



The Canadian League



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National President's Message

Shari Guinta
National President



Oh, I love the League!

How could any other organization be as fulfilling, affirming and informative as The Catholic Women's League of Canada? I have been a member for 39 years. I have been in the kitchen (which I love) and at the parish for spaghetti suppers and bake sales. I have served on the parish, diocesan, provincial and national executive, prepared resolutions, presented to government, spoke at various functions, worked on many committees, and participated in Mass at many churches across the country and in other countries as my League journey took me. Some might say, "You have seen it all!"

I have seen and experienced a lot, I will admit. But "seen it all?" No, I don't think so. There is always more in the League.

Seeing the League grow and evolve fulfills me. There have been many changes over the past several years. It began with intense discussions about the structure of the League and its future. Strategic planning has played a huge role in focusing on the future over the last several years, and amazing resources have come out of that process.

During strategic planning, I met women I had never met before and witnessed these women volunteers' experience and expertise. Women with university degrees, experience in law, education, finance and those with *life experience* who love the League and want to help. And they did.

The national executive/board, along with office staff, work as a team. Many issues and topics are discussed, and then, many times, more work emerges from that discussion. What is created is well-thought-out resources, direction and even transformation. So now, we move forward.

You will see the outline for the national convention in this issue of *The Canadian League*. Much planning goes into the convention, and more than a bit of anxiety is felt because the executive and the planning committee want the experience to be spiritual, memorable and worthwhile. I remember my first convention. I was hooked!

I therefore invite you to mark your calendars to attend the 105th annual national convention and encourage you to invite other women to attend as well. It is an experience to

remember. It is one part of "I've done it all!" †



104th Annual National Convention.

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.

From the National Spiritual Advisor

Most Rev. Wayne Lobsinger, Auxiliary Bishop of Hamilton

National Spiritual Advisor



My dear members of the Catholic Women's League,
Several years ago, the son of a friend of mine was preparing to get married. My friend was concerned that the young woman had been raised very differently from how she had raised her children. The bride-to-be did not go to church, was not baptized and had a very secular outlook on life. Worried about how she would fit into their family, my friend came to me seeking advice on how to help them get along as a family. After a long conversation, my friend summed up our discussion by saying, "Well, I guess we will have to just love her into the family."

In October, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, released a new document on the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Carol Glatz, a writer for the Catholic News Service, summed up the pope's document by saying, "Only love will save humanity, pope says in encyclical on Sacred Heart." In *Dilexit nos*, "Pope Francis urges the world to counter indifference, greed and war by embracing Christ's infinite love, and he highlights the devotion to the Sacred Heart as the key to renewing the church's missionary mandate and fostering fraternity and care for creation." Does this not sound like the League's pillars of faith, service and social justice?

League members are called to rise above the voices of the contemporary world, to hear only the voice of Jesus

and his Holy Mother calling them to faith, justice and service. The Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary pound for the love of us and invite members' hearts to pound for the love of others—the poor, the oppressed, the stranger, the lonely and the forgotten—and also for the love of family, friends, League sisters, fellow parishioners and clergy. Love is our calling as baptized Christians.

It is easy to get caught up in the "things" of life and buy into the world's view that humans are simply beings to be used for pleasure and advancement. The Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary call members to something greater, to see God as a loving Father and all men and women as fellow travellers on the path to God's kingdom of justice, love and peace.

I invite all members to read *Dilexit nos* (*He loved us*) and to ask the Sacred Heart of Jesus to help open their hearts to the love he offers and then to share that love of God with all they meet. May the League be known far and wide as the instrument of God's love.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel continue to lead members deeper into the Sacred Heart of her divine Son, Jesus. Yours in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. †



Take it Personally

Betty Colaneri

National Vice-President



Day-to-day duties and responsibilities can often take us off track, causing us to lose sight of our original purpose or reason for doing what we do. Just like special occasions that come along, we can get so wrapped up in the planning that we may not enjoy the event itself. The same can hold true when you have been part of something for so long that you may take it for granted or forget the real reason you joined. So, let's step back and remember why you joined the League.

As an advocate for membership, I promote the League at any opportunity possible. An interesting point I have noticed in recent years is the change in response. When I propose membership to a younger generation, the response I usually get is, "What's in it for me?" Needless to say, I take it personally. What I mean by taking it 'personally' is that I tell them why I joined the League by sharing my journey. The story always begins with the joy and desire in my heart to respond to my baptismal call of ministry. I can still vividly remember the day when I asked my parish priest what I could do to give back and make a difference. He responded that I should join the League, and my journey began.

Over the years, I have met incredible women from across Canada whom I would never have met were it not for the League. Reading about the founding women who began the League and all those who followed has been and continues to be very inspirational. Their faith, skills, knowledge and leadership forged the League to become the amazing organization it is today. Those stories and all that has been accomplished by members throughout the years empowers my journey and those of members.

The stories may not be monumental. Often, it is the subtle ones that touch my heart the most. As I have expressed before, all it takes is 'I'. That 'I' kind gesture makes such an impact it remains in your memory years later. An example of 'I' of those gestures that often comes to mind is the honour guard provided at funerals to pay

tribute to a member who has gone to her heavenly home. It is silently done with such reverence, yet it is profound. Women in attendance have been so moved by it that they joined the League.

Could your story be that generations before, you were a member and passionately spoke of the sisterhood of the League? Perhaps it was that 'I' member who warmly invited you to a meeting and kindly welcomed you when you did attend. That beautiful smile calmed your nervousness as she gestured for you to sit beside her. The same member introduced you to other members, who also warmly greeted you. It was that 'I' member who

took her time to explain what the League was all about, a member who became your mentor and gave her time, support and encouragement so you felt included. It was that feeling that kept you coming back. Her love and dedication for the League were so inspirational to you that it became the driving force for you to do your part in the organization. As you did, that same member continued to inspire and

encourage you. We all have members in our lives who have been mentors to us, these strong, wonderful women who led us with faith, wisdom, kindness, compassion and determination. Though some have gone before us, we are grateful for the opportunity to have known them and experienced the impact they had on our lives. It is that lasting impression that inspires us to continue that legacy and mentor others as they have mentored us.

