic planning. Our Lady and the Holy Spirit, through our many prayers and requests for intercession, gave us confidence that, while a somewhat terrifying experience, would assure us that all would be well. I believe the memory of the national town hall held in Charlottetown at the 97th annual national convention will remain one of the highlights of my time as a member, as thousands across Canada responded to questions under the guidance of consultant Donna Dunn of Tecker International. A few strategies will have yet to be completed, but my little trip down memory lane makes me realize how much has been accomplished by so many. I consider it a privilege and honour to be part of what will have a substantial positive impact.

And here the League is today, forging forth with new structures, new resources and what I trust will be a new era for the next 100 years. Of course, there will always be new challenges and more changes, and I am confident, too, that these will be met with all the zeal members can muster.

What started as the opportunity to represent my diocesan council as president in 1996 at a national

convention in Toronto quickly became a passion for ensuring the church, communities and members I served had a voice that would be heard from coast to coast. It has been an experience only surpassed by motherhood and child-rearing. Serving as national president was an honour I had dreamt not of. Yet, I have learned so much, a few of which I mention that may speak to members and prospective members:

- Attending a convention is an excellent way to learn and become more committed to the work of the League.
- Disagreement and discussion ultimately move the League forward in a positive way.
- National presidents I met and been mentored and befriended by have been exactly where they needed to be at the time of their leadership.
- Members in the parish are *the* heart and soul of this organization.
- A national office is the best investment in keeping the membership organized and the organization intact.
- Prayer strengthens this huge organization.
- In difficult times of which I've had some, the sisterhood carried me in their collective arms.
- Resolutions written and presented to local and federal governments demonstrate the League has it right.
- The unexpected will happen, and there are people who will journey with me in good times and bad.
- The spiritual advisors are true blessings, and they can spread the good news that is the League; national spiritual advisors I've known, from Most Rev. Douglas Crosby (Hamilton) to Most Rev. Stephen Jensen (Prince George), have always had the best interests of the League at heart.
- While I am only a poor frail human, when God calls, I am to answer.
- Numbers are important nationally, and we have them. Numbers are not important locally as long as there is a strong desire to serve and make a difference wherever we are.
- As the country becomes more secular, keeping the League alive becomes even more important. Federal government departments listen to the League's collective voice.

- Change is to be embraced and not feared.
- God is good, all the time.
- All will be well.

I will sit with a storied group of women once I leave the dais in August, the good Lord willing, all of whom have lifted and made all members better because of their leadership: honorary life members Jean Mahoney (1982-1984), Irene LeFort (1986-1988), Heather Kolla (1992-1994), Claire Heron (1994-1996), Joan Chesser (1996-1998), Vivian Bosch (2000-2002), Marie Cameron (2002-2004), Agnes Bedard (2004-2006), Lorette Noble (2006-2008), Danielle McNeil-Hessian (2008-2010), Velma Harasen (2010-2012), Betty Anne Brown Davidson (2012-2014), Barbara Dowding (2014-2016) and Margaret Ann Jacobs (2016-2018).

I will cherish the memories of meeting so many women “in the trenches,” representing Canada at the national conventions of the League’s American counterpart and the World Union of Catholic Women’s Organisations, meeting beautiful women at the congress of the Ukrainian Catholic Women’s League of Canada; I continue to pray for many. While I chaired only one in-person national convention prior to the pandemic, I was blessed with the expertise of national office staff so as to chair not one but two partially virtual annual meetings of members. Again, the right people were there to help this technological-challenged president.

May God continue to bless The Catholic Women’s League of Canada. What a tremendous way to be *Catholic and Living It!* Be not afraid. †

SPOTLIGHT

On January 25th, public health nurse and chairperson of service for Church of The Ascension Parish Council (Parkville) Julia Murrell coordinated a panel of experts from Vancouver Island to address the crisis of seniors’ care in the province. Seniors Advocate for British Columbia Isobel Mackenzie was the keynote speaker. Each panellist addressed a different issue, from home care to assisted living and nursing care. The audience was encouraged to prepare an advanced plan before it became necessary to use these services. It was apparent that financial hardships could be a serious consequence of out-of-hospital acute care. Ms. MacKenzie addressed many of these issues in her speech, and following the panel discussion, questions and answers indicated how much work still must be done. The member of the legislative assembly for Parkville-Qualicum spoke of his experiences with his constituents and planned to do more with Ms. McKenzie on this subject. A donation was provided to Manna Homeless Network on behalf of the guest

speakers. The parish council plans to host a follow-up session on the financial planning aspect of critical care.



Panelists left to right: Gwen Seasing (Oceanside Health Centre), Helia Sillen (Vancouver Island Health Authority) and Isobel Mackenzie, Seniors Advocate for British Columbia.



