

the accuracy of the information received. The new process does not recognize invalid postal codes or provide for discrepancies in addition. Technology is great, but the information is only as good as that which it receives. As each new membership year begins on January 1<sup>st</sup>, parish councils are encouraged to send in their membership lists in a timely manner in order to improve the accuracy and turn around times for diocesan and provincial per capita fees.

Based on input received from members across the country, the national executive established an ad hoc marketing committee. A firm has been consulted to assist the League as it goes forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is a very exciting time and members are encouraged and hope-filled as they look to the future.

In 2008, there were 14 members awarded life membership and at the end of this convention one woman, National Past President Agnes Bedard, will join the ranks of the honorary life members. It can not be overstated that these women continue to be not only a resource for all levels but an inspiration as they continue to journey with us in the League.

The Bellelle Guerin Award proved to be very popular in its inaugural year. There were 29 women who, in the opinion of their peers, were deserving recipients of this prestigious award. This pin should be worn with pride as it recognizes these women who have given extraordinary service to the League in the spirit of the first national president.

One significant statement in the new organization handbook, "To sell the CWL you must be sold on it yourself", is critical as we go forward. Let us remember to be sold on the League and to be Christ's presence in parish and community. Organization begins with the letter "O", standing for open – open to the spirit and to change, open to new ideas, new members and, yes, new ways of doing things.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world." I say to you, "Be the change we want to see in the League." For God's sake and the sake of the League, keep going! †

person" (Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF) *Families, where are the saints of the third millennium?*).

Fr. Anthony Gittens, keynote speaker for the National Association of Vocation and Formation Directors conference, said, "We must seek to be disturbed! We are sent to be a Godly disturbance in the world: a counter-cultural undertaking!"

Many young people today seek to be a "Godly disturbance" in the world; to live "counter-culture" as evidenced so recently at the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia. COLF's newly released message on *Marriage in the Catholic Church* is a document that members can offer to today's young people contemplating marriage.

Young people are taking up the challenge to defend the unborn and this year thousands of youth participated in the National March for Life in Ottawa, Ontario, and many of the leaders in the pro-life movement are the young people. The League responded to the challenge and joined with the Knights of Columbus across Canada to participate in the March for Life at provincial legislatures. Thank you to National Chairperson of Resolutions Betty Anne Brown for being the League's voice for the unborn in Ottawa. Thank you also to members in every province who embraced the challenge and marched for life. I believe that the League was a more visible presence this year. The National March for Life, May 14, 2009, will mark 40 years since former prime minister Pierre Trudeau's omnibus bill decriminalized abortion in Canada. Let's strive to march in greater numbers in 2009!

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, the governor general of Canada named Dr. Henry Morgentaler to the Order of Canada. A letter was sent to the Rt. Hon. Michaëlle Jean expressing the League's "profound disappointment and distress" and asking that this decision be revoked. Naming Morgentaler to the Order of Canada has accomplished one positive outcome and that is to make Canadians aware that the abortion debate is not settled; Canada is without laws regulating this practice and without any protection for the unborn child!

Two private members' bills are of particular importance to this committee:

- Bill C-484, *An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (injuring or causing the death of an unborn child while committing an offence)*, passed 2<sup>nd</sup> reading in the House of Commons and was sent to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. Members need to send individual letters to all committee members urging them to have full hearings on Bill C-484, especially here in Winnipeg and in Edmonton where pregnant women and children have been victims of violent crime. A list of committee members may be obtained from the government website.

- Bill C-562, *An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (right to die with dignity)* was introduced by Member of Parliament Francine Lalonde and received first reading on June 12, 2008. The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition (EPC) warns that the reintroduction of such a bill threatens the lives of people with disabilities and other vulnerable Canadians.

## CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE



**Ann Doucet**  
Rothesay, New Brunswick

"As Christians of the third millennium, we cannot yield to indifference or to fear. The daring of the first Christians is an example that calls us to go against the tide and to build a family culture, a civilization that respects the sacred character of life and the dignity of each

The 2008 National Euthanasia Symposium will be held October 24-25 at the Victoria Inn Hotel and Convention Centre here in Winnipeg.

