

COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL

Kim Scammell
Executive Director

In this age, information flows like never before. For The Catholic Women's League of Canada, this means that at any one instant any one of its 99,000 members is communicating with multiple other members. How do you, as members, discern what information is important and what is not? How do you discern what information must be acted upon and what is simply "nice to know"? National executive members realize it can be overwhelming trying to keep up with the information you receive, both officially and unofficially, in your own priority-setting.

Fortunately, there are three clues that you can use to discern if material is officially sanctioned by the League or if it is the personal opinion/belief of one member acting on her own behalf.

The clues as to the authenticity of a statement are its reproduction on League letterhead, its original source and the signature affixed to the document. Communications that are officially endorsed by the national executive will only be distributed via national office and printed on League letterhead. If the communication is intended for an external audience, such as the federal government or the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, then the national president's signature will be affixed. If the communication is intended for an internal audience, i.e., members and councils, then any one of the national officers may have her signature affixed.

If you receive communications that display these three clues, it is an authentic and official League statement. Pay particular attention to the subject raised in the communication and discern what you and your council can do with the

information. If the communication does not display these three clues, the communication should be accepted as personal opinion or information only. Limited to no research has gone into the authenticity or accuracy of the information provided. Nor has the national executive discussed the communication and the merits of its distribution.

This also applies to information gleaned on the Internet. Websites and information distributed via e-mail are not necessarily accurate and could contain false statements. It becomes entirely up to you and your council to further research the non-official information provided and to determine if it is something you wish to act upon as an entirely voluntary action.

Likewise, this applies to provincial and diocesan councils. If their information is provided on League letterhead, it is important and an official statement made by the

council at that level. If it is found in a mass distributed e-mail, it may not carry the same merit.

This article is provided so that you may be judicious with the information you receive. Not all information will be valid or correct, but if it has gone through the League's communications process, you can rest assured that it has been researched by your national officers and approved by your national executive. This process should give you comfort that the national executive will support the direction you take on the information you receive. And, it will help you discern the priorities that are most important for The Catholic Women's League of Canada. †