St. Michael Parish Council (Gimli) spearheaded an initiative to collect cleaning products for its new Ukrainian neighbours in the Interlake area as they moved from a dormitory setting into their own homes. Eighteen baskets of cleaning products, plus small kitchen appliances, were collected from the three Catholic churches in the area and delivered to grateful families!

Members of St. Michael Parish Council (Gimli) with donations.

Just Breathe

Margaret Schwab

National Chairperson of Education and Health



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

For members, ministry and service are a huge part of daily life. They are natural caregivers—they care for children, grandchildren, spouses, elderly parents, siblings, other parishioners and members of their communities. The list goes on. Members genuinely try to be *Catholic and Living It!* But what toll does all the caring take on their health?

Studies show that women who juggle many roles as caregivers and sometimes breadwinners experience significantly higher stress than men. Women are also twice as likely to be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder (compared to men), perhaps because of trying to manage it all. Every role women take on exposes them to more stress factors. A small amount of stress is good for everyone as it can motivate people to reach their potential and get the job done. However, different people will find they experience stress very differently. What is considerable stress for one may be no stress at all for the next person. Women’s reaction to stress is quite different from men’s because of the entirely different hormonal system that causes women a more emotional response to stress and more exhaustion on the emotional level.

What are the signs of stress? Common signs include sleep problems, constant fatigue, an unbalanced digestive system, tense muscles, changes in appetite, headaches and trouble concentrating. In addition, impatience, negativity, an increase in blood pressure and a weakening of the immune system causing failure to fight off infections, are also possible problems arising from stress. The worst result that can and does occur is total burnout.

How do women, as their lives seem to get busier, manage the stress? Stress can be addictive. Often, people crave being busy to help them feel worthwhile.

Members, especially, never turn down an opportunity to help rather than take time for themselves. They need to realize that living under constant stress is not a normal way of living, work on the “I can do everything” habit and learn to take specific time to relax their minds and bodies. Take time to create something that makes you happy if you are creative. Read that book that has been sitting for too long on the shelf. With the arrival of the long-awaited summer, take time to walk, sit in the sun and communicate with the beautiful nature God has provided. Yes! Take time to really smell the roses. Meditation is also recommended to relieve stress, and as Catholics, members have the most wonderful meditation tool—the Holy Rosary. Take your rosary on a walk and meditate on the great mysteries. It will put your mind at ease and lower your heart rate. Purposely slowing your breathing for a minute or two will help to calm your body and clear your head.

Eating healthy is extremely important to stress relief. When rushing from job to job, people tend to grab anything quick and easy to keep away hunger. However, taking time out for a healthy meal or snack energizes us, and nutritious food feeds more than just our stomachs.

Of course, a great stress reliever is to have a good laugh. Find a friend or family member who always finds something to laugh about and spend time together. A good friend is a fine jewel.

“... Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor 6:19-20).

God has chosen us to help Him carry out His plans. He created us, and we must take care of His creation so that we can carry out His plans with peaceful, joyful hearts. †

Living In Times of Financial Uncertainty

Janet McLean

National Secretary-Treasurer



The economy—Canadians hear about it every day. Depending on whom they speak to, Canada is either on the brink of a recession, in a downturn or may avoid a recession. Economists have various views and opinions, but the one sure thing is that many are feeling the pinch of rising prices, whether at the gas pump, the grocery store or when shopping for necessities. If you have never had a budget or don't stick to one you do have, now is the time to prioritize this. Whether financially well off or finding it hard to make ends meet, a budget will help you manage your finances in these tough economic times. Calculating your income on a monthly, bi-monthly or weekly basis and listing all expenses for the same period can help you see where funds are spent and where you can make changes if necessary.

Make sure you take advantage of any federal, provincial or municipal services available either free of charge or for a nominal fee. If various choices are available in your area for telecommunication services, research before renewing any contracts to ensure you aren't paying for services you don't use or are available elsewhere for less. Many companies will offer services for free on a trial basis, and if you don't cancel after this free trial period, you will find yourself paying for a service you may not be using. Those automatic \$3.50 or \$5.00 monthly charges to your credit card may seem small but they add up in the long run.

Be alert for offers that seem too good to be true—in many cases, they are. Whether working full-time or enjoying retirement, Canadians all lead busy lives and may forget to read the *fine print*, especially when it means scrolling through several pages of the Terms and Conditions. Make sure you know what you are signing up for before agreeing to a new service and the cost (including any penalties) if you cancel.

Fraudsters have become highly adept at making people part with their money. Individuals pretending to be from a heating or air-conditioning company or offering other services to renovate your residence may offer enticing “deals” on new equipment or insist that you must make various renovations to keep up with current safety standards. Never sign anything on the spur of the moment, and never give a “deposit” so the company can

“get started” unless you have verified the company or individual's credentials. Speak to trusted people you know, check with neighbours or others in the community and ask for references before parting with any money. If cash is required, be wary—especially if offered a better price for paying this way (i.e., “I won't have to charge you any taxes”). The old adage—better safe than sorry—should be your byword.