Remember why you joined. Get to the heart of the matter and bring that feeling back. Share those incredible stories filled with precious moments of sisterhood from across Canada that mean so much to you. Show how proud you are that we have 'I' faith that binds us to pray and care for each other—after all, who doesn't like a good story?

So, the next time you are asked, "What's in it for me?" or "Why should I be a member?" I hope you take it personally. †



Called by God— Female Vocations

Rolande Chernichan

National Chairperson of Faith



At the 2024 national convention, a question was raised about what initiatives the League has to support female vocations, specifically recruiting/encouraging new nuns and supporting those already living this calling.

In my initial response, I emphasized that women have always played a vital role in the church. Many of us first learned the faith from our mother, who guided us in prayer and service. Women religious have historically contributed to the church's mission as educators, catechists, musicians, sacristans and healthcare providers. Yet, in recent decades, the number of women entering religious life has significantly declined. In Canada, many convents have closed due to the ageing population of religious sisters. I noted that the challenge for the League is to help fill the void created by this decline in vocations to consecrated life.

I also mentioned the League's National Bursary Fund. This fund helps members pursue studies and courses aligned with the League's mission, offering up to \$4,000 in financial assistance over a lifetime. This initiative supports personal and spiritual growth, but in hindsight,

I realize I should have highlighted another significant initiative.

In 2015, the League partnered with Sisters of Service to create the Catholic Women's Leadership Foundation, which aims to empower Catholic women as transformational leaders. The League contributed \$100,000, and the Sisters of Service gifted \$500,000, with an additional \$400,000 from the League to ensure its long-term impact. This initiative is a powerful example of the League's commitment to supporting vocations in women.

Reflecting further, I realize it prompts a deeper conversation about what "vocation" truly means. Traditionally, vocation has been associated with ordained ministry or religious life, but the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us that a vocation is a call to love and serve God, leading to eternal happiness. This calling can be lived in many ways, including through religious life, marriage or single life. It is a reminder that all vocations, whether religious or lay, marital or single, are equally dedicated to serving God and the church.

The 2023 parish council annual survey summarizes the extent to which councils support religious vocations. Of the reporting councils, 63% donated to seminary funds, 45% supported religious sisters through prayer or donations, 14% invited speakers on vocations to ordained ministry, 12% focused on the role of women in the church and 10% sponsored League membership for religious novices. These findings show that the League is already involved in supporting vocations, and they point to areas where the League can do more, particularly in supporting women discerning religious life.

Since the convention, I have had conversations with several nuns, each with a unique vocation story. Three women, aged between 35 and 45, have chosen different paths: one serves with the Sisters of the Holy Cross (Peru), one is part of the newly established Queenship of Mary Community (Ottawa) and the third with the Daughters of St. Paul (Toronto). Each spoke about the importance of prayer and support for women discerning a vocation. One key takeaway from these conversations is that prayer is the greatest support members can offer women discerning religious life. Councils could consider partnering with religious communities to offer financial assistance to women in formation, which can last up to 12 years, including university education.





Women have always been essential to the Catholic church, contributing to education, service and leadership. Today, many women are increasingly taking on active roles in leadership and administration, collaborating with clergy and religious. A consecrated sister affirmed me in my vocation as a married woman, saying, “The vows you make in marriage are a sacrament of the church; the vows we make as consecrated women religious are to God and the community we join.” Her words highlight the dignity of all vocations, whether in marriage, religious life or leadership.

Pope Francis has affirmed the role of women in the church and the importance of women religious, stating, “What would the Church be without religious sisters and consecrated laywomen? The Church cannot be understood without them.” His words remind us that all vocations—whether to marriage, as a single person, or to religious life—are integral to the life of the church and to God’s plan for each of us.

Through prayer, financial support and encouraging discernment, we can all contribute to fostering vocations in the church and supporting those who have already responded to God’s call. †

2025 ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION TORONTO, ONTARIO



APRON FUNDRAISER

This handy apron, available in blue, is imprinted with the League crest. It is a one size fits most with a neck strap and waist ties to keep the apron in place. There are two spacious front bottom pockets to hold pens, paper pads, cell phones and other essentials. Great for those League functions.

**Price: \$20.00 each +
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shipping****

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Magazine Deadlines

Spring issue – February 15, 2025

Fall issue – July 15, 2025

Winter issue – November 15, 2025

Myths and Facts About Human Trafficking

Shelley De-Serres

National Social Justice Subcommittee Member



In August 2024, a League position paper on human trafficking was adopted, emphasizing that it is a violation of human dignity and Catholic social teaching (CST). Exploiting society's most vulnerable for profit undermines the core principles of social justice. Pope Francis calls human trafficking "an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ," stressing the need for urgent action.

How Informed Are You About the Current Situation of Human Trafficking in Canada?

True or False:

- Most trafficking victims in Canada are illegal immigrants or temporary residents.
- Sex trafficking is the most reported form of human trafficking in Canada.
- Social media is a standard tool used to recruit victims of human trafficking.
- Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax account for 45% of cases.
- Victims can be charged with crimes like prostitution or immigration violations.

