

# SHOULD WE BE THERE?



**Lorette Noble**  
National President

From time to time, the questions are asked: “Why does the League keep going to government with its resolutions?” or, “Why does the League send representatives to various conferences? What’s the point? Does it do any good?” It is always good to question how and why we do what we do.

The answer to the first question is simple. Each year the resolutions adopted at national convention mandate national council to take members’ concerns to various levels of government. This could be accomplished just by sending a letter, but every delegation that has met with federal government ministers or their senior advisers knows that personal contact is invaluable and has an impact on policy makers in Canada. Each year the League delegation is welcomed and finds that federal government officials are impressed with the diversity of topics members address and ready to listen to members’ concerns.

Last November, at the meeting with Health Canada, a permanent member of the civil service was so impressed with the League’s grassroots interest in environmental matters that she personally invited the delegation to her office on the other side of Ottawa. She showed us what she and her colleagues at the Pest Management Regulatory Agency were doing to provide information to the public in this area, especially on their website [www.pmra-arla.gc.ca](http://www.pmra-arla.gc.ca). It contains a wealth of easily accessible information on virtually every toxic substance, and she wanted the delegation to make sure all League members were aware of this resource.

Following the delegation’s meetings in Ottawa, an invitation from the prime minister’s office was received to nominate a member to the National Seniors Council that will soon be formed. Honorary Life Member Irene Lefort was nominated on the League’s behalf.

The other day I received a call from a representative of the Canadian Catholic School Trustees’ Association. He had attended the Forum for Catholic Associations and Movements hosted by the Episcopal Commission for Associations of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Laity of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, at which National Spiritual Development Chairperson Cecile Miller and I were also present. He said that hearing about the League’s meetings with the federal government each year spurred him on to organize a similar encounter for his association. The result was this association’s first meeting with members

of parliament and both sides found it a very satisfactory encounter. Referring to the League, he said, “You were an inspiration to us!”

In recent years the League has been invited by the federal government to take part in its consultations on various issues, such as reforms to the young offenders’ law, immigration, trade policies, and sustainable development. Where there have been government study and advisory commissions that travel to different parts of the country to hear the public’s views, the League has been there and spoken on its position on defining marriage, genetic engineering, nuclear waste disposal, euthanasia and assisted suicide and other subjects.



Then there are conferences given either by government agencies or ministries, such as the annual consultations on human rights around the world which are sponsored by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada; the annual convention of the Catholic Health Association of Canada; or the seminars and symposia offered by the Catholic Organization for Life and Family. Normally the chairperson, under whose standing committee these issues fall, is delegated to attend such conferences on behalf of the League. She learns first hand the emerging trends on these subjects and becomes better informed and able to share this information with all members. Reports are submitted

following these meetings and shared with the national executive. Workshops might sometimes be developed for use in parish councils. You will find a list of recent meetings attended by League representatives on page 5.

Whenever the League is present at public forums, it has the opportunity to express, in a reasoned and informed way, the beliefs of the Catholic faith, which underpin League resolutions. So, should the League present its views? What do you think? Might this be one form of evangelization?

Pope Benedict XVI, in his first encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love), says, "The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society...is proper to the lay faithful." For, he says, "The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible." "Building a just social and civil order...is an essential task which every generation must take up anew."

Does this activity have anything to do with the theme of *Love One Another*? Again, the pope addresses this. "Love – *caritas* – will always prove necessary, even in the most just society. There is no ordering of the State so just that it can eliminate the need for *a service of love*." [These last italics are mine.] Perhaps what we are doing is providing "a service of love."

Several councils have used the League's promotional DVD at their meetings, and the response has been very positive. It was produced by Salt + Light Television and described in the last issue of the magazine. It could be a very helpful way of making the League known. Copies may be purchased by contacting Salt + Light at (888) 302-7181.

As you will read in the article on the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, a small group went on a "trip of a lifetime" last January. The pilgrims really felt they were walking on holy ground wherever they went. The custodians of the holy shrines are doing marvellous and valiant work maintaining them and they need the prayers and support of visiting pilgrims. Should the opportunity ever present itself, this is a pilgrimage no one will ever regret.

Perhaps you noticed that there were two prayer cards inserted in the last issue of the magazine. Please tear them out and use the prayer, each day if you can. You might consider giving the second card to a friend. If councils want more copies, for example to use on CWL Sundays, they are available in sets at national office for a very modest price.

The best way of being there for each other, of loving one another, is through prayer. Isn't it amazing how often you are asked, "please pray for me..."? We know the strength and comfort this brings. I remember once hearing a member say, "There is no such thing as an 'inactive member' of the League. Every one of us can pray and that is being active!" Isn't this another service of love?

Finally, the excitement about the annual national convention this August in Montreal is growing. You will find more details on the program in this magazine. Have you registered yet? We'd love to see you there! ☩

The World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) North American Regional Conference will be held in conjunction with the League's 88<sup>th</sup> annual national convention in Winnipeg, 2008. The WUCWO conference will begin on the evening of Friday, August 8, 2008, and continue until the opening Eucharistic celebration of the 88<sup>th</sup> annual national convention on Sunday, August 10, 2008. Come early and learn more about your sisters around the world! If attending is not possible, then perhaps you may wish to consider a subscription to *Women's Voice*, the official organ of WUCWO. The cost is \$15.00US and can be purchased by sending a US draft or money order to Joann Hillebrand, 54 Derby Court, Oak Brook, Illinois 60523 USA.



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