All too many members have heard stories of older adults being duped out of their money by someone pretending to be their grandchild, niece or nephew or a friend's child. The telephone connection may seem poor, or the individual may say they are calling on behalf of a person who is in difficulty. You may be told that money is needed *immediately*, or they may ask you to send gift or prepaid credit cards. The minute you hear the words “Don't tell anyone/don't tell your local police/don't let Mom or Dad know I'm in trouble,”—**be wary. Always** contact the child's parents or guardians, and do not hesitate to contact local police. Those who work in the banking industry should be alert if anyone wants to make an unusual withdrawal of funds. This type of scam is not confined to older individuals. People of all ages have been robbed of money simply because they wanted to help someone in trouble. As Catholics, wanting to help others should be part of each member's nature, but members should always exercise caution and act using their brains and not just their hearts.

Look out for your friends and neighbours and help where you can. Sharing your concerns and problems with others can help lighten the load. God is always looking out for us, so let's look out for one another. †

Mission Statement

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

Setting Sail in Hope

Rolande Chernichan

National Chairperson of Resolutions



Hello dear sisters! As I prepare this article, I am filled with the hope of springtime and the promise of resurrection that Easter brings. Pope Francis' motto for the 2025 Jubilee year, *Pilgrims of Hope*, adds to my hope as Catholics dedicate the next two years to spiritual preparation for the jubilee. At first glance, there is much richness in the artwork of the official logo for the jubilee. The theological explanation for the logo's imagery adds to my appreciation of its symbolism and how it was decided. I am reminded of the two anchors used by Honorary Life Member Margaret Ann Jacobs in the logo that captured the theme of her presidency—*Inspired by the Spirit, Women Respond to God's Call* and of the anchor used in the Gratitude Project postcard initiative. I am especially reminded of the League's use of a boat to capture its five-year journey to implement its strategic plan. The hope invested in those five years adds to the hope many members and I cling to as we continue our pilgrim journey "For God and Canada."

As my term on the national executive/board draws to a close, I am left with questions. What is the future of resolutions as a form of advocacy by the League? Will the focus on them be sustained and encouraged? As one who is passionate about resolutions, I hope members, now and in the future, will continue to be inspired to speak on matters that concern them through the resolutions process.

The League has produced several new resources available to guide the process of developing resolutions. The *Resolutions Handbook*, *Resolutions Guide*, *Resolutions Workshop PowerPoint* and *Resolutions Workshop Speaker Notes* provide guidance in understanding the resolutions process from start to finish. These resources were developed to explain the *who, what, when, where* and *why* of resolutions. These resources considered several years of feedback from members. Hopefully, most questions have been answered, and members have a better understanding of resolution development and its adoption process through to the national level, supported by examples and new information provided and explained in the resources.

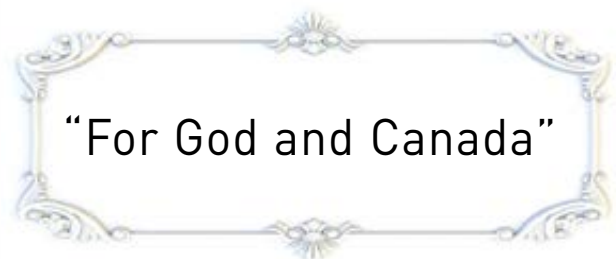
So where do we go from here? When asked to report about action on resolutions, the 2022 annual report survey completed by parish councils revealed a wide array of answers. There remains a need to continue to promote the

value of discussing resolutions and to educate and create awareness about the topics they present and the follow-up action by members through letter writing. These are necessary acts of advocacy in support of social justice.

The survey also yielded several names of members Canada-wide who would be interested in receiving specialized training in resolution development to continue League advocacy through resolutions. Those names give me hope on which the League can build. Bringing together interested members through virtual meetings, using modern technology to provide workshops, building teams and keeping members connected will be the key to inspiration, feeling supported and keeping the flame of resolutions still burning within members well into the future.

In his message announcing the 2025 Jubilee year, Pope Francis said, "We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart, and a far-sighted vision. The forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire."

May hope be an expression of members' faith as they serve God and Canada through membership and the opportunities to be *Catholic and Living It!* offered by the standing committees of faith, service and social justice. Members are invited to join in the pilgrimage offered to them by Pope Francis, setting sail in hope and gaining "... new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision." The longevity of resolutions in the League's future is a part of that hope. †



Immigration in Canada— Then and Now



Faith Anderson

National Chairperson of Community Life

Canada has long been and continues to be a land of immigration. According to Statistics Canada, “Since Confederation in 1867, more than 17 million immigrants have come to Canada.” However, over the last 150 years, the annual number of landed immigrants in Canada has fluctuated. Some indicators can be linked to immigration policy changes, Canada’s economic situation or world events connected with the movement of migrants and refugees.