The Reality of Human Trafficking in Canada

Human trafficking is a global crime affecting millions, and Canada is not immune. The crime involves exploiting individuals through force, fraud or coercion for forced labour or sexual exploitation. Traffickers prey on victims' vulnerabilities, often promising better opportunities. While human trafficking is commonly linked to

developing nations, Canada serves as both a source and destination country, with individuals trafficked into, out of, and within its borders.

The 2021 *Trafficking in Persons in Canada* report highlights human trafficking as a growing concern. Between 2009 and 2019, more than 1,000 cases were investigated, though actual numbers are likely higher due to underreporting. Victims are primarily Canadian citizens or permanent residents, with most being women and girls, with about one-quarter being children and youth younger than 18 years.

Sex trafficking is the most reported form of human trafficking in Canada, with victims—especially women and girls—coerced into prostitution, pornography or other forms of sexual exploitation. Victims often work for little or no pay and may be moved across provinces or between cities to meet demands in high-traffic areas.

Traffickers frequently use false promises of legitimate work, such as jobs in hospitality or modelling, to recruit victims. Social media, dating apps and fake job advertisements are standard tools for luring individuals. Once under the control of their trafficker, victims are isolated from their families and communities, confined to hidden locations such as brothels or hidden apartments, and threatened with violence or deportation.

In some cases, traffickers claim victims owe large debts for transportation or housing, creating a cycle of debt bondage. Victims may also face criminalization, being charged with prostitution or immigration violations, further complicating their ability to seek help.

Canada's Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking

Canada's *Criminal Code* (Section 279.01) criminalizes trafficking for exploitation, including sexual exploitation and forced labour, with severe penalties for offenders. In 2012, Canada launched its *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking*, emphasizing prevention, victim protection and prosecution through collaboration among governments, law enforcement, non-government organizations and international partners.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police operates specialized units to address trafficking, and high-profile operations have disrupted major networks, including illegal brothels and prostitution rings. Internationally, Canada partners with organizations like the United Nations, nations such as the United States, and the European Union to tackle trafficking on a global scale.





Challenges and the Path Forward

Despite progress, significant gaps remain, particularly in shelters, legal aid and psychological support. Five cities—Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax and London—account for 45% of Canada’s known trafficking cases. This highlights the need for local interventions as well as national approaches.

Human trafficking is a complex and pervasive issue, affecting thousands of vulnerable individuals. More work is needed to raise awareness, to provide comprehensive victim services and to ensure that traffickers are held accountable for their crimes. Addressing it requires a coordinated and sustained effort from all sectors of society. By focusing on advocacy, education and empowerment, members can fight trafficking by promoting social justice and systemic change in Canada. †

Introducing



Colleen Martin
Ontario
Provincial President

Colleen’s League journey began at her mother’s knee as part of a large family in the small town of Atikokan in northwestern Ontario.

She attended university in Ottawa, obtaining a bachelor of commerce degree with honours (accounting), then settled in Thunder Bay. Colleen married Bruce in 1987, and their family expanded to include two children, Tamara and Jarred, their partners, Jeff and Lexy, and two grandsons, Noah and Billy.

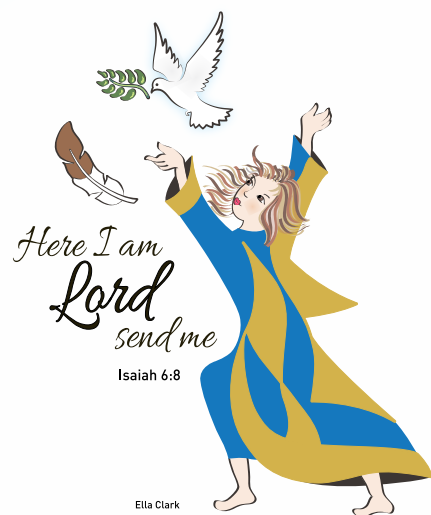
Active in the church, Colleen joined the League in 1992 after receiving a personal invitation. Her parish council mentored and lifted her up through council members’ encouragement. Colleen meets new women at every League gathering and counts them all as sisters. She loves to remind her League sister Linda that her invitation was one of the greatest gifts received, and it keeps on giving through opportunities to serve and advocate for social justice in an amazing sisterhood.

Colleen’s parish council gifted her a maple leaf service pin in 2009, and she was commissioned as a life member in 2015. As a member of her parish, diocesan and provincial councils, Colleen was humbled by opportunities to fulfil the role of chairperson of the communications, spiritual development, resolutions, Christian family life and

organization standing committees, treasurer, and, most recently, was installed as provincial president in Sudbury in July 2024.

Her more than 30-year career working for First Nations created her passion for bringing awareness of history and legislation to develop understanding and compassion for intergenerational trauma experienced by First Nation peoples in Canada. Until early 2024, Colleen represented the League nationally as part of Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle. She is a founding member of the Mikinakoos Children’s Fund which has a mission to improve the quality of life for First Nation children in remote First Nation communities in Ontario by providing food, warm clothing and healthy activities such as recreation and the arts.

In her term, Colleen hopes to be present and available to members, inviting all to live the joy of the gospel, serving and advocating for social justice through love, responding with *Here I am Lord, send me!* †



Protect Yourself from Scams

Dorothy Johansen

National Secretary-Treasurer



By Telephone

Telephones are no longer simply a means of contacting family, friends and reputable businesses. The telephone has become one of the main ways criminals try to steal money. Criminals threaten us by

- saying they will send police to our door if we do not call back right away to pay some money
- calling us pretending to be fundraising for a charity
- pretending to be a relative or friend in trouble who needs money
- trying to sell some service we do not need, or even
- asking us to help them “catch criminals” who are committing fraud

—anything and everything to get us to give them personal financial information.

The first thing to remember is that the telephone is for you to make calls to people you know, to make appointments and to chat with friends.

