

Now in its second year, the prestigious Bellelle Guerin award has a total of 48 recipients.

We encourage parish, regional, diocesan and provincial councils to utilize the National Development Fund, established to help promote League development, spiritual development, leadership training and other development workshops. Eleven applications to the fund have been approved so far this year.

I urge you to put maximum effort into leadership development. There already exist a number of workshops available to you and, again, look to the life members and diocesan, provincial and national executives for help. This is crucial if we want to develop our executive of the future.

We are called to be *Women of Peace and Hope*. May you live life, find *peace* and give *hope*! †

CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE



Pearl Bridgwater
Candiac, Quebec

As members, we are committed to respect life from conception to natural death. All human beings, regardless of age, from the unborn to the

aged are therefore to be protected and respected. The good news is that the League is not alone in this, and there are other groups with similar respect-for-life agendas.

There were record-breaking numbers of pro-life supporters at the 2009 March for Life which marked the 40th anniversary of the legalizing of abortion in Canada. More people are taking up the challenge to defend the unborn. Not only were there thousands of young people present, and an unprecedented showing of religious leadership, but also 19 members of parliament all affirming their support for the movement. The League was represented by the national chairperson of education and health and many members, and I thank them all for contributing to making the League a visible presence. I also thank each one of you for prayers said for the success of the march.

On May 13, 2009, Member of Parliament Francine Lalonde introduced Bill C-384 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (right to die with dignity)*; this bill would legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide. It is almost identical to Bill C-562 and Bill C-407, which she introduced in the last two sessions of parliament.

Bill C-384 is a dangerous bill for anyone who is experiencing physical or mental pain or is terminally ill and has reached the age of 18. It is not limited to terminal illness or to Canadian citizens; it does not attempt to assure competency and allows for euthanasia of incompetent persons.

The first hour of debate on Bill C-384 is tentatively scheduled for late September. We need to continue to lobby in order to defeat the bill. Write to your members of parliament; it is important to know how they stand on this bill.

The 2nd International Symposium on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide was held in Washington and the League was represented by the national chairperson of legislation and me. One of the speakers said, "It is important to individualize your message, personalize your message, humanize your message. In other words... personal letters, blogs, chat sites, letters to editors of newspapers, visits with your members of parliament, calling talk shows, these are more effective." I would like to add that we should combine all actions with our most powerful weapon – prayer.

The Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF) held a seminar on the family in Ottawa and the national past president attended on behalf of the League. COLF has launched a new publication on assisted procreation entitled *High-Tech Babies... Exploring New Challenges To Human Dignity*. A well-constructed workshop, *Life in the Balance: A Workshop on Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia*, is also available and can be used by parishes or at League meetings. Both can be downloaded from the COLF Web site.

This year the National Pro-Life Voluntary Fund collections totalling \$12,209.39 will be donated to COLF and the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition.

A survey was conducted by Life Member Ann Doucet, at my request, in order to give an updated report on the status of the Catholic Girls League (CGL). The findings of the survey reveal that the CGL has lost ground over the past year. It is growing, but only in Alberta where there are six active councils, with a new one formed as recently as May 2009. Quebec continues to have just one active council, but it is very active. Ontario has four active councils and three inactive councils; seven CWL parish councils expressed an interest in forming a CGL but did not pursue it further. There has been the loss of two councils in British Columbia and there are none in Saskatchewan, Manitoba or the Atlantic area. CWL parish councils with CGLs do very well, with both members and leaders very keen and the CWL parish councils very supportive. However, the CGL is experiencing the same lack of leadership that is affecting many CWL parish councils. Nearly everyone thinks it is a very worthwhile endeavour, but when it comes to actually forming a CGL in a parish, no one has the time or energy to devote to it. We're going to work on that.

I pray for your continued support as we stand up for the rights of the family. I leave you to ponder Ted Sorensen's words, "The right message delivered by the right messenger, can ignite a fire, change men's and women's minds, alter votes, bring *hope* to their lives and in all these ways, change the world." †