The number of immigrants admitted annually in the late 1800s varied between 6,300 and 133,000. In the early 1900s, when Canada was promoting the settlement of Western Canada, a record number of immigrants were admitted. More than 400,000 immigrants arrived in Canada in 1913—the most ever recorded until 2021. During World War I, the number of people who immigrated dropped significantly to 34,000 in 1915. During the Great Depression in the 1930s and during World War II, Canada recorded its fewest number of landed immigrants.

The Statistics Canada report, *150 years of immigration in Canada*, indicated, “The return of peace fostered economic recovery and an immigration boom in Canada. Other record levels of immigration have been registered during political and humanitarian crises, including in 1956 and 1957, when 37,500 Hungarian refugees arrived in the country, and in the 1970s and 1980s, when [many] Ugandan, Chilean, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian refugees came to Canada. Since the early 1990s, the number of landed immigrants has remained relatively high, with an average of approximately 235,000 new immigrants per year.”

The 1931 Census counted nearly 2.3 million foreign-born people, representing 22.2% of Canada’s population at the beginning of the 1900s. A 2011 National Household Survey estimated the foreign-born population at 6,775,700, roughly 20.6% of the total population—the most considerable proportion since the 1931 Census.

The number of people working (i.e., the labour force) and paying taxes to fund public services, such as health care, reflects the strength of Canada’s economy. Canada’s labour force continues to grow thanks to immigrants as they fill available jobs where there is a lack of qualified

workers. While immigrants contribute to the economy, fill gaps in the labour force and pay taxes, they also spend money on goods, housing and transportation. More than 335,000 immigrants work in health-related occupations according to the 2016 Census.

In the last 15 years, immigration in the Prairies and Atlantic Canada has more than doubled. The number of immigrants who settle outside Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec has grown from one in 10 (1997) to almost four in 10 (2017). About 85% of newcomers become citizens, giving Canada one of the highest naturalization rates in the world.

The federal government is committed to supporting Ukrainians affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine by helping families get visitor visas quickly to find a safe, temporary home in Canada. It is also actively working with provinces, territories and settlement organizations to expand services available to Ukrainian families. Some measures the federal government has put in place include priority processing of Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel applications, increased newcomer services for Ukrainians arriving in Canada, waiving fees and providing support for flights to Canada.

A January 3rd federal government news release indicated Canada experienced one of the fastest recoveries from the global COVID-19 pandemic due to its approach to immigration. The release noted that newcomers enrich communities and contribute to the economy by working, creating jobs and supporting local businesses. The government had planned to welcome 431,645 new permanent residents in 2022. Canada reached its target and surpassed the previous record (set in 2021), representing the largest number of people ever welcomed in a single year in Canadian history.

While there is an urgent need to help and support Ukrainian immigrants, other immigrants also need support. For more than 100 years, the League has had a long-standing history of helping immigrants. Members and parish councils are encouraged to learn more about immigrant needs in their community and be a welcoming force in their communities and churches. Being *Catholic and Living It!* can change the lives of newcomers. †

One Bite at a Time

Implementation Committee

Archbishop Desmond Tutu once wisely said, “There is only one way to eat an elephant: a bite at a time.” He meant that even when everything in life seems impossible, it can be accomplished gradually by taking on just a little at a time.

This speaks to the League’s five-year strategic plan. The League is nearing the end of this project that has involved hundreds of women across the country who have contributed thousands of hours of service to the League and members. It is now time to continue to keep “eating the elephant!” I can not only talk about the high quality of resources available to members, but to anyone who visits the national website. The quantity and content of these resources will keep “gifting” this beloved League for decades to come. Through this project, the implementation committee and its working groups have reached out to numerous ecumenical and interfaith organizations, school boards across the country and retreat centres and more from outside the League that are a part of this project.

The fruits of labour are ripe for the picking—members and councils need only to reach out and pick one! Take one bite (resource) and be nourished! Then share with other members, family, friends and pastors!

Sr. Susan Scott, Goal 2 Lead

As the president of a small parish council, finding the time needed to create and plan everything to keep the council running is challenging. I have been grateful in these last 15 months as parish president to be able to use many resources created by different working groups. For example, I have used the *Newsletter Template* to start a bi-monthly parish council newsletter. This has allowed my small parish council to stay connected. Copies of the newsletter are also left at the back of the church for non-members to take home. The template made it much easier for me to think about beginning this project.