If you answer the telephone, say “Hello,” then wait no more than three seconds. If you do not hear a hello back or recognize the person calling you, just hang up. It is not rude, and there is no need to be polite.

If they try to sell you something or want you to do anything where you need to provide personal information such as your name, address, financial institution or credit card information, just say no thank you and hang up. There is no need to be polite.

By Cell Phone

If you have a cell phone, you will likely have received messages telling you that your package has not arrived, your subscription has expired, or your account or credit card has been charged for something. When you see these messages, delete them, do not click on any links or message them back.

Also, do not use free Wi-Fi unless you know exactly who provides it. Do not loan your cell phone or give your number to people you have just met, as they might steal your information.

By Email or Searching the Web

When you check your email, you may have received messages asking you to send gift cards or money to someone whose name you know. Be aware that criminals look at social media pages and association websites to see people you might know or even parish bulletins to find names to use such as your parish priest, a sister in the League, or names of someone in need. As soon as you see

a request for money or gift cards, delete the email without responding.

You may also have received emails from companies that want to sell you something or offer a deal, and they will ask you to reply to tell them you are not interested. Again, just delete the email.

The other popular method criminals use is sending an email saying, “Jane Doe (using your friend’s name) has sent you some pictures, click here.”



Or perhaps you have searched websites for information you need to write a resolution, and you did not realize you reached a fake website run by criminals. Suddenly a big box pops up indicating that your computer has been compromised and you must call a number for technical support!

Instead of calling the number that will connect your call to a criminal, turn your computer off and restart it. The message will likely disappear, and you can continue to use your computer. If it doesn’t go away, take your computer to where you bought it and have them clean it up. Never let someone online from “tech support” connect to your computer.

And Last But Not Least

If you are unsure about someone’s identity, someone asks you to do something or provide information in a hurry or something else that seems even the slightest bit strange to you—stop and disconnect the call, delete the email and stop the communication. Talk to a trusted friend or family member about it, as scammers or criminals rely on people being too embarrassed to tell anyone that they have been a target of a scam. If you have been scammed, tell someone you trust. †



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Novena for Members



*This novena is based on the Objects of the League.
The Hail Mary can be prayed using the more common
language or more contemporary language such as
that used in the hymn "Hail Mary, Gentle Woman."*

DAY 1

Peace be with you! Today, let us pray that the League unites Catholic women in Canada to achieve individual and collective spiritual development through the sisterhood of membership in the organization. Let the many avenues for prayer, spiritual enrichment and witness of faith that the League offers be fruitful. Let us pray through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel, for guidance and discernment to overcome the challenges of spiritual development.

Daily novena prayer:

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

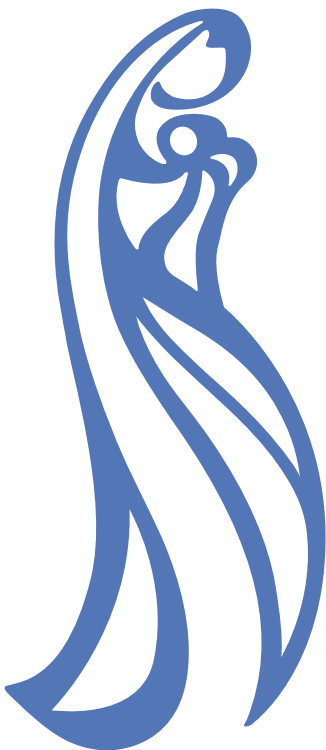
Dearest Mother of God, please pray for me and for these my intentions... (state your intentions)

Our Lady of Good Counsel, patroness of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, please pray for me and today's intention for the League that continues to plan its future and evolution in keeping with its mission, calling "its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service." Mother of the Divine Son, pray that I may have the grace and humility by your example to accept God's will for

my life. With the Holy Spirit, pray that I may grow in faith, hope and love through the graces of the Holy Trinity. Mother of the Church, pray for these intentions and for my League sisters who are sharing this novena with me. May we be worthy of God's mercy and love and one day be welcomed by God into heaven for all eternity.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.





DAY 2

Peace be with you! Today, let us pray that the League unites Catholic women in Canada to promote the teachings of the Catholic church through the witness of their lives and in sharing the scriptures with others. Let us pray through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel that women continue to contribute to the life and mission of the church through their leadership skills and unique gifts, empowered as messengers of the good news through their baptism and confirmation.

Daily novena prayer



DAY 3

Peace be with you! Today, let us pray that the League unites Catholic women in Canada to exemplify the Christian ideal in home and family life where God is at the centre. Through prayer and reflection on God's word, family members are called to live God's law of love by serving one another through the example given by Christ. Let us pray through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel that we model a Christ-centred life in our home and family and that we will be strengthened by the outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Daily novena prayer

DAY 4

Peace be with you!
Today, let us pray that the League unites Catholic women in Canada to protect the sanctity of life. All life is sacred and should be respected and valued. Catholic women are called to defend the vulnerable, voiceless and every life from conception to natural death. Let us pray through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel that all people are treated with dignity, that governments make laws to protect the right to life and that there is improved care for the dying through access to hospice and palliative care.

Daily novena prayer



DAY 5

Peace be with you! Today, let us pray that the League unites Catholic women in Canada to enhance the role of women in church and society. Through vocations, ministry, advocacy, community engagement and leadership, Catholic women contribute to the life of the church. Let us pray through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel, that by outreach to women, the church and society will create an inclusive and empowering space for women.

Daily novena prayer



DAY 6

Peace be with you! Today, let us pray that the League unites Catholic women in Canada to recognize the human dignity of all people everywhere. Catholic women believe in the inherent dignity of the human person as created in the image and likeness of God. This motivates their concern for the well-being of every person in every dimension of life. Let us pray through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel that the love of neighbour helps us prioritize the good of the human family in keeping with the principles of Catholic social teaching to further God's kingdom on earth.

