

## MANITOBA



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I bring you greetings on behalf of members in Manitoba.

This spring we met with our new premier and cabinet members; representatives from our three diocesan councils, the Military Ordinariate Provincial Council and the local Ukrainian Catholic Women's League chapter joined us as observers.

This year's provincial convention saw five resolutions come to the floor – an arts and culture tax credit for children, accessible library services for the blind and partially sighted, financial support for the Holy Names House of Peace, the use of mandatory bike helmets and banning the importation of cat and dog fur.

Delegates to the provincial convention learned that “Computers Are Our Friends”. This PowerPoint presentation stressed the importance of e-mail protocol and pitfalls, then showed members how to use Google Docs and ZamZar.

Members have chosen to participate in the Canadian Blood Services Partners for Life program through the provincial council. Team CWL will be recognized and listed on the donor wall as members credit their blood donations to the team.

With League representation appointed to the planning committee, members were kept informed and encouraged to participate as preparations were made for the Federal Truth and Reconciliation Commission national event held in Winnipeg June 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>.

The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the St. Boniface Diocesan Council was commemorated with a day of service at Siloam Mission providing for the homeless. Members prepared and served meals, sorted clothing, cleaned, scrubbed and painted walls as well as provided gifts of clothing, goods and cash. It was an amazing gift of self in celebration of the council's milestone anniversary.

At the diocesan convention, Member of Parliament Joy Smith commended League members for their ongoing support of Bill C-268 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (minimum sentence for offences involving trafficking of persons under the age of eighteen years)*, and at the Walk Against Human Trafficking in Winnipeg on May 8<sup>th</sup> she publicly thanked members from across Canada for their support on this initiative.

As the face of the League changes to embrace the needs of its members, the Winnipeg Diocesan Council embraced change as it adapted its convention format so that all delegates had the opportunity to participate in meetings as well as the workshops offered.

The guest speaker, a First Nations woman with a degree in education, spoke on a variety of topics relating to native spirituality and customs, residential schools and the gift of the Catholic church in her life.

The provincial post-convention meeting will be held in the fall to accommodate the busyness of harvest. In response to members' requests for more training, a series of smaller workshops on the standing committees will be developed and facilitated by diocesan chairpersons.

The Keewatin-The Pas diocesan convention was hosted by St. Maria Goretti Parish Council in Lynn Lake. Vehicles were rented appropriate to the distance, isolation and road conditions of travelling that far north – four hours drive past Thompson. Members are grateful for financial assistance from the National Development Fund which facilitated the attendance of members from across the north as well as members from “down south”.

Sister Eva Solomon, CSJ, a First Nations woman who works with the Western Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, spoke on the theme *Build Me a Church That Will Honour My Son*. She used her life experience and faith development to explore the significance of Canadian First Nations Catholics as well as the inter-culturation of faith in light of the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Sister Solomon provided experiences of the integration of Catholic faith and First Nations spirituality. She shared a number of ways that members and councils could help but asked that we pray with and for them in a special way. She gave each member a prayer card for victims of violent death with original artwork and a prayer that she wrote. It is her dream that members consider using the prayer at their meetings for the upcoming year. Pictures of the beautiful aboriginal wall hangings that Sister Solomon brought to Lynn Lake can be seen on the provincial Web site.

Keewatin-The Pas Diocesan Council sent a letter of invitation to religious women serving in their diocese which included the generous offer to pay their membership for 2010 and 2011.

Winnipeg Diocesan Council continues to work with and support parish councils through outreach, workshops and personal contact and looks forward to reactivating one parish council and welcoming a new council as well.

Over the past year St. Boniface Diocesan Council sent letters of introduction to the pastors of the 19 English-speaking parishes in the diocese that do not have a council and requested the opportunity to do a promotional presentation. To date three parishes have been visited and invitations to speak this fall have been received from four more parishes.

Interest in the League has been expressed by women from the Hispanic, Korean, Laotian and Vietnamese parish communities in St. Boniface. Archbishop Albert LeGatt suggested that consideration on a national level be given to approaching and engaging ethnic-based parishes, taking into consideration language used for conducting business and reporting expectations. There are similar issues to be addressed with the aboriginal community as well. †