I am responsible for planning bi-monthly prayer services for my council. I have used the prayers in the *Prayers and Spiritual Programs* document. It has saved me so much time and worry. I know the prayers and spiritual programs were written with my League sisters in mind and that everything in this document can be used, copied and adapted for my council’s needs.

Taking on these new projects in a small parish council has been so much easier because I have used these resources. If you haven’t taken a look, you should!

Jacqueline Nogier, Chairperson and Goal 3 Lead

The Catholic Women’s League of Canada means many things to people. The marketing working group developed a resource to help members speak positively about the League by expanding on the words featured on the national sisterhood map. The *Share the Words* resource lists 52 affirming messages, one for each week of the year. Some councils have been inserting a message in a weekly parish bulletin to promote the League to parishioners. The words also give members talking points when initiating a conversation with a prospective member or to clarify a misconception. Some councils across the country use the words online—on provincial and diocesan websites and social media (Facebook and Instagram) posts using the hashtag #WhatsYourCWL. This resource gives many reasons to talk about the League. Whatever you decide, the words will start the conversation!

Christa Grillmair, Goal 1 Lead

I have relied on the many available resources created by the various working groups. There are two documents that I have mostly relied on for the monthly CWL Virtual Wednesdays. The *Welcome Program* was presented in April 2021. This resource continues to be one I encourage parish councils to use in small parts at meetings and recruitment drives.

Given a chance to choose a favourite resource, it would be *The Joy of Leadership*. I recently offered it as a three-hour presentation on a Saturday morning, but it is very easily adaptable to shorter presentations at the parish council level. In March, I also incorporated sections of it into a virtual workshop on values-based time management. Attendees appreciated the project planning forms and becoming aware of their ministry in the League. With the changes at various council levels, and the reluctance to take on leadership roles, this manual is a wonderful tool for women of faith to discern their call.

Sue Lubowitz, President, Toronto Diocesan Council

BINGO

Use the “Quick Links: Strategic Planning Resources and Updates” link on the national website (cwl.ca) to play a game of Bingo and earn a chance to win a prize! Complete one line (any direction) and submit the questions and answers to Project Coordinator Kerri Sylvester at projects@cwl.ca by June 30, 2023. One name from each of the three regions (Atlantic Canada/Quebec, Ontario, Western Canada/Military Ordinariate) will be drawn randomly from all correct submissions. The prize is a donation to a charity of the winner’s choice (in line with Catholic teaching) or reimbursement of a registration fee covered for the provincial convention in the winner’s province, with a monetary value of up to \$150.00. †

In the <i>Calendar of Social Justice Events</i> resource, what is the event for February 20 th ?	How can members “Be a Bridge Through Generations”? List one of the three bullet points.	List three of the five sections in the <i>Guide to Simplifying Meeting and Reporting Processes</i> .	In the <i>Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers</i> key principle of Catholic social teaching resource, name two of the “Prophets Among Us.”	List three Marian Devotions included in the <i>Toolkit for Faith</i> .
What was the largest age group of members in 2019? This information can be found in the <i>Intergenerational Activity Program</i> .	In the <i>Catholic Social Teaching Resources</i> , what are the two feet of social justice?	In the <i>Care for God’s Creation Resources</i> key principle of Catholic social teaching, what is the last sentence from the scripture quote from Genesis?	What are three short-term leadership activities outlined in <i>The Joy of Leadership</i> ?	List two of the five workshops contained in the <i>League Misconceptions Workshop</i> .
List six of the nine words from the “What We Do” poster.	What are three long-term leadership activities outlined in <i>The Joy of Leadership</i> ?	How many Retreat Centres for Spiritual Development are listed in the document with the same name?	Where can you find a listing of all the available strategic planning resources and updates?	What is the strategy of the Catholic social teaching working group as listed on the front page of its resources?
List four of the eight guidelines for subcommittees in Addendum #6 of the <i>Guide to Simplifying Meeting and Reporting Processes</i> .	What are six of the seven key principles of Catholic social teaching as listed on the national website home page under the “Strategic Planning Resources and Updates” link?	Where would you find marketing materials, videos, and vignettes to promote the League?	How many prayers and spiritual programs were created by the spiritual formation working group?	In the <i>Call to Family, Community, and Participation and Subsidiarity</i> key principle of Catholic social teaching resource, what is the quote from <i>Caritas in Veritate</i> by Pope Benedict?
What are the two service projects contained in the <i>Toolkit for Service</i> ?	List three of the six purposes of preparing reports.	In the <i>Life and Dignity of the Human Person</i> key principle of Catholic social teaching resource, what is the scripture quote for Proverbs?	The <i>Prayers Service Planning Workshop</i> lists what six things protected by copyright in Canada?	What are three of the five sharing suggestions listed in <i>Share the Words</i> ?