Daily novena prayer

DAY 7

Peace be with you! Today, let us pray that the League unites Catholic women in Canada to uphold and defend Christian education and values in the modern world. Through example, parents are called to be the first educators of their children in the Christian faith. Through baptism, Catholic women are called to grow in knowledge through adult faith education so that they may uphold and defend Christian values. Let us pray through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel and with the help of the Holy Spirit, to faithfully live the law of love, to defend and advocate for Christian values, and to intentionally live the corporal works of mercy so that Christian values will permeate the modern world.

Daily novena prayer



DAY 8

Peace be with you! Today, let us pray that the League unites Catholic women in Canada to contribute to the understanding and growth of religious freedom, social justice, peace and harmony. Catholic women strive for this through their respect for other's beliefs, their commitment to building relationships and community through ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, and their support of social justice initiatives. Let us pray through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel that those on the periphery of society are welcomed and that channels of peace and harmony will be opened by the examples of lives lived in imitation of Christ through the virtues of faith, hope and love.

Daily novena prayer





DAY 9

Peace be with you! Let us pray that the League unites Catholic women in Canada by growing in faith and in giving witness to the love of God through ministry and service. Let us pray through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel that we imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary by responding to God's call with full and generous hearts in order that we may be instruments in building the kingdom of God on earth through faith, service and social justice.

Daily novena prayer

Building on Foundation



ONE HEART
VOICE
MISSION



*"Cast Out into the Deep
Companions on the Journey
Centred on Faith and Justice
We Have Seen the Lord!"*



CATHOLIC
and **LIVING IT!**



CLOSING PRAYER:

PRAYER FOR ONGOING RENEWAL

God of new beginnings, ever faithful God,
we thank you for your constant care for
the women of The Catholic Women's League of Canada.

We have sought to serve you in faith by service to your people.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with
the help of Our Lady of Good Counsel,
we continue to discern your call to seek justice
and build your kingdom on earth each day.

We ask your guidance as we continue the ongoing work of
renewing The Catholic Women's League of Canada.

Grant us wisdom, the grace of discernment, and strength.

May each of us open her heart and mind to your will and
welcome the new life you bring to the League.

We ask this through Jesus, your beloved Son and our Lord,
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever. Amen

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.



Welcoming the Stranger

Joline Belliveau

National Chairperson of Service



“When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God” (Lev 19:33-34).

The definition of a refugee is someone who, “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted” or facing serious threats to their life or safety, is

- unable or unwilling to return to their home country
- fleeing armed conflict, violence, serious public disorder, or human rights violations or
- fleeing because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or other political opinion (United Nations).



Pope Francis reminds Catholics that “the arrival of Catholic migrants and refugees can energize the ecclesial life of the communities that welcome them.”

In August 2022, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) reported that the Catholic church has participated in the country’s Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program since its inception in 1979, “resettling tens of thousands of refugees who were forced to flee their home countries because of war, violence or persecution. Since 1979, private sponsors have resettled over 350,000 refugees to Canada. This is a remarkable accomplishment for Canadians. This program has since been paused.

“Eighteen Catholic organizations (Dioceses, Religious congregations, and other groups) across Canada currently work as Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs). As a SAH, they are allowed to name the refugees that they wish to sponsor. Once Immigration Canada approves the refugee

sponsorship application, SAHs work with parishioners and parish communities to welcome, journey and support their sponsored refugee families. Each SAH commits to financially supporting their refugee family for a period of one year, which can be a significant financial commitment.

“It is estimated that there are currently over 89 million people who have been forced from their homes, of which over 36 million have fled their homelands. This terrible situation is made even worse... [by the war in] Ukraine, forcing millions of Ukrainians to flee their home country. The [federal] government has responded by creating a special program for Ukrainians displaced by war.”

As of April 1, 2024, more than 1,189,000 Ukrainian nationals have applied to travel to Canada under the special Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) program. Applications to CUAET from 962,612 people have been approved, and 298,128 of them arrived in Canada. Those refugees without family ties in Canada have experienced difficulty; however, thankfully, many groups are involved in addressing their plight.

The World Union of Catholic Women’s Organisations (WUCWO) actively supports refugees and migrants. It has committed to encouraging “the church to welcome, protect, accompany, promote and integrate migrants and refugees” and promoting volunteerism to help refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants. Among its initiatives is raising awareness about the dangers of irregular migration and human trafficking and advocating for better legal alternatives for refugees. The organization works closely with member organizations to provide concrete support and help build a better future for migrants and refugees.

The Catholic church plays a significant role in helping migrants and refugees find new homes and has a long history of advocating for and supporting displaced individuals.

In an ever-evolving world, members witness the continuous flow of displaced individuals, moving and adapting to new environments, shaping and being shaped by the places they go. †

SAVE THE DATE!

105TH NATIONAL ANNUAL CONVENTION

TORONTO, ONTARIO | AUGUST 10-13, 2025

Mark your calendar! The national convention of The Catholic Women's League of Canada returns to the vibrant, multicultural city of Toronto, August 10–13, 2025. Near Eaton Centre, the host venue's location offers easy access to shopping, restaurants and sightseeing.

The convention promises to be unforgettable, with enriching sessions, unique events and opportunities to connect with sister members. There will be something for everyone! Some exciting highlights include a keynote address by a renowned author and recipient of a Governor General award, dinner theatre, a Jukebox Dance Party, a

Sea and Sky Tour and the election and installation of new national officers. While at the convention, participate in the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisation's North American Regional Conference before Opening Mass on Sunday, August 10th!

