

## MILITARY ORDINARIATE



**Barbara Thuen**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

When I joined the League just over 27 years ago, I never imagined I could be standing here today, representing the women of the Military Ordinariate Provincial Council.

But who are these women? They are mothers, sisters, young women, teenagers, senior citizens. They are students, stay-at-home moms, working mothers, career women, retirees, and members of Canada's military. Does this list sound somewhat familiar? Are these the same groups of women that make up your councils? Of course they are. Do we all face the same challenges and issues? You bet we do! Members are very busy, many with young children or full time jobs, or both. It's hard to make another commitment that will take up even more of that precious time with family and home.

Our members face a few additional stresses. Our loved ones are on duty 24/7 and may be called to work at a moment's notice. Often, we are not sure where they are going, when we'll next hear from them, or when they will return. If we do know where they are going, we may not be happy about it. Emotions run high when facing known and unknown dangers, and our members often need to be both Mom and Dad to their children. Add to this the possibility of frequent moves and new beginnings, and you will get a feel for the unique lifestyle of military families. Then we ask these women to make more commitments and take on more responsibilities as members of the League? Please understand, this is not whining or complaining – it's just our life.

At the provincial convention, we experienced many of the same challenges that many other councils face. We had two members willing to let their names stand for office; we had no one for treasurer or secretary. Our spiritual advisor had just stepped down and we didn't know who would replace him. What a state! During the convention, we all became aware of the presence and the work of the Holy Spirit among us. We were reminded that we had all received the gifts of the Holy Spirit at our confirmation to help us through our lives and on our spiritual journey. With a lot of prayer, deep reflection, and strong faith, we returned home from the convention with only one spot on the executive not filled, and a new spiritual advisor. Her name is [Hope!](#) The Holy Spirit works in wondrous ways!

At last year's convention, Father Tim Nelligan challenged each council to choose a female saint, research her story, and present their findings at this year's convention. This

project was a tremendous success, and the presentations were incredible. We saw PowerPoint presentations, musical renditions and costumed enactments. In a very entertaining way, we learned a little bit more about our faith.

Ten years ago, the provincial council and the Protestant Ladies Chapel Guild met at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Trenton for a joint convention. We called this convention Operation Common Ground. We shared spiritual and social aspects of our meetings with our Protestant sisters. We compared challenges and triumphs and learned that we do indeed share common ground. Our convention next year will again be held at CFB Trenton, where we will celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Operation Common Ground with our Protestant sisters. Councils have been asked to prepare a presentation which highlights their local interactions with the Protestant Ladies Chapel Guild. I plan to be able to report to you next year on the success of this anniversary convention.

Our past president created a Book of Remembrance honouring our fallen military members in Afghanistan. Sadly, we continue to update this book. We thank you for your prayers and support.

As you can see from these projects, the League continues to be active and involved. I believe this is because our members are strong and resilient. The military lifestyle has prepared these women to face challenges, develop creative solutions and overcome obstacles. Using the gifts the Holy Spirit has given us and believing in ourselves and God's love for us will allow our members to move forward. Our councils will grow and become stronger.

During my term, I intend to encourage our members to rekindle their passions. These include our passion for prayer, faith, the League – its mission and sisterhood – and for discovering and developing our spirituality. We all have these passions – that's part of why we joined the League in the first place! They may remain dormant or buried, but all we really need to do is rekindle our passions. I invite you to join us. ✠

## NEW BRUNSWICK



**Joyce Green**  
Fredericton, New Brunswick

Membership in New Brunswick is being maintained at just under 3,000; I am [hopeful](#) that by 2011 we may see a small increase. We are presenting workshops to encourage members to step forward and become the leaders of tomorrow. I personally plan to present leadership workshops in any diocese that will invite me.