

cancer had not spread and I am fine now. For those of you who will receive the diagnosis this year, there is hope. I invite women in the room who are cancer survivors to stand. When you hear those words, remember this, there are people who get through it. Pray for us and for our continued health. Ask cancer survivors for their stories and they will celebrate their journey with you.

In a few hours I am going to be “past” past president. I will join the circle of friends at the honorary life members’ table. I have served with a great many of the honorary life members. I came on the national executive during Lucille Cullen’s presidency in 1991. Then came Heather Kolla, Claire Heron, Joan Chesser, Sheilah Pellerin, Vivian Bosch and Marie Cameron. Those with whom I did not serve were always there for us – Mary Matthews, Dorothy Brocklehurst, Jean Mahoney, Ardis Beaudry and Irene Lefort.

During the 35 years I have been member I have met extraordinary women. There is no way I can be sorry for this “passing”. I am going to miss all of you. I am going to miss being here every year. What a wonderful time! Thank you for being so supportive of me. I love you all and I hold you in my heart. †

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



**Lorette Noble**  
Candiac, Quebec

This year the League has had the added advantage of experiencing and being part of the World Union of Catholic Women’s Organizations (WUCWO) North American Regional Conference. This was an opportunity for members to learn about WUCWO, its mission, theme and priorities, which are so closely linked with the League’s mission and theme. It also gave participants a chance to meet representatives of the other organizations in North America which belong to WUCWO. I was delighted and impressed with the large number of members who came early to attend these WUCWO days. The liturgies were beautiful and the presentations by Archbishop Richard Smith, of Edmonton, Nazanin Afshin-Jam and WUCWO President-General Karen Hurley were inspiring.

The donations this past year to the WUCWO National Voluntary Fund, from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008, came to \$8,328, representing an increase of \$1,249 over that of last year. The cheque has been presented to Karen Hurley.

An interesting connection worth mentioning was established at the 49<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress last June in Quebec City. I was contacted by Jacqueline Coin

from southwest France, through the Paris WUCWO office. She belongs to L’Action Catholique des Femmes and was interested in knowing what League members saw as their challenges. We met over lunch at the congress. It was quite remarkable how alike the two organizations are: a somewhat aging membership, which is sometimes daunting to younger women; attracting very busy young women who work full-time; and suggesting projects and activities likely to rouse their interest. I was able to introduce Jacqueline to Canadian WUCWO Board Member Agnes Bedard, and we exchanged ideas and promised to keep in touch.

I want to share with you the story of a letter I received from the Argentinian Embassy in Ottawa. It demonstrates the ripple effect of League action taken 25 years ago in support of the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo. The letter from the counsellor at the embassy read as follows:

“It is a pleasure to send you a copy of the book entitled *Testimonies of the International Solidarity*, which was published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina in March 2007 as a summary of the workshop ‘A 30-year of the Coup d’État’, related to the tragic events that happened in Argentina.

“In the chapter entitled: ‘Grandmothers and the world: from north to south, an endless list’, pages 39/40, Mrs. Rosa Roisinblit thanked the cooperation of different Canadian Organizations and Institutions that worked with the ‘Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo’ at that time, mentioning specifically The Catholic Women’s League of Canada and its President Jean Mahoney.

“Hoping you will find this book interesting. Cordially, Luis Del Solar Dorrego, Counsellor Embassy of Argentina.”

Now, the book is in Spanish and by coincidence my husband, Christopher, has been taking university courses in Spanish for over three years, so he was able to translate the passage in the chapter by Rosa Roisinblit concerning the League, which reads as follows:

“I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge and bear witness to the support that the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo have received for a total of thirty years and in almost every country in the world.... It is no accident that Canada was the first country to support us and that by one hundred per cent. In 1979, around Holy Week, every one of the grandmothers began to receive letters of support, comprehension and requests for affiliation. I personally, and I was not alone, received over 500,000 letters, on one day alone 110....