The planning committee cannot wait to welcome you to this extraordinary gathering. Stay tuned for a complete program and registration information in the spring edition of *The Canadian League*, but for now, save the date and start planning to *Come to Toronto... and Meet the World!* †



Toronto, Ontario. ©Destination Toronto

105TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9

Evening Program Dinner and Theatre, Famous
People's Theatre

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10

Day Program WUCWO Regional Conference
Evening Program Opening Mass and Reception,
St. Paul's Basilica

MONDAY, AUGUST 11

Day Program Keynote speaker Dr. Gerry Turcotte,
President of St. Mary's University
National Officer Luncheons
Resolutions Dialogue Session
Standing Committee Q&A Session
National Spiritual Advisor
Q&A Session
Evening Program Juke Box Dance Party

TUESDAY, AUGUST 12

Day Program Plenary Session with Brothers
of the Good Shepherd
Life Members' Luncheon
Spiritual Advisors' Luncheon
Break Out Sessions facilitated
by Provincial Presidents
Evening Program Provincial Dinners

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14

Day Program Annual Meeting of Members,
including election of officers
Closing Mass & Installation of
Officers, St. Michael's Cathedral
Evening Program Gala Banquet

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15

9:15-12:30 p.m. Sea and Sky Tour (ticket required)

HAPPY Birthday

Congratulations to the following centenarians!

Anne Malyj

105 years old on
September 10, 2024
Our Lady of the Assumption
Parish Council
Edmonton, Alberta

Yvonne White

104 years old on December 2, 2024
Holy Family Parish Council
Bathurst, New Brunswick

Adeline Wingert

104 years old on June 2, 2024
St. Peter Parish Council
Regina, Saskatchewan

Clara Brazeau

101 years old on July 13, 2024
Sacred Heart Parish Council
Roblin, Manitoba

Sylvia Carriere

101 years old on September 8, 2024
St. Joseph Parish Council
Indian Head, Saskatchewan

Edythe Gillis

101 years old on October 23, 2024
Our Lady of the Assumption
Parish Council
Edmonton, Alberta

Maria Hermes

101 years old on November 17, 2024
St. Martin of Tours Parish Council
Terrace Bay, Ontario

Betty Keating

101 years old on
September 27, 2024
Blessed Trinity Parish Council
North York, Ontario

Margaret Krzyczkowski

101 years old on November 4, 2024
Immaculate Conception
Parish Council
Sexsmith, Alberta

Rita Murphy

101 years old on
September 19, 2024
Precious Blood Cathedral
Parish Council
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

Clara Argo

100 years old on November 30, 2024
St. Helen Parish Council
Beamsville, Ontario

Anna Maria Gajdics

100 years old on November 8, 2024
Our Lady of Perpetual
Help Parish Council
Vancouver, British Columbia

Annie Hashem

100 years old on October 2, 2024
Our Lady of Fatima Parish Council
Sydney River, Nova Scotia

Twillia Kitowski

100 years old on May 11, 1924
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Council
Fort Frances, Ontario

Therese LaCroix

100 years old on November 15, 2024
St. Louis Parish Council
St. Louis, Saskatchewan

Susan Mailhiot

100 years old on November 13, 2024
St. Vincent de Paul Parish Council
Weyburn, Saskatchewan

Ellen Phillips

100 years old on April 26, 2024
Holy Angels Parish Council
Brighton, Ontario

Rosella Pinsonneault

100 years old on October 23, 2024
St. Simon & St. Jude Parish Council
Belle River, Ontario

Lea Sinnaeve

100 years old on August 21, 2024
Blessed Sacrament Parish Council
Chatham, Ontario

Cornelia VandenBoere

100 years old on January 27, 2024
St. Christopher Parish Council
Forest, Ontario

Connie Weaver

100 years old on October 28, 2024
Blessed Sacrament Parish Council
Chatham, Ontario



Archiving – the New Scrapbooking!

Fran Lucas

National Past President



The more I delve into archives at the national level, the more jewels, learnings and treasures I encounter! Three members graciously passed on to me items of their family members who were League members.

The three service pins below are examples of some of the League's various pin designs. The 30- and 35-year service pins are mine, and though they are only five years apart, they are different. Member Jessie Kolodychuk (Lamont, Alberta) shared the third pin. Can you spot the differences in all three?



Years of service pins.

The pin with the 300% addition belonged to deceased member Hilda Heck (Prevost, Alberta), shared by member Patti Heck (Wetaskiwin, Alberta). It was a great conversation piece with members and many ideas of why the 300% was added, but absolutely no firm answer for it. If you know more about this addition to the pin, please let me know by contacting national office at info@cwl.ca.



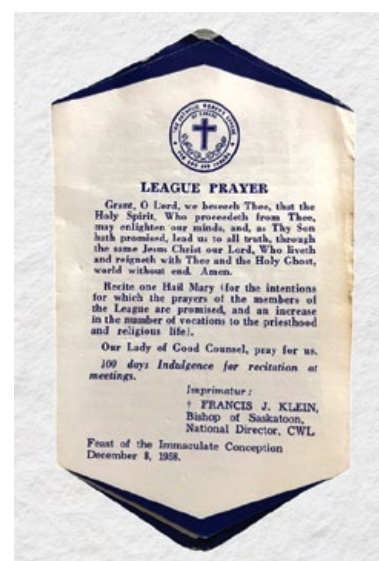
League pin with 300% addition.

This beautiful rosary was found in an antique store by the son of member Jacinthe Germain (Edmonton, Alberta). On spotting it, he knew his mom would love to have it! The timeline of this rosary is thought to be in the 1950s.



*Left:
League
rosary.
Right:
League
rosary with
a close-up
view of the
medallion.*

The photograph of the League Prayer, though not the official one, is part of a small pamphlet of prayers shared by Jessie Kolodychuk. Bishop Francis J. Klein (Saskatoon) was the national spiritual advisor (then called national director) from 1958–1963. He was the imprimatur for this prayer, but who wrote it? Again, if you know more about this, please advise!