Becoming a Marian Successor in 12 Actions



Betty Colaneri

National First-Vice President and Chairperson of Communications

Dr. Josephine Lombardi, Ph.D., recently held a retreat for the national executive/board on what it means to become a Marian successor in 12 actions. Her complete presentation can be viewed at [youtube.com/watch?v=kaxN6KImPgo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kaxN6KImPgo). The following briefly highlights the steps.

In his post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Querida Amazonia*, Pope Francis states, “The Lord chose to reveal his power and his love through two human faces: the face of his divine Son made man and the face of a creature, a woman, Mary.”

What does it mean to become a Marian successor? It is to be a stand-in for Mary, a copy of Mary, someone that hangs on the living memory of Mary’s contribution to salvation history.

First Action: Grace through Faith

Mary is full of grace, which means she is full of God’s power and strength to fulfill her mission. The angel reminds her that God is with her. The gift of Mary to us tells us that we too can be like Mary.

Second Action: Courage

Mary had been gifted, chosen and called for her very unique mission. Courage is not only a gift given by the

Holy Spirit at confirmation but also a cardinal virtue. 1 John tells us that *perfect* love casts out fear. We need love to be courageous, and God is love. Have you resisted saying yes to God’s plan because you are afraid?

Third Action: Obedience

Mary’s response is, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). Mary surrenders to God’s will. We may try to do things our way, and not thy will be done. God may want to give us what we desire, but we are not prepared or ready yet. God’s delays are not God’s denials. We need to be patient and obedient.

Fourth Action: Humility

Another important virtue is humility, the habit of knowing the truth about ourselves, being grounded and being of service to others. It is knowing we are daughters of the most high.

Fifth Action: Perfect Love

1 John tells us that God is love. St. Thomas Aquinas defines love as willing the good of the other for the sake of the other. Jesus did nothing for personal gain but all for the glory of God. Like Mary, we too can will the good of the other for the sake of the other. By not doing anything out of ambition, attachment to glory or status, we will have the



The national executive/board listens to Dr. Josephine Lombardi’s presentation prior to its winter meeting in Toronto, Ontario on March 2, 2023.

courage to love for the sake of others. We must thoroughly examine our conscience before we serve and ask ourselves, is my motivation love?

Sixth Action: Trust

At the presentation of Jesus, Simeon sees the restoration of humanity in the child Jesus and tells Mary that a sword will pierce her heart. This disturbing prophecy may have worried Mary, but she remained in the moment and placed her trust in God. We must not allow an uncertain future to rob us of the peace of the present moment. God is with us; we are not alone.

Seventh Action: Hope

Mary is the mother of Hope, another theological virtue. Romans 12:12 inspired the definition of hope as the habit of waiting with joy, patience and perseverance. All of Luke 15 refers to saving and finding those that are lost, the parable of the lost sheep, the coin and the prodigal Son. Jesus came as one who saves the lost—He is our hope.

Eighth Action: Service

When working in our ministry, we must strive to be like Mary with her feminine genius to be of service, to know where there is need and to have the courage to bring that need to someone who can do something about it.

Ninth Action: Sacrifice

Mary knows what it is to suffer, and she offers herself in sacrifice. We do the same when we bring all our own struggles, hardships and suffering to the altar as our sacrifice. During mass, when the priest says, “my sacrifice and yours,” it is a time to reflect on what causes our pain and join it to the suffering of Jesus, the high priest.

Tenth Action: Wisdom

While Mary was in the upper room, she received the Holy Spirit. Mary is referred to as an advocate, a helper and a mediator because she is full of the Holy Spirit. We need to pray for liturgical wisdom.

Eleventh Action: Authority/Influence

“And she held authority: as the Lord did over the twelve disciples and then the seventy, so did the holy mother over the other women who accompanied him... But she was not only an inspiration and a teacher of endurance and ministry to the blessed apostles and the other believers, she was also a co-minister with the disciples of the Lord” (*The Life of the Virgin: Maximus the Confessor*). As successors of Mary, we have that same authority and influence by virtue of our baptism.

Twelfth Action: Glory

Mary, Queen of Heaven, experiences eternal glory with God, yet the dragon continues to pursue her. This reminds us that we are in constant battle. This is why it is important to embrace all these actions and become Marian successors so we too, can enjoy eternal glory. Mary shows us how.

Marian Successor as a Reflection of God

Mary is the perfect reflection of God in this world. We are called to accompany others on this journey. The less we sin, the more we trust, hope and are humble, obedient and courageous. The more we sacrifice, the more influence we will have, and the likeness of God will be restored. Reflect on Mary, a divinized creature, as a way of becoming a Marian successor and of what it means to hand down her living memory. †



Dr. Josephine Lombardi.

