

My last provincial council visit was held in Cornwall, Ontario. I had been to Cornwall before on different occasions to the plenary of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB). However, this was the first time I was able to appreciate the beauty of the city and the warmth of its people. I was picked up at the airport by a committee member. We shared our stories and she told me of her grandchildren, including an adopted granddaughter who would soon arrive from Korea. While I was at the convention I learned that my oldest daughter was adopting a baby that was to be born in a few weeks. At the time of this national convention her granddaughter and my grandson have both arrived.

At this convention there has been a beautiful spirit and a group of women who know how to celebrate with *faith, fun and fulfillment*. Through workshops, and many other activities women came together to celebrate the work being done “For God and Canada”.

December 31<sup>st</sup> ends the second year of the theme, *Women of Peace and Hope*, and the new theme will begin on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The theme has given members opportunities for spiritual programs that enhanced both their prayer life and spiritual growth.

At the national level, a new resource, *Prayers and Workshops for Women of Peace and Hope*, was created with input from all members of the executive. I am proud of this resource and the dedicated work of its contributors. The book is a resource that can be used by councils for years to come.

In honour of the *Year for Priests* a letter was sent to all priest spiritual advisors. The names of two priests were selected at random to attend this year’s convention all expenses paid. As well, Archbishop Currie will facilitate a workshop for all spiritual advisors in attendance at the convention.

The technology at national office continues to allow members to access more information. On-line registration is off to a great start and councils are encouraged to try this new method for faster and more accurate information sharing. The executive director is looking into an on-line ordering system.

The e-newsletter continues to improve and councils are encouraged to keep the material coming on a regular basis.

Although some councils have increased their membership, my challenge to members to increase membership by 10% has not been realized, but I am confident that it will continue to be on the agenda of councils. The new membership materials, developed this year, promise to be an asset to future membership campaigns.

By now you are all aware of the sound defeat of Bill C-384 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (right to die with dignity)*. A letter was written to all 228 members of parliament who voted to defeat the bill, thanking them not only for their vote but for their commitment to be present when the vote was taken. As well the members of parliament were encouraged to focus on palliative care initiatives.

A letter will be written to Bishop Pierre Morrissette, president of the CCCB regarding the impact on the church on

the sexual abuse crisis which continues to cast a shadow over the church in Canada and the world. The letter will call for an implementation of the recommendations in *From Pain to Hope* and its subsequent update. The letter will ask the CCCB to develop a communications strategy that will serve the church in Canada. Finally the letter will state that members will continue to support their clergy and work with them for the good of God’s people.

I am appreciative for the opportunity I have had to serve as president. I am most grateful for the women that I have met and I shall miss meeting members from across the country in their home province. I am confident that with the leadership of National President Velma Harasen, God’s help and the commitment of members in 2010, the League will thrive long into the future. I look forward to the role of past president, to supporting the new executive and to journeying with you as I continue to serve the League. May Our Lady of Good Counsel intercede for us and guide us as we go forward, striving to support each other “For God and Canada”. ✚

## SPIRITUAL ADVISOR



**Most Rev. Martin Currie**  
Archbishop of St. John’s  
and Bishop of Grand Falls,  
Newfoundland and Labrador

At the spiritual advisors’ workshop we had a wonderful meeting. There were 34 there, priests, sisters, lay people and a great discussion was had. We had four presenters on different aspects of League life and I’ll try to sum up briefly.

First of all is the importance of communication. We need to be able to communicate and priests and spiritual advisors need to be taught that they are to walk with the members of the League. We need to communicate at the parish, diocesan and provincial levels so the knowledge of the League will become known and people will know what the League does. It was even suggested to me by one priest that perhaps members could visit the English seminaries and talk to the seminarians about the League.

The other point made in our group is that there were several priests from various countries. Many of them say it has to be a two-way street. Many of them feel very accepted by the League, no question of colour or language. They too have to understand what the League is about. It was suggested that with the changing face of the church – large numbers of Philipinos, many from African countries and different Asian countries – we should see more diversity in the League. One of the problems is that some ethnic communities have associations of their own and that is good, but how can we educate them and make the League known to them?