It is recommended by the national executive that the National Pro-life Voluntary Fund collections from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008, of \$10,771 be divided between COLF and EPC.

Two ad hoc committees were struck under this standing committee:

- The first was struck for the development of ethical guidelines for the League. These were approved at a national executive meeting and are now in the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*.
- The second was struck to streamline the basic guidelines for organizing a Catholic Girls' League (CGL) council, resulting in a much more user-friendly manual.

Thank you to the individual members of these ad hoc committees for a job well done. Concerns raised with respect to liability and the Catholic Girls' League were addressed to the national executive's satisfaction, through consultation with legal counsel this spring. Following discussions at the pre-convention meeting, a motion was carried that the groups remain under the rubric of the Christian family life standing committee. Additional cautionary remarks will be added to the present manual for the protection of the girls' groups and the League. A cover letter will be added to the manual explaining the parameters of structure and League copyright information. There are currently 17 CGL councils operating in Canada – five in Alberta, one in British Columbia, ten in Ontario and one in Quebec. There have been seven more inquiries from councils interested in forming a CGL group.

"No matter what a family's circumstances are, no matter how it suffers or what challenges it faces, when it opens itself to another family, it is a reflection of God – tender, faithful and merciful. It becomes a messenger of the compassionate Love of Christ for us all" (COLF 2003, *Families: Messengers of the Compassionate Love of Christ*). ✠

and advocating for developing countries.

Child poverty continued to be a focus. Poverty is a reality affecting both rich and poor countries. Eli Khamarov said that, "Poverty is like punishment for a crime you didn't commit." As national chairperson, I suggested the "Adopt a child" project in an attempt to fight poverty – one child at a time. The idea came from a letter I had received from a member in British Columbia who stated, "There are too many children in this world that are dying each day of hunger. Praying for them is good. But God gave us the means to help. Why can't the CWL as a group adopt one child per council?" I put it out to members to consider adopting a child from a developing country or northern mission, and the results have been overwhelming. While many parish councils had already adopted children, many picked up the project and ran with it. Across Canada, councils hosted parish presentations in which upwards of 50 children were adopted (56 children were adopted in my own parish). Thanks to the dedication and commitment of members, hundreds of children have been adopted.

Human trafficking has been coined as "slavery of the 21<sup>st</sup> century". Councils have developed action strategies to deal with this difficult problem. It is critical to work on research and gathering information, education, prevention, support groups and lobbying governments. Also, it is important to promote the education of men and boys on the trafficking of women and its devastating effects. It is critical that members continue to write letters to government.

In the World Refugee Survey 2008, Canada earned the grade of "A" for the right to earn a livelihood and freedom of movement and the grade of "B" for both physical protection and detention/access to courts. Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives sent a warning. "Every year, violence, conflict and poverty force millions to leave their homes in search of refuge. While Canada prides itself on welcoming refugees and migrants, we are often far less welcoming than we want to believe. Recent federal initiatives threaten the basic human rights of refugee claimants, and everywhere refugees and migrants continue to face suspicion and discrimination." Indeed, another area where members need to be vigilant.

Contributions to the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace National Voluntary Fund for the period of July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008, totalled \$77,161. Members again have been very generous.

At each meeting with the federal government, the League delegation has included in its presentation the League's position on eliminating elder abuse and the plight of the homeless. It is encouraging to note that there has been some really positive government initiatives recently announced in both of these areas:

- Elder abuse: The Hon. Marjory LeBreton, leader of the government in the Senate and secretary of state (seniors), announced that the 2008 federal budget would allocate \$13 million over the next three years aimed at curbing elder abuse.

## COMMUNITY LIFE



**Dr. Rayleen De Luca**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Congratulations to members for the amazing work that has been done in the area of community life. Members at all levels have served as role models in upholding the dignity and rights of persons, working for social and economic justice, helping refugees and immigrants, supporting the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace,

