

councils will pay absolutely no membership fees for 2011! Congratulations! What a tremendous achievement for your councils and for the League!

Never lose faith, have fun and relish the fulfillment that is yours in the League! Continue to be the beautiful women you are – *Women of Peace and Hope!* †

## CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE



**Pearl Bridgwater**  
Candiac, Quebec

The past year was both challenging and rewarding. Fortunately I had an amazing team of provincial counterparts with me every step of the way.

Their work was a big help in bringing about the desired results to the two bills of special interest to this committee.

The human trafficking bill, Bill C-268, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (minimum sentence for offences involving trafficking of persons under the age of eighteen years)* has now become law. The new law will provide a minimum sentence of five years imprisonment for anyone convicted of trafficking a minor in Canada. A minimum of six years imprisonment can be added for cases involving aggravated assault. Previous to this new law, the prison term in Canada for victimizing women and children had been non-existent!

Bill C-384, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (right to die with dignity)* was defeated by an overwhelming number of “no” votes (228 to 59). “The CWL has been of central importance to the success of our strategy to defeat Bill C-384. Thank you for your impressive caring and committed work”. This is a direct quote from a letter sent by the director of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition in appreciation for your help. I couldn’t have said it better.

Members from all across Canada were part of the large turnout for the annual March for Life. Because of the defeat of Bill C-384 the League will now focus on providing good palliative care and insisting that government does too. The National Pro-Life Fund was \$12,135 and the national executive recommends the money be donated to a Canadian national palliative care group. Doctor Nuala Kenny has been asked to help us choose one that is most deserving.

It is evident that young people are taking up the challenge to help bring about the changes that they believe will make life better in their world. They are not only marching for pro-life but they seem to be pro-religion as well. They attended the March for Life in large numbers.

This year’s Youth Summit, having the theme *Sent*, was well attended and the idea seems to be catching on. Youth summits

began the years preceding the 49<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress held in Quebec City in 2008. For the first time this year’s summit was held outside of Quebec. Participants marched over the bridge across the Ottawa River to Parliament Hill in Ottawa carrying the Ark of the New Covenant. The Ark of the New Covenant was passed on after this year’s ceremonies to Montreal where the next summit will be held.

Youth will soon be asked to prepare for World Youth Day 2011 in Madrid, Spain. Please respond generously to their requests for prayerful support. The theme will be *Rooted and Built Up in Jesus Christ, Firm in the Faith*. For all information regarding WYD 2011 get in touch with the local representative in your parish.

Catholic Girls’ League members are involved in projects that foster *faith, fun, friendship and fulfillment*. Growth in membership has slowed a bit but members remain committed. This year we have had two new councils and big plans ahead for Edmonton.

In the *Year for Priests* members embraced every opportunity to host special events for bishops, priests, deacons and seminarians. They were invited to members’ homes and to special gatherings. Their anniversaries were celebrated, prayers and spiritual bouquets were offered, and some councils even adopted a few seminarians. We will continue to show our love and appreciation even though the year officially came to an end on June 19<sup>th</sup>. †

## COMMUNITY LIFE



**Mary Nordick**  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

As I leave this challenging, wonderful standing committee of community life, I would like to focus on three areas, all intertwined and at the core of all that we do; believe me our members do a great deal in community life.

For the past few years we have been concerned with the global yet local problem of human trafficking. While the 2010 Olympics have come and gone, trafficking remains. Sub-committee Chairperson Pat Battensby reports that British Columbia is turning from a focus on trafficking to one on prostitution and pornography, both integral to human trafficking. Women and children suffer most from human trafficking and men are in the forefront of the demand for and as the suppliers of human “commodities”. Victor Malarek, in his latest book, *The Johns: Sex for Sale and the Men Who Buy It*, argues that it is time to target the johns because without the demand for trafficked bodies there would be no trafficking.

Just a few weeks ago a man was convicted in British Columbia of sexual exploitation of minors in a sex tourism case. We need to continue to raise awareness in our councils, families, parishes and communities about human trafficking, both local and abroad. We need to demand laws that protect victims, hold perpetrators accountable and ensure the enforcement of such laws. We need to change attitudes towards prostitution, in terms of both clients and providers and to resist the calls for legalized prostitution. We also need to change our language. It is not the oldest profession but the oldest oppression.

