

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Danielle McNeil-Hessian**  
National President

As I begin this giant step on my Catholic Women's League journey, I am overwhelmed by the support received from friends and strangers alike within and outside the League. It is an honour and a privilege to serve as your president. I look forward to continuing the journey with you over the next two years.

Today, I am reminded of my first presidency in my parish council of St. Ignatius in Bedford, Nova Scotia. Fr. Gregory Heenan was the diocesan spiritual director when he came to Bedford. Of course he wanted his parish, St. Ignatius, to be part of the League, no pressure, and we were eager to support him.

My father-in-law passed away and I was unable to be at the charter meeting. At the last minute my friend Florence Zinck called and I told her that I would be willing to let my name stand for office. "Even for president?" she asked. The rest is history and I am the charter president of St. Ignatius Parish Council in Bedford. That was 25 years ago. My council is not unlike many of yours, limited membership and the same faithful group of members putting their efforts into the work of the standing committees and the parish. The women of my council are committed to the League and take every opportunity to laugh together, pray, and care for and support each other, a typical parish council in every way. I am very proud of them and of every one of you for your continued support of the League and your parish.

Once again the national convention was a great success. Close to 750 members went home filled with the spirit and renewed in their League commitment. Congratulations and many thanks to the convention committee in Winnipeg, a very special thank you to convention chairpersons and committee members. The hospitality in Winnipeg was superb; the sunny dispositions of the volunteers were appreciated as was the beautiful sunflower chosen as one of the convention symbols. The convention was filled with joy and enthusiasm, spirit filled liturgies, and members sharing and greeting old and new friends.

During the business sessions six resolutions, included in this magazine, were debated and adopted. Also included are the oral reports of the provincial presidents and national officers, along with other information. As members we are called and challenged to heed the words of Jesus to His disciples, "love one another as I have loved you." The theme was apparent throughout the convention.

The gathering day featured three individuals who spoke on

end-of-life issues, Dr. Moira McQueen, Alex Schadenberg and Senator Sharon Carstairs. At the end of the panel presentation, participants were given real life and death scenarios to discuss and the results were shared with the assembly. It was clear to the members gathered that it is important to discuss with family members and plan for end-of-life care. Members are encouraged to continue to take action on Resolution 2007.03 Hospice Palliative Care: An Integral Component of the Canadian Health Care System. It is important to continue to lobby provincial and federal governments for excellent end-of-life care in all of Canada.

The League theme *Love One Another* was in evidence in prayer and action, not only at the convention but also during the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) North American Regional Conference, held two days prior to the convention opening ceremonies. The women of the member regions of Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America/Caribbean and North America were represented by participants who carried their pictures and remembered them with love through a prayer service.

Not unlike the national presidents who have gone before me, I have been asked about my vision for the League, a very good question. At the beginning of my presidency I would say it is one that sees every Catholic woman concerned with social issues such as eliminating hunger and child poverty, ending child and elder abuse, providing adequate shelter, and eradicating trafficking of women and children at home and abroad. A vision that sees women committed to God and Canada through service in The Catholic Women's League of Canada long into the future. A vision of Catholic women of the future having the sisterhood of the League, the opportunity to strengthen the bonds of friendship with women from all walks of life and to work, pray and play as they continue the League tradition. It is up to us to carry the torch of our foremothers, an awesome responsibility.

The song says, "Love makes the world go round," and as has been said, love is the only thing that can be divided without being diminished. It is yours to give and hopefully yours to receive. Let's share the love. I challenge every parish council to increase its membership by 10 per cent over the next two years and every member to focus on building the League through service to the parish, praying and playing together. Finally, I challenge members to share and care for each other as they go forward in faith and action. †