The other thing we discussed is that we need to learn to respect the gifts of women. Many members have tremendous talents they can share with their parish, the province and the church. When priests go to meetings it is not just enough to say mass before a meeting or stop in and say a prayer. Give it importance. Don't say you're too busy, because only when you attend the meetings do you get a sense of the council's vitality. You see all the issues that are dealt with and the power that is in the room and as you move up to national you will see the potential much more. Spiritual advisors, please give it importance. Give the CWL a positive image. Give it respect.

And also members, make presentations and encourage the priest to speak positively about the League and what it does. Educate people about the League.

We need that mutual love and support and we need to walk together. As Doctor Kenny explained, we need to walk together, support each other in this troubled time in our church, and recognize the power for good and the power for change that this group has.

It was also mentioned that the appointment of the spiritual advisor doesn't mean he will be a good spiritual advisor. You don't send a chaplain to a school or anywhere if he doesn't have the skills. There are certain skills, understanding and a desire that have to go with it. How do you get to be appointed – because you're the only one available? You happen to be in the parish?

How do you train somebody to be a spiritual advisor? That's why a workshop on the history of the League, what it represents and its power and potential are important.

Also in some parishes there are other groups, often women themselves, who are negative to the League. They need to see the bigger picture, the potential for good – the powerful voice that the League has with prime ministers, premiers, government officials and society as a whole. Women should want to be a part of this "something that is much bigger than your parish."

Think positively and work positively with your pastor when you go home to build that positive image and see the potential that the League has. †

continued to experience a decline in membership; there were 878 fewer members than in 2008. We relied on our investment income to make up for this operating loss.

We are always proud that members continue to find it in their hearts to come forward and help others. From the annual reports, an amount of \$4,064,007 was donated to various groups and individuals at home as well as to the global community, some of whom may not be able to sustain themselves without this continued support. What a positive impact League contributions have on so many lives! It is very heart-warming to see so much **peace** and **hope** given to so many through members' contributions.

We continue to be financially sound because we are good stewards striving to find ways and means to increase our revenues without decreasing programs. Over the past four years we were able to do just that, without a fee increase, because we were able to draw down on our investment income to offset our operating expenses.

Unfortunately this cannot go on forever. The cost of doing business in today's world has increased greatly while we are experiencing a decline in membership each year, which is our main source of revenue. In order for us to preserve the League for generations to come, maintain our programs and promote the League in **hopes** of attracting new members, we are going to have to generate revenue sooner than anticipated.

We have to come together now to set the wheels in motion to keep the League we all love financially sound. To do this we need our membership's understanding, goodwill and support. The national executive has struggled long and hard trying to find solutions.

Some organizations have increased either their convention registration or their annual fees. We could cut programs or become an elitist group. The League cherishes its members and takes every opportunity to give back to them.

Now some may say that this is going to be a burden on members. I am on a fixed income and I know I don't find it a hardship to purchase tickets on chance or whatever is needed to support various groups or organizations. We pay per capita fees once a year and we don't think that the increase will make this a hardship. With your support and understanding on this issue we will be able to keep the League solvent for many years to come.

This is not a decision made by the national executive. It will be your decision to make when the instructed vote is distributed to parish councils for vote at their annual meetings in January or February 2011. That instructed vote will be brought back to the convention floor for the vote and if approved will be implemented in 2012.

The reality of what the League is facing is that our resources will run out in 2015. A fee increase of \$1.00 will not be enough to meet expenses; a fee increase of \$3.00 will allow us to be viable for ten years but a \$5.00 increase will allow us to be viable for 20 years. †

## SECRETARY TREASURER



**Peggy Roche**  
Torbay, Newfoundland  
and Labrador

At its pre-convention meeting, the national executive reviewed the 2009 audited financial statements prepared by Chambers, Fraser & Co.

Chartered Accountants. Once again the per capita fees were not sufficient to cover expenses. The main reason was that the League