Discerning Provincial and Federal Legislation Accountabilities

Life Member Elizabeth Doyle and Betsy Fletcher
National Legislation Subcommittee Members



Where does one start? With multiple levels of government, figuring out where accountability lies when advocating for a legislative concern or issue can feel confusing. This article describes the federal and provincial/territorial government accountability in health legislation and policy, using mental health and illness as an example. While municipal governments also play an essential role as implementers of government legislation and shape their communities to support the needs of citizens, they are not the focus of this article.

The first step to discerning government accountability is to define a concern's nature and scope. For example, mental health and mental illness are not the same. Mental health is a state of well-being, similar to physical health and typically refers to emotions, a sense of connection to others, and how well daily life is managed. Loneliness and isolation are significant factors in mental health well-being and are often supported by community-based program interventions and services. On the other hand, mental illness usually involves changes in behaviour, mood or thinking, as seen in a diagnosis such as major depression, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders and addiction. Care in these circumstances is more likely to require professional support, hospital admissions and clinical services.

Further reflection determines how certain government policies and legislation affect a concern. The lack of adequate and timely access to service is significant for mental health and illness. It challenges the ability of people of all ages to reach their wellness potential and is especially true for Canadian children and youth. Their challenges to access directly affect the youth suicide rate, resulting in Canada having one of the highest rates among industrialized countries. Another example is the often stressful and frightening youth transition to already overwhelmed adult services at a specific, legislated age. Some provinces and territories have a cut-off at age 16 for youth mental health services; others have until 18. While the federal government could provide structure and funding for service and research to assist this transition, the provinces and territories would address this legislative concern.

Provinces and territories have primary jurisdiction in the planning and delivery of mental health services. They govern the direction of funding and the implementation of healthcare services, oversee specialized and professional services and allocate healthcare resources. The federal government provides the Canada Health Transfer funding to the provinces and territories through the *Canada Health Act* by defining services as medically necessary. Unfortunately, the services covered by the act often relate to hospital admissions or physician office visits leaving many essential mental health services unfunded. Therefore, the *Canada Health Act* may be an important player in some gaps in care at the local level.

All Canadian legislation must conform to the overarching *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, establishing rights and protection from discrimination for people with mental health and illness concerns. In addition, mental health acts are significant pieces of legislation that protect the rights of individuals in various settings by governing the assessment, treatment and rights of people. This includes setting privacy standards, prohibiting abuse and addressing discrimination. Each province and territory has its own mental health act that must comply with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Determining what services are covered in a province or territory and comparing them with federal services and legislation will effectively guide communication and advocacy.

The strategies to improve care are often bilateral, with the federal and provincial/territorial governments working in partnership to provide services. The recent bilateral agreement between the federal government and the provinces and territories in February 2023 is an example of collaborative work between the various government levels that aim to improve integrated health care for Canadians. With the commitment to increased funding, the federal government has also sought assurance that provinces and territories will provide services in response to a person's healthcare needs—not their ability to pay. This aims to hold them accountable to the basic premise of universal healthcare access for all Canadians through Medicare and the *Canada Health Act*.

The information and process described in this article can be applied to other topics, such as environmental concerns, human trafficking and medical assistance in dying, to name a few. Resolutions and letter-writing campaigns are examples of the arsenal members have used to positively influence government legislation,

encourage research endeavours, and support needed programs and services. Through continued legislative awareness and discernment, members can continue their advocacy efforts with federal and provincial/territorial elected representatives. †

Welcome Change!

Shari Guinta

National President-Elect and Chairperson of Organization



Those who have been members of the League for at least a few years, know it is going through some changes. As I like to put it, the organization is evolving—and that is good.

Some members prefer to keep things the same, as many people do not care for change. However, members are encouraged to consider the strategic planning initiative a growth effort. The League was organized more than 100 years ago. It might be time for change!

The members of the implementation committee and the working groups they steer have produced some incredible resources for the League. Just look on the national website to see what they have created. Members from across the country have researched, discussed, edited and created documents, workshops, information platforms and resources for the League to use as it moves forward. I am incredibly impressed with their work.

I encourage members to seek out these resources for councils across the country—use them and share them.

In addition to this, National President Fran Lucas instigated a Unity Outreach project where a visit to every council across the country has been initiated for input from the various levels of the League. The League needs to know from members what they want and need. It is important to have feedback and collaboration—that is what this project is about. The hope is that members will give practical information so that, once again, the League may evolve. Although the League has been around for more than 100 years, there may be some confusion and miscommunication about the various roles and support available. Members should always feel comfortable asking questions, seeking out information and asking for assistance if they need to.

The League plays a very important role in the Catholic church. I hope every member feels important and that her voice is heard.



NATIONAL COUNCIL REGRETFULLY ADVISES THE PASSING OF LIFE MEMBERS:

Elizabeth Condon
Peterborough, Ontario

Gladys Gillissie
Kapusksing, Ontario

Edith McPhail
Long Sault, Ontario



Magazine Deadlines

Fall issue – July 15, 2023

Winter issue – November 15, 2023

Spring issue – February 15, 2024

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Congratulations to the following centenarians!

