

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS CHRIST LOVES US



Lorette Noble
National President

Some of you, like me, didn't have sisters when you were growing up. I had three older brothers instead. So sisterhood was a foreign concept to me, though in my high school years at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in England I made wonderful life-long friends. Joining the League 26 years ago has taken me on a journey of discovery, experiencing at every stage along the way the close links which bind us together in this sisterhood we call the League, this network of caring women stretching in every direction in this immense country. We might not always see eye to eye on every topic or issue (are there any sisters who always do?) but what unites us, and over which there is no dispute, is our faith. It is at the root of who we are and it binds us together like members of one family, a concept very familiar to me and to us all. How lucky we are to belong to such a family!

In August, a huge number of us, over 800 in fact, gathered at the annual national convention in Halifax to celebrate this belonging and to listen to each other's stories. We were invited to imagine the stories of women from other corners of the earth, and to consider the issues that concern us most here in Canada, so that we can take these concerns and speak with one voice to the various levels of government, knowing we can make a difference.

...a beautiful new national president's pin! It has the League crest and the stylized Madonna on a maple leaf background with the insignia "National President."

The hospitality of our Nova Scotian sisters was outstanding (isn't that so at all our conventions?). The League flag was raised in front of City Hall by Mayor Peter Kelly before he hosted lunch for the national executive and the convention committee. Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, S.J., welcomed us to his home before hosting supper for us that evening at the St. Mary University Loyola residence.

On Gathering Day we heard from two women who both were moved by personal experience to take action to help

others. Kathleen O'Shea's work as a young teacher in Chile led to an awakening awareness of the plight of persecuted people and her life work now is with women on death row in the United States. One way she helps them is by providing an opportunity to tell their stories in a newsletter which she started. Her message was that no matter what we have done, we are human beings loved by God and, therefore, deserving of attention – no matter how hard that might be.

I met Pamela Bryson-Weaver quite by chance when I boarded the second bus to the convention opening mass. It was already three-quarters full and, as I moved toward the back, I passed this young woman sitting on her own. I asked if I could join her and on the way discovered that she was going to speak to us the next day. Pamela is the mother of a seven year old autistic boy, Johnny, and she came to tell us their story. But that wasn't all. Pamela was the moving force behind getting the New Brunswick government to help families of autistic children obtain early diagnosis and care. You could not help but be moved by these two remarkable



women whose passion and compassion led them to action, helping others.

The provincial presidents gave spirited accounts of events and projects in their provinces, new life members were commissioned and blessed by Bishop Richard Smith, six resolutions were adopted and the elections for the new slate of national officers took place. You will find Susan Bernier's full account of the convention in this magazine.

You will also find the 2006 resolutions. Please talk



about them at your monthly meetings and perhaps invite guest speakers on the topics. Look at the detailed action plans and get together to write letters when this is suggested. A senior policy advisor to one of our federal government ministers earlier this year stressed how much weight these carry and encouraged us to continue our efforts.

Last June, most of the national executive and some other members attended the General Assembly of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) in Arlington, Virginia. It was an horizon-widening experience for us all, meeting Catholic women from every corner of the globe, learning about their culture and way of life, and realizing that we all share the same faith. These general assemblies take place only every four or five years and our retiring past president, Marie Cameron, a long-time enthusiastic WUCWO supporter, urged us to take advantage of this happening on our doorstep. It was obvious from the oral reports that the Canadian delegation will become ambassadors here at home for our sisters abroad. Make sure you get them to wear the colourful dresses they acquired when they come to share their experiences with you! National Past President Agnes Bedard, now our North American regional representative on the WUCWO board, will be a strong link between us and the world.

It gave me great pleasure to propose a theme for 2007-2008: *Love One Another*. In many ways it is a continuation of our present theme. We have grown as companions and now

the invitation is to grow in love for each other, in good times as well as in difficult times.

I have been asked if I have a vision for the two years ahead. It is to celebrate membership in the League, which gives us such incredible opportunities to grow in knowledge of our faith, to grow in awareness of our responsibility to help build a better world and to grow in our love for God and each other. Coming together at conventions heightens our realization of what the League means to us. I would love to see that enthusiasm maintained throughout the year from annual convention to annual convention.

At the initiative of National Past President Agnes Bedard, there is a beautiful new national president's pin! It has the League crest and the stylized Madonna on a maple leaf background with the insignia "National President." The pin has been blessed by National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Richard Smith, and I and my successors will be proud to wear it whenever we represent the League.

The elections were exciting and a wonderful team of talented and dedicated women were installed as the elected officers for the next two years. It was a thrill having all my family present at the closing mass and banquet. It will be an honour and privilege to serve you all as best as I possibly can, knowing I can count on your prayers. May God bless us all. †

**National Council Regretfully Advises
the Passing of Life Members**

Margaret Scherer, late of Lethbridge, Alberta
Colette Ceci, late of Thorold, Ontario

WELCOME!

**The League is pleased to welcome
the new parish council of
St. Patrick, Schomberg, Ontario**

**Welcome back to reactivated council
Sacred Heart, Roblin, Manitoba**