“A short time later, we received a note from the Catholic Women’s League of Canada; its President wanted to come to Argentina to visit and share with us, and could we put her up in the Grandmothers’ house? We still had a little apartment on Montevideo Street. We dismantled the office, turned it into a bedroom with a bed, bedside table and a pretty pedestal table and lamp. And thus we received Jean Mahoney, President of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada. She stayed and

shared time with us. The visit must have been a success because the next year, when we visited Canada, the CWL invited us to a small city near Toronto, where they made me honorary member of the League. Wow, Rosa Tarlovsky de Roisinblit!"

A footnote to this heartwarming story – Honorary Life Member Jean Mahoney was a member of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace delegation that in 1983 went to Argentina to join in the daily grandmothers' march and offer them "visible support", as you will read on page 73 of the League history, "Except the Lord Build the House...". Incidentally, the "small city near Toronto", site of the 1983 national convention, was Saskatoon! Jean's visit to Argentina and sharing of her experience resulted in a huge letter-writing campaign by members. What a ripple effect of a simple action so many years ago! †

## ALBERTA MACKENZIE



**Donna Prevost**  
Fairview, Alberta

What a wonderful year Alberta Mackenzie parish councils have had in 2007. There has been an increase in membership, the formation of five Catholic Girls' Leagues and the strengthening of St. Joseph

College Campus Council. On another note the provincial council has said goodbye to 130 deceased members.

Alberta Mackenzie had five dioceses and 9,904 members at the end of 2007. For 2008, the provincial council is shooting for 10,000 members.

The theme of *Love One Another-Embracing Christ in the Eucharist* was truly adopted across the province. Conventions and workshops had wonderful titles such as *God is Love*, *Love Life-caring for each other*, *Love One Another as people of the Eucharist*, *The Eucharist-source and summit in our lives*, *Turn our worship into witness in the sacrament of life*, and *God's Gift of Love and God's loving response*.

It is evident that working and studying together is rooted in the love God has for us and our response to His loving gift of the Eucharist.

In the words of Zainab Salbi, winner of the Conrad Hilton Humanitarian Prize, "Women are the glue that keeps families and communities whole. No society can progress if women are not fully engaged."

League members in the province are "fully engaged" working together to make changes to society as they come to grips with social issues and, through knowledge, resolve to act.

Some areas of action are poverty, human trafficking, sponsoring a refugee family, global mining accountability, proper burial of unborn human remains, ridding meetings of Styrofoam, and becoming more aware of nuclear energy coming to the province. Members continue to be generous to various charities such as Adopt a Seminarian, women's shelters, Catholic schools, donations to countries that have had a natural disaster, pro-life, and Pennies for the Poor. Over \$5,000 was donated to a Burundi, Africa, orphanage, with the money used to cover expenses for education and health care for orphans.

Focus areas were on faster and more inclusive communication regarding timely issues with the use of e-mail, becoming more effective in keeping records to preserve archives, and using the mentoring method for League development.

Poverty was a focus of one diocesan council. Strategies were developed on how to approach the issue of homelessness. Letter writing was ongoing to members of parliament regarding affordable housing in Alberta.

Human trafficking was a predominant interest in every diocesan council. Members attended workshops, listened to speakers, wrote to members of parliament, learned more about this problem in Canada and are trying to find ways to take action to stop this activity.

A resolution, Proper Burial of Unborn Human Remains, from Grouard-McLennan Diocesan Council, was not accepted for presentation at the 2007 annual national convention but is being worked on for re-presentation.

So many celebrations happened throughout the year. Councils continued to recognize the achievements of members since 1912. Sixty years is now a common anniversary with one council celebrating 87 years.

League visibility increased this year. Members were present for honour guards at celebrations and funerals, wore CWL scarves, and sponsored more advertisements and articles in various newspapers.

Women continued to take stronger roles on school boards, in all areas of church liturgy, parish councils, and on boards for organizations. Alberta Mackenzie members are truly "fully engaged" in their communities.

There has been more awareness of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations through the "adopt a country program" introduced by National Past President Agnes Bedard.

I attended four of the five annual diocesan conventions and was honoured and blessed to be able to attend the 49<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress held in Quebec City. It was an exciting and educational time.

St. Joseph College Campus Council is hosting a conference this August to train attendees on how to start a campus council. Hopefully some university students from across Canada can attend.

One diocesan president reported that "the Catholic