

COME TO EDMONTON, THE CITY WHERE THE CWL WAS BORN!

AUGUST 12-15, 2012

EDMONTON NATIONAL CONVENTION PLANNING COMMITTEE

Did you know that although the Catholic Women's League in Canada was incorporated nationally in 1920 in Montreal, it actually began in Edmonton in 1912? Much as our members do today, the women who founded the CWL in Edmonton saw a need and stepped in to help. They began by offering protection and support to immigrant women and girls, many of whom were arriving from Europe without work, shelter or money. Now, 100 years later, the CWL in Edmonton is recognized as a force that has helped transform and inspire the city to become a centre of service and compassion.

We eagerly look forward to welcoming members from across Canada to visit us during our centennial year and to attend the 92nd Annual National Convention of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, August 12-15, 2012. Convention activities are centred in the heart of downtown at the beautifully appointed The Westin Edmonton hotel and at the nearby Shaw Conference Centre, which overlooks the verdant valley of the North Saskatchewan River.

From convention headquarters, it's a healthy 10-block walk or a short transit ride to St. Joachim Church, the oldest Catholic church in Edmonton and the site of the very first CWL meeting in November 1912. Visitors who step inside can be forgiven for thinking they have been magically transported to Quebec – the

1899 red-brick building is an exquisite example of French-Canadian church architecture and decoration. Mass is still celebrated *en français* at St. Joachim.

A few blocks away sits St. Joseph's Basilica, the cathedral church of the Archdiocese of Edmonton and venue for the convention opening and closing masses. The cathedral started out as a "crypt church" because the congregation couldn't afford to build much more than the basement at first. They worshipped there for over 30 years until 1963, when the upper edifice was finally completed. You will get a glimpse of the old crypt church – it's now the parish hall – when attending the reception after Sunday's opening mass.

If you're getting the impression that the convention will be tinged with a taste of history, you're right. To honour the local centennial celebrations, a special event for the Saturday evening before convention has been planned at historic Fort Edmonton Park. This is a place where time stands still, offering visitors an opportunity to experience life as it once was. Take a ride on the steam train, sample bread baked the old-fashioned way, visit the old-time midway or see a multimedia show in the refurbished Capitol Theatre. Tickets to the evening event include transportation to and from the park, admission, dinner and entertainment.





On Sunday, tour the beautiful new St. Joseph Seminary and Newman Theological College. See the breathtaking architecture of the seminary's main chapel, enjoy the serenity of the Mary Garden in the courtyard and stop for a quiet moment in the smaller Chapel of Our Lady of Good Counsel, which has been furnished through the generosity of members. The tour continues to the nearby Muttart Conservatory, a vibrant oasis that features stunning displays of plants and flowers under four iconic glass pyramids.

On Monday evening, at The Westin Edmonton, enjoy games, food, entertainment and song as we recreate the festive nature of an old-time penny carnival, an informal event reminiscent of those held in the early 1900s.

In addition to special convention events, attendees can enjoy many local highlights on their own. Stroll through the lush North Saskatchewan River valley or see it from the deck of the Edmonton Queen Riverboat. Visit the magnificent new Art Gallery of Alberta, or take a guided tour of Alberta's legislature. Head out to West Edmonton Mall for some world-class shopping – with no provincial sales tax! Or venture north to St. Albert where a provincial historic site honours the legacy of Father Albert Lacombe and the Oblate missionaries who came West in the 1800s. And members' husbands may be interested to know that the Edmonton area offers plenty of

golf opportunities, including two scenic public courses easily accessed from downtown.

On Thursday, members can take a tour east of Edmonton to the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, an open-air museum that uses costumed interpreters to depict the pioneer life of Alberta's early Ukrainian immigrant settlers. Or if you've never seen the Rockies, rent a car or take the train to experience the spectacular mountain vistas, wildlife and hot springs of Jasper National Park.

We invite you to arrive well before the convention and stay longer to see more of our part of the country. We're proud of our home, and we promise to make your experience a memorable one.

Your League sisters in the Archdiocese of Edmonton are ready to welcome you to the annual national convention, to the city of Edmonton and to Alberta. It's a chance to join hundreds of members from across the country to celebrate our faith, pray together and make friends from every province and territory. And, as always in our League, there is sisterhood, food and fun.

Our Web site www.nationalconvention2012.cwl.ab.ca has much more information about the convention, alternate accommodations, transportation and local attractions. Visit soon! Visit often!

See you in August! †

