

# LOVE AT THE CENTRE OF LIFE

**Lorette Noble**  
National President



*One discovers the meaning of life with the discovery of the love which is at the centre of life. (Jean Laplace, S.J. in Sacred Moments for Every Day: A Perpetual Calendar for Your Spiritual Journey)*

**H**ow on earth do we discover "... the love which is at the centre of life"? Think of our families, friends and neighbours, even chance acquaintances. Do we give outward signs of our love for them, and receive such signs in return, signs such as a smile, shared laugh, hug, loving touch or glance. Does this exchange of love not make the world of difference in our lives? Now try to imagine life without any sign whatsoever of love from anyone, day after day. Instead of a smile or a loving glance, is what we give or receive a frown, or instead of a hug, a cold shoulder? Would we feel emptiness or a lack of purpose? The chances are that the answer is "yes, absolutely". So when we experience love, in any of a myriad of ways, we find life has meaning and look forward to each day because we can draw from this inner well-spring of love. The more one loves, the deeper the spring. Remember when your children were small and they would wonder which one of them you loved the most? Remember being just as

amazed as they were when in fact you realized that your love for them has no bounds, so how could you measure it?

This past year and a half I have traveled right across Canada meeting members at diocesan conventions, as well as diocesan and provincial executives, and look forward to completing the visits in the coming months. I know that conventions are the best of times when we're all on our best behaviour. We come together to celebrate, learn, meet old friends and get to know new ones, share a laugh or two, and sing a song or two. But it's more than that. The joy that comes from unity of purpose is quite tangible. It is the strongest sign of love for each other. It gives meaning to saying, "I am a member of the Catholic Women's League".

My admiration and respect for all that each of you does in the centre of your particular universe, be it a small town or a large city, is as strong as the network of caring individuals that we know of as the League. Every report gives evidence of this. Are some activities the same year after year? Of course some of them are, and this is a testament to dedication and constancy. Do these activities help others in need, or bring joy to those who participate? Of course they do, and so we should keep up the good work. Are some of them new and

innovative? Did they work successfully the first time they were tried? If they fell a little short of expectation, we just need to try again. No harm in that! And when something new succeeds, we should shout it from the rooftops or send in a report of it as a *Spotlight* and share the good news with other councils, so that they can all give it a try!

If we stop and ask “Why did we do that?”, I am sure every member will be able to answer “because we wanted to help” or “because we needed to put right an injustice” or “because if each of us does our little bit, we can make a difference”, whether it’s being less wasteful or taking the time to be present when someone needs a sympathetic ear. Every one of us has our low moments, when we need a gentle nudge to get back on track. No gesture is wasted, no matter how small, if it’s rooted in love. How many times have you heard, “You’ve made my day!”? That’s the kind of love that is at the centre of life.

By the time you’ll be reading this magazine, some of you will be getting ready to come to Quebec City, Quebec, for the 49<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress, and I hope to meet you there. And if you cannot make the trip, try and follow the event in the media.

What a variety of articles you will find between these covers: ideas on developing spiritually; becoming living stones; what it is to be homeless, or a refugee or a displaced person, or living in a developing country; identifying strokes; learning more about good communication; being sensitive to the environment; and concerns about end-of-life issues. There are the *Spotlights* which might give your council an idea or two, and some news on a new initiative which aim is to reflect in the public place a true and clear image of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada.



It is a challenge putting together a stimulating program for Gathering Day at the annual national convention which will take place in Winnipeg this August, with the added excitement of experiencing a World Union of Catholic Women’s Organizations North American Regional Conference. A number of

events in the last few months have highlighted how important it is that members think about the kind of care and attention each human being deserves at the end of life. The overriding question is, “Who should make the decisions about this?” We look forward to three excellent speakers on this theme: Dr. Moira McQueen, executive director of the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute; Alex Schadenberg, executive director of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition; and Senator Sharon Carstairs on palliative care. There will also be an interactive workshop, so come prepared to listen and share.

By now I hope you have registered in great numbers so that we can meet and enjoy that special celebratory, uplifting experience called “national convention”. I look forward to seeing you there!

This will be my last message as national president. It has been a joy serving you with the help of an extraordinary group of women, the national executive. Each provincial council has been represented by an outstanding group of provincial presidents. It has been fun getting to know each other, and hearing all the different ways the Mission Statement is being lived in communities. Above all, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the love and support which you have given me and, it goes without saying, the wonderful welcome you have extended to my husband, Christopher, too! May God bless us all and Our Lady of Good Counsel continue to smile on us as we continue always to *Love One Another!* †

## SASKATCHEWAN PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

Sarah Dauk is the recipient of Saskatchewan Provincial Council’s Social Justice Award for 2006. She has been involved in the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP) for some time, participated in an exposure tour to El Salvador and is one of the youth program’s interns in CCODP’s Toronto office. While in Toronto, she was struck with the realization of the extreme urgency in which the fight for justice and solidarity must be fought. Because of her experiences with CCODP, Sarah will “walk with great love, the love that Jesus had for the sinners, tax collectors, and prostitutes. . . . and will stand up for justice in solidarity with the whole of the body of Christ.” Congratulations, Sarah!



Pictured are National Chairperson of Legislation Mary Nordick and Sarah Dauk.