League Prayer.

Thank you to Jessie, Patti and Jacinthe for sharing your treasures. They shall be added to the national archives. I encourage all councils to add history of the League to their next council meeting agenda. Ask members to share any unique items and stories they may have and add them to the council's archives. If suitable, share them with me!

Happy archiving! †



Congratulations!

Congratulations to councils celebrating anniversaries!

90 YEARS

Holy Name of Jesus Parish Council
Essex, Ontario

75 YEARS

St. Agnes Parish Council
Thunder Bay, Ontario



National Council Regretfully Advises the Passing of Life Members:

Lorraine Faherty
Salmon Arm,
British Columbia

Joanne Hough
Lindsay, Ontario

Marie O'Malley
Porters Lake, Nova Scotia

Jacqueline Papke
Waterloo, Ontario

Carole Pitcher
Bramalea, Ontario

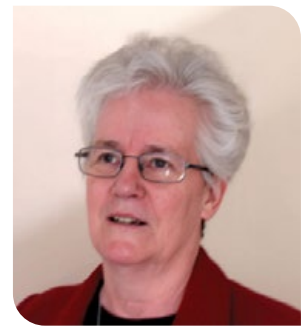
Catherine Power
St. John's, Newfoundland
and Labrador

Mary Quinlan
Mississauga, Ontario

Blessed are the Poor (MT 5)

Sr. Nancy Brown

Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul
Halifax, Nova Scotia



I was shocked one day at Covenant House Vancouver when Jane bounced into my office and shouted joyfully, “I will get a higher place in heaven than you because Jesus said, ‘Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God’” (Lk 6: 20).

Trafficked youth have their freedom and dignity stripped away from them early in their life. Many, if not all, start life in vicarious situations, such as Jane, a bright Indigenous girl from Northern British Columbia who was adopted after witnessing her mother’s death. Unfortunately, her father sexually abused her, leaving her no option but to flee to the streets of Vancouver, where she became highly addicted and trafficked.

Jane was one of countless youths that I journeyed with over the years, the majority being sexually abused as children, thus prime targets for pimps and traffickers. Research indicates that 85% of prostituted persons were abused as children. Social media has acknowledged that they focus on the vulnerability of the young to engage them early into pornography, which fuels prostitution and human trafficking. Article 3(c) of the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons* states that a sexually exploited child is deemed to be a trafficking victim.

When I retired from Covenant House Vancouver, I promised the youth that I would continue to advocate for justice to stop the exploitation that entrapped many of them through no fault of their own. I think of Muriel, the eighth of nine children born in Manila and adopted from the Philippines at the age of three. Shortly after her arrival in Vancouver, the father left the family, and Muriel blamed herself. Searching for her identity, she quickly fell into the cycle of addiction and prostitution. Or the story of two Mexican 20-year-olds who were trafficked separately and forced to work in construction at a local shopping mall in Burnaby. After several months of labour, both escaped and arrived at Covenant House Vancouver penniless. Or the story of Jessa, from Toronto, where she was sexually abused as a child by her family and sold by them into prostitution and trafficking throughout



the United States. Returning to Canada to renew her passport, she was trafficked again during the Olympics in Vancouver. Covenant House Vancouver assisted her in her safe return to the United States. These amazing stories and others continue to inspire and motivate me to advocate for justice.

To understand the injustice involved in human trafficking, one needs to understand that it is based on a dynamic of power over the innocent and vulnerable. It is not a choice but rather a system built on male pleasure, power and privilege. Human trafficking is the fastest-growing crime in Canada, where the most vulnerable are lured into a coercive relationship and treated as commodities to be sold and resold. About 30% of all trafficked victims worldwide are children. Globally, 426 million children live in conflict zones, where the risk of trafficking is extremely high.

To believe that trafficking is a choice or work is an error when one examines the extreme harm inflicted on the person. Reem Alsalem, United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, recently released a groundbreaking report called *Prostitution and Violence Against Women and Girls*. In this report, she refused to use the term sex work “in recognition of the scale of the harm experienced and the impairment of fundamental rights and the rights to protection, assistance, compensation and reparations.” Prostitution, she says, is also incompatible with the international standards for decent work.

All countries need to follow the abolitionist approach, as in Canada’s *Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act* which is twofold, providing exit services and holding sex buyers, pimps and traffickers accountable for their criminal behaviour. Change will only come if Canadian laws focusing on eliminating the demand are enforced. Until we address the demand, nothing will change.

May God bless you with anger at the injustice, oppression, abuse and exploitation of children so that you will work for justice, equality and peace. †



Perception Vs. Reality

Kim Scammell
Executive Director



It is often heard in League circles that the national board/executive is neither seen nor heard, leaving members to wonder what the board does. Do they listen? Do they respond? Do they act? The answer to all three questions is, “Yes, they do.”

To understand how they do, one first must understand that the board's jobs are different than the parish councils' jobs. The board focuses on the future of the League and how best to seize opportunities or navigate circumstances that may stand in the way of that future. Parish councils focus on the present and the needs in their community.

The board's primary role is governance, not activities, not administration, not even communications. More on that later.

1. The board meets to **govern** the League. The board knows the mission and vision of the League and reviews it occasionally to ensure it captures the hopes and dreams of the members. The board knows the environment that councils operate in (hence the Unity Outreach in 2023). The board considers the current environment, compares it against the mission, and sets a course that takes the League from its current state toward its mission. The board is proactive and future focused. It does not dwell on the past or behave reactively. We call this **direction setting**.

