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The Military Ordinariate Provincial Council is comprised of a small but dedicated group of women. Although we are presently only 14 active parish councils and about 300

members, our Catholic faith and dedication to the League is paramount in all we do. We strive to promote our Catholic faith and values while also supporting our military families.

The annual convention was held May 8-10, 2009, at CFB Petawawa. This was the first time the convention was held in Petawawa. It was quite a challenge for the parish council since it has many young and new members who had never attended a convention. There was a major troop rotation as the Petawawa soldiers were returning from Afghanistan, and it was very reassuring to drive through town and see many yellow ribbons symbolizing the welcoming of the troops back home. Some spouses having just returned home even assisted with the convention.

The convention theme followed the national theme of *Women of Peace and Hope*. Fr. Thomas Lynch, national director of Priests for Life Canada, spoke on pro-life values through spirituality and his ongoing commitment to the pro-life cause. He challenged attendees to speak out for our Catholic values and noted that there is always *hope* for an end to abortion.

Life Member Edith Mockler, a past president of the Military Ordinariate (1980-1982) and registered parliamentarian, gave a presentation on parliamentary procedure and informed attendees on how to conduct meetings in a *peaceful* way.

National President Danielle McNeil-Hessian gave a workshop on being *Women of Peace and Hope*. Attendees were placed in small groups and asked to share their personal stories of being at *peace* with those around them and of offering *hope* to someone. It was very moving as attendees shared their stories; many had similar stories of bringing *peace* and *hope* into their lives.

Provincial Spiritual Advisor Fr. Tim Nelligan gave a PowerPoint presentation and talk on St. Paul and his message of *hope* to early Christians. Lyn Smith was the banquet speaker; she spoke on child poverty in Renfrew County and her work to deliver basic necessities to promote *peace* and *hope* to area children.

It was great to see seven Military Ordinariate past presidents and life members attend the convention this year. Also attending the banquet were Ontario Provincial Past President Margaret Ann Jacobs, Pembroke Diocesan President

Suzanne Mullins and Military Women's Protestant Guild Past President Doris Graves.

Fr. Nelligan presented the parish councils with a project; each council chose a female saint to research and they are to present the information they find at the 2010 convention. I'm sure they will be fun and informative presentations. We will celebrate the 45th anniversary of the provincial council in 2010, which will be held at CFB Borden.

On our military bases we share many events with our sisters from the Protestant Ladies Guild. In 2001, as a Millennium project, we held a joint convention with the Guild entitled the *Common Ground Convention*. For its 10th anniversary in 2011, we will again have a joint celebration of faith with the Protestant Ladies Guild, hosted at 8 Wing, Trenton. Preliminary plans include a day of fellowship and prayer and a day with each group hosting its own meetings, followed by a banquet for everyone.

In the spring issue of *The Canadian League*, the national president challenged members to bring a symbol of *peace* and *hope* to convention. On behalf of the provincial council, I wish to present its symbol, a medic bag. A medic bag is a symbol of *peace* and *hope* to provide medical aid to the injured, a sign that someone is there to care for them and to help them.

I would like to share one member's story about serving in Afghanistan. Nanette Black is a member of Our Lady of the Airways Parish Council, CFB Ottawa, and is a medic serving in the Canadian Forces. She recently returned from a tour in Afghanistan. While there, she administered first aid after an IED explosion, prayed for the injured men and stayed with a fallen soldier until transportation arrived. She has cared for Canadian soldiers, members of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police, Afghan children and even a member of the Taliban in one bed and his victim in the next bed. She was inspired to write a song about who decides who gets to live and who dies. Her belief is that they are all the same – God's children – and it was her job to do the best she could professionally for each and every one and to honour them with dignity. She lives by her Catholic faith, to offer *peace* and *hope* to the downtrodden, to the poorest of the poor.

Many members have spouses, family members or friends serving in Afghanistan and we ask for your continued support and prayers for Canadian troops both while on tour and, equally as important, when they return home. Please pray for all those who have died serving our country. May they rest in *peace* and may their families find solace in God's love.

It has been my privilege to serve as provincial president. I am thankful and honoured to have met so many of you, my CWL sisters. I am so proud to be part of this wonderful organization of faith-filled women. Let us continue the good work "For God and Canada". †