



The Canadian League



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National President's Message

Betty Colaneri

National President



“Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” (Lk 24:32)

The successful national convention this past August gave members such wonderful memories! It was the perfect time to reconnect with members, hear all the amazing things being done across Canada and listen to inspiring presentations. These are exciting times! I am honoured and humbled to begin this new journey with you as national president. The many offerings of prayers, words of encouragement and support from members nationwide have deeply touched my heart. The newly elected national executive members also greatly appreciate your prayers and the confidence you have shown in electing them. With God’s help, we will work together as a team to serve members and communities to the very best of our ability.

A very warm welcome to the League’s new National Spiritual Advisor, Bishop Gerard Bergie (St. Catharines)! For the past 15 years, I have had the pleasure of knowing Bishop Bergie, who has been the inspirational shepherd of his diocese. In 2013, when I was elected the Ontario provincial president, I had the privilege of working with Bishop Bergie as the provincial spiritual advisor. His

spiritual guidance, wisdom and inspiration will truly be a blessing for the national executive and members.

Upon reflection of the above quote from the Gospel of Luke (24:32), we see that the story of the Road to Emmaus represents Catholics’ individual journeys of discernment. It reminds us that we may encounter someone who could very well be Jesus himself. When the men realized the truth, they were fired up with their new knowledge and rushed off to tell the apostles the good news. This is members’ call as well, to recognize Jesus, where we least expect, renew our faith and joyfully share the good news.

When embarking on a new journey, one can’t help but look back at the path that has led to this moment before contemplating the road that lies ahead. While working on the 100th anniversary coffee table book, *Vision, Faith and a Dream—100 Years of Service*, I was in awe of all the amazing women who forged the foundation of this incredible organization we belong to. Their courage, perseverance and profound faith inspired me to follow in their footsteps. The themes of all the





parishes and communities will be drawn to him and his mission. Let's reach out and invite them to join us!

It is truly an honour to be your servant as we embark on this journey together. May it be spiritually enriching, filled with blessings and rich in memorable experiences.

From my heart to yours, may the Holy Spirit set our hearts ablaze with the fire of God's love. One of my favourite quotes by St. Catherine of Siena is the perfect reminder of our mission. "Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire." We have been called; we are his chosen people. It is our call to action. *Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission.* †



honorary life members were remarkable, reflecting not only their personalities but the signs of the times. As members honour the past, we now look with excitement to the future. I am thrilled that members expressed their joy with the new theme, *Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission*, which was presented at the annual meeting of members and will take effect in January 2026. More information regarding the theme and the focus for the next two years will be available soon, so please stay tuned!

The many signs along my faith journey inspired the theme I chose. It uses one of my favourite words, "passion," and encompasses a call to action. In this changing world, League members are needed more than ever to show compassion and understanding, and to be advocates for the vulnerable and marginalized. Members are called to be God's hands and feet in a world that so greatly needs the love of Jesus to carry on. The League's faith pillar is the foundation of all that members do. The social justice pillar gives us the courage to take a stand. The service pillar gives us a sense of purpose in our actions. Together, these form the heart of this incredible organization, The Catholic Women's League of Canada. Members across this great nation are to be commended for their dedication and the countless ways they serve the League and their communities.

It is now up to members to carry forward this amazing legacy that began so many years ago. Our passion and love for God fuel us to remain steadfast when it would be easier to give in. That love and light that will shine through the darkness, empowering his mission for the good of