How can you tell if this is happening? Direction setting can look like goal setting, a strategic plan, the striking of a task force, the undertaking of a nationwide initiative, changes to bylaws or changes to policy. If you see or hear of these things, you know the board has been at work.

2. The board concerns itself with how to move toward the future. Once it has set a direction, it determines what resources are needed to ensure the League can adequately move in that direction. The board considers what financial and human resources, both paid and volunteer, are needed to maintain the League's existing operations and to make it possible to move toward its mission. We call this **resource allocation**.

How can you tell if this is happening? Resource provision may look like a budget allocation reported on the annual financial statements, a per capita increase, a new staff position to address members' expectations, or a call for volunteers to lead a necessary project. If you see or hear of these things, you know the board has been at work.

3. Finally, the board must concern itself with ensuring that the League is moving forward and changing and adapting if it isn't. To know if the right mix of resources and initiatives has moved the League toward the future, the board must receive both statistical reports and feedback from members. With this information, the board determines if the League is moving toward the goals set during the direction-setting process. We call this **oversight provision**.

How can you tell if this is happening? Oversight provisions may look like member surveys, data gathering like in annual reports, or a change to, addition or removal of a program. If you see or hear of these things, you know the board has been at work.

Members and councils play a very critical role in this process. To move toward the future, the directions set by the board must be embraced and implemented by other levels, trusting that the board has made the best decisions it could with the information it obtained from the membership, with the resources it has available and considering the environment in which the League operates.

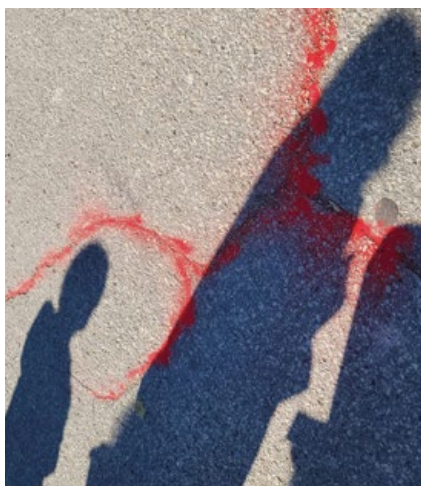
Without member input to assist with informed decision-making, the process fails, and hence, so does the governance of the organization. If you see or hear of an invitation to offer your opinion, please do take it. The board needs you to help it make decisions in the best interests of the organization.

Some recent examples of the board working on issues identified by members:

1. Strategic plan
2. Implementation committee resources
3. Unity Outreach
4. Communications task force
5. Priorities task force
6. Education and training task force
7. Online learning opportunities task force
8. Membership task force

The reality: The board is actively engaged at the highest level, making sure members' interests and concerns are addressed for the betterment of the League's future. You may not see them at work, as the provincial levels are responsible for communicating the messages and we applaud provinces for taking on that role, but the board is indeed engaged in the future of the League “For God and Canada.” †

Spotlight



St. Vital Parish Council, Winnipeg, Manitoba — In October 2024, St. Vital Parish Council participated in the Red Sand Project following Mass. A brief service was held, and members and guests poured red sand into the cracks in the parking lot. In addition to the service, the council filled 13 backpacks with supplies for Dignity House.

The Red Sand Project, created by Molly Gochman, draws attention to the estimated 50 million people being trafficked or living in modern slavery globally. The sand grains represent “those individuals who fall through the cracks—whether the cracks of [the] social, economic, and political systems or those of our personal consciousness” (Red Sand Project).



Our Lady of the Lake Parish Council, Blind Bay, British Columbia — On September 29, 2024, Our Lady of the Lake Parish Council hosted an old-fashioned fall supper, serving turkey dinners and fostering fellowship. The event revived cherished memories for members who grew up on the prairies and remembered their mothers cooking turkeys for the local community fall supper. Funds raised supported the council's operations and many charities, including the Carmelites of Armstrong.



St. Thomas of Villanova Parish Council, Conception Bay South, Newfoundland and Labrador — In September 2024, St. Thomas of Villanova Parish Council held a Mass in memory of its deceased members. May those who have passed on rest in peace.



St. Agnes Parish Council, Thunder Bay, Ontario — On October 6, 2024, St. Agnes Parish Council celebrated its 75th anniversary with a celebratory Mass where members served as altar servers, greeters, lectors, ushers, Eucharistic ministers and the glorious choir. Special anniversary prayers and blessings followed. Ontario Provincial President Colleen Martin and Thunder Bay Diocesan President Cathy Carlino attended the celebratory event.



Saskatchewan Provincial Council — Members of Saskatchewan Provincial Council stepped up for mental health! Saskatchewan Provincial Vice-President Donna Aldous and Saskatoon Diocesan President Marion Laroque completed a five-kilometre walk as part of the Step Up for Mental Health Walk in downtown Saskatoon in late September 2024. More than \$1,200 was donated by the Catholic Women's League team!

Holy Redeemer Parish Council, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island — Holy Redeemer Parish Council held its annual membership dinner and more than 36 members and their families attended. A meet and greet was held, followed by a wonderful turkey dinner and a years of service celebration for members who had reached milestones of 65 and 70 years of service!



Left to Right: Viola Doyle (70 years), Anita McGuigan (65 years), Alice MacDougall (65 years) and Doris Doyle (65 years). Not pictured: Helen MacInnis and Eileen Gillis, both with 65 years of service.



St. Joseph Parish Council, North Sydney, Nova Scotia — St. Joseph Parish Council celebrated its 50th anniversary this year with a special commemorative gathering of members.

St. Emile Parish Council, Legal, Alberta — St. Emile Parish Council presented new bibles to Grade 4 students at Legal School's Thanksgiving celebration. Council members also led the rosary for a few days at a seniors' residence in the community.





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