

Congratulations to members who contributed \$30,822.76; that's \$4,224.36 more than last year. Thank you very much.

The Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada Web site includes prayers, services and ideas to work within an ecumenical community. Topics include domestic violence, trafficking, World Day of Prayer and Fellowship of the Least Coin. See what our sisters of other faiths are doing to promote [peace](#) and [hope](#) in this world.

One of the goals mentioned in the *CWL Day of Peace & Hope Activities Kit* was to visit those in palliative care units. One thing to remember when visiting in hospitals and palliative care units: be respectful! What you see there, stays there.

Only a couple of councils mentioned the *One in the Spirit* program. This program will help members to understand the working habits of their sisters in the League and will prevent many misunderstandings and hurt feelings. It is also a fun program and will teach members many things about themselves.

It has been a joy and a privilege to be your national chairperson of spiritual development. I thank the annual national convention liturgy committee for assembling the beautiful booklets, choosing the hymns, and for all its hard work over the past few months. I thank the choir, especially co-convenors Regina Shapter and Mary Power, and choir coordinator Carol Gibbons.

I thank the national president for her trust and patience and for taking a chance on appointing me to this role. It certainly has been a learning year, and I have developed skills in writing prayers that I never knew I had! I have seen Jesus in a new light and feel closer to Him than ever. Yes, I am in love with Him, and Jesus is my sweet tower of [peace](#) and [hope](#). God bless! †

All we ask is for parish councils with a membership of 25 or less to recruit one new member. If membership is between 26 and 60, recruit two new members; between 61 and 100, recruit three new members and councils with over 100 members, recruit four new members. There is not a minimum; more is just fine! When submitting the names of those new members, please note that they are part of the membership challenge blitz. Membership recruitment continues year round; every opportunity that comes our way is a time to invite women to journey with us.

We have spiritual members who are no longer with us and [hopefully](#) are praying for us in their eternal home. These are members we can no longer count. Unfortunately as well, we had many members who did not renew in 2008. Perhaps they weren't asked, perhaps they were away during the membership drive, perhaps they didn't feel welcomed or valued, or perhaps the meetings didn't offer opportunities to develop and use their God-given talents. A New Brunswick parish council paid the membership fees for those members who did not renew, and then advised them of the action and the desire that they would continue to belong! When you return home from this convention, ask one of those members whom we've lost to renew and then move on to recruit one more new one.

After working with Manifest Communications last year and having them identify unique opportunities for the League, establish a framework and recommend new ideas, we have added a staff component with marketing expertise. The contract with Manifest is over. We have benefitted from its expertise and many of the initiatives are a result of the recommendations made. One initiative is the designation of April 26<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel, as a CWL Day of [Peace](#) and [Hope](#), accompanied with the resource kit.

The membership invitation postcards have been well-received and are available on the Web site. They will be updated, adding one to reflect older members, "I'm Too Old". You're never too old to join the League; we have a minimum age but not a maximum one! All promotional resources are being reviewed to keep them current. We look forward to sharing the new material when it becomes available.

The permanent membership cards are new this year. They provide an identification number for each member and will assist greatly in tracking members who transfer or who drop their membership for a period of time. The printing of the cards has slowed down the process of completing and mailing membership data and tabulating accurate membership statistics. While this initial year of implementation has been slower than we had [hoped](#), in the future permanent membership cards will be required for new members only.

We welcome nine members awarded with life membership this year. Life members are an inspiration and continue to be a tremendous resource for all levels. Let's call upon them to share their wisdom and expertise. I would like to thank National Life Member Liaison Shirley Bernier. She kept us well informed with happenings of life members across the country.

## ORGANIZATION



**Velma Harasen**  
Regina, Saskatchewan

It is with excitement and joy that I report one Ontario parish council has 30 new members, one Saskatchewan parish council with every woman in the parish as a member, a British Columbia diocese boasting two new parish councils, and some parish councils already having met or surpassed the ten percent membership increase, the challenge from the national president. These are just a few of our success stories.

The membership challenge blitz is well underway. It is one giant step in getting that ten percent increase. The goal is 100,000 members by October 31<sup>st</sup>. Can we do it? Yes we can!

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 40<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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." †