Closely related to human trafficking is the issue of poverty. Many become victims of trafficking simply because they are desperately poor. In a world which our loving God has blessed with abundant riches, many lack the necessities of life. Even here in Canada in 2010, children go to bed and to school hungry, dependant on food banks and school breakfast and lunch programs for subsistence food. In many developing countries such aids are not present and starvation and disease take a terrible toll. Once again, attitudes need to be changed. What are our personal actions in regard to poverty? How do our lifestyles contribute to others' suffering? How do we hold governments responsible to eliminate poverty, ensure living wages, encourage fair employment and care for the most vulnerable in our midst? What are we prepared to give up so that others might live? Many years ago our government produced target dates for the elimination of child poverty in Canada. Sadly those dates have come and gone and the problem remains. You might like to check out the latest nongovernmental push against poverty, the Dignity for All Campaign. As food banks proliferate, unemployment rises, social services are cut, hard-earned dollars buy less, and charity is stretched to the maximum, it is easy to despair.

Turning to my third area, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and [Peace](#) (CCODP) offers us a way to participate in aid to developing countries, especially at a time when governments, despite fulsome rhetoric of concern, are cutting back on foreign aid. Thanks to CCODP, I experienced first-hand the partnerships in Africa. CCODP project support is based on two main premises. One, people on the ground in the countries know what needs to be done and are most capable of getting it done with a little help. Two, CCODP funds programs that will raise awareness and bring lasting fundamental change rather than immediate gains, and yet when necessary there is provision for immediate disaster assistance, eg. Haiti. Unfortunately, our League donation to CCODP under the One Percent Program is down considerably this year, only \$69,758. I [hope](#) that perhaps some of the drop is due to councils directly supporting the CCODP Haiti relief appeal and the Christmas campaign. I learned that the Christmas campaign, "Light a Candle for Burundi", based on our African experience, was one of the most successful ever. Please take CCODP to heart and consider this: If every member gave a loonie, probably far less than one percent of our personal expenditures, next year's CCODP's contribution

would be well over \$90,000. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops affirms the work of CCODP. This year and for the following three years our contributions will go to the Afghan Women's Resource Centre, National Federation of Bolivian Domestic Workers and the Northern Nigeria Development Exchange Centre.

Faced with the overwhelming problems I have touched on in this report, the temptation might be to despair and think that what we can do is far too small and useless. But, we are women of faith, we are women of the full gospel of life, we are *Women of Peace and Hope*, and we do have a choice in the face of violence, despair and poverty, a choice that many in our world do not have. We can curse the darkness, or we can light a candle. We can throw up our hands in despair and give up, or we can join our hands in prayer and reach into our treasures of money and time, using our hands to write to government and to reach out in loving care. ✚

## EDUCATION AND HEALTH



**Cecile Miller**  
N.E. Margaree,  
Nova Scotia

In June, Senator Sharon Carstairs tabled her third report on palliative care, *Raising the Bar: A Roadmap for the Future of Palliative Care in Canada*. In

it she made recommendations to all levels of government; these recommendations as well as a full report can be found on her Web site. A multi-party group of members of parliament has formed a parliamentary committee on palliative and compassionate care. The committee will examine a number of challenges facing Canadians, including aspects of palliative, hospice and home care, suicide prevention, elder abuse, pain control, mental health and disability issues. The committee has begun hearings. These will continue and written submissions will be received until this fall; a report will be completed by December 2010. Groups and individuals are invited to make a submission to the committee and may do so by contacting the office of either Member of Parliament Joe Comartin or Member of Parliament Harold Aubrecht.

Twenty-one members applied for support from the National Bursary Fund this year, but one withdrew her name before the committee met by teleconference in June. The total amount available for bursaries this year was \$10,320 so each applicant was awarded a bursary of \$500.00. One of the applicants did not receive her bursary last year because the confirmation of her acceptance into the designated program was not received by national office. She was awarded the remaining \$320.00.