Ann Kneale

107 years old on April 10, 2023
St. Joseph Parish Council
Grimbsy, Ontario

Emma Carrier

104 years old on January 25, 2023
St. Michael Parish Council
Leduc, Alberta

Norma Roche

104 years old on April 3, 2023
Holy Angels Parish Council
St. Thomas, Ontario

Margaret Clemow

103 years old on February 28, 2023
Our Lady of Fatima Parish Council
Renfrew, Ontario

Antoinette Boudreau

101 years old on February 10, 2023
Saint Anthony Parish Council
Glen Levit, New Brunswick

Mary Goethals

101 years old on November 20, 2022
Sacred Heart Parish Council
Langton, Ontario

Antonietta Mete

100 years old on January 1, 2023
Our Lady of Hope Parish Council
Sudbury, Ontario

Blanche Bennett

100 years old on November 12, 2022
St. Francis of Assisi Parish Council
Cornwall, Prince Edward Island

Charlotte Conrad

100 years old on January 5, 2023
Saint Benedict Parish Council
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Helen Gordon

100 years old on March 1, 2023
Resurrection Parish Council
Fort St. John, British Columbia

Helen Sydney

100 years old on December 24, 2022
St. James Parish Council
Vernon, British Columbia

Jeanne Allard

100 years old on February 10, 2023
Our Lady of The Assumption Parish Council
Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan

Josie Korte

100 years old on January 12, 2023
St. Ann Parish Council
Flin Flon, Manitoba

Martha Scheers

100 years old on January 1, 2023
Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Parish Council
Delhi, Ontario

Congratulations!

Congratulations to councils celebrating anniversaries:

100 YEARS

Saint Peter Parish Council
New Westminster, British Columbia

Reminiscing 2020 as Members Move Forward to a Vibrant 2023

Noli Buyco

St. Ann Parish Council, Abbotsford

In March 2020, League activities came to a halt due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. There was no policy or procedure to guide councils during this shutdown. St. Ann Parish Council (Abbotsford) followed daily government and Archdiocese of Vancouver announcements in order to proceed with regular activities safely.

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security” (Ps 37:3).

As the council complied with government mandates, members volunteered to maintain the grotto parish garden and continue its CWL Sunday prayers at the grotto. As restrictions eased in September, the team fundraised through mask sales and bottle drives. Through consultation with the spiritual advisor, announcements were made about a bottle drive fundraising project through church bulletins and visual posters outside the church. The priests, nuns and members

were delighted to volunteer for this project. This event brought life to the parish during the pandemic. Realizing how successful and viable the bottle drive was, the council decided to keep it as an ongoing project. Its coffers were filling, and members were creating a greener environment.

“So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mk 11:24).

Members took proactive steps to keep the bottle drive as an initiative supported by the League. The council sought permission from the church secretary (a long-standing member) to take over the church's bottle return. It created a designated area for “CWL bottle returns” within the church grounds and set up a specific account with the bottle depot. A seven-day-a-week initiative to inform and educate parishioners about charitable deeds was created,

and the bottle drive occurred daily. The grand knight at St. Ann's made more storage for empty bottles by donating a homemade wooden crate. The team, comprised of three members and “Brownie,” its bottle drive guard dog, offered home pick-ups from complexes and workplaces. It also provided an opportunity to connect with members and parishioners who were unable to come to the church.

This successful initiative came with its ups and its downs. Two bottle depots had unfortunate fires, but the council was able to connect with another organization.

The council is so grateful for the support of its new bottle team and gifted them with chocolates and oranges to keep them well hydrated with high levels of Vitamin C.

As I spoke with anyone who would listen about the bottle drive (it is just like recruiting for membership), one parishioner mentioned that her husband was one of the four men who initiated the bottle depot program in 1995 in

British Columbia. All these years, and no one in the parish knew! What a remarkable deed! What forward thinking and action! So now, the Catholic Women's League of St. Ann Parish Council continues this legacy.

Members embraced the challenges during the pandemic, welcoming technology to keep the League alive and venturing into farm work and creative ways to fundraise to support charities. They continued to find ways to nourish their faith and research legislation supporting the vulnerable. The Lord continues to bless the council as members sincerely ask for His mercy and grace as they recite the League Prayer daily. For that, members are very grateful. They strive to make their hearts a dwelling for our Lord, embracing Christ in everyone and being *Catholic and Living It!* †



Members of the bottle drive team from St. Ann Parish Council (Abbotsford).

A close-up photograph of several purple crocuses blooming from a patch of snow. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green field under bright, warm light, creating a bokeh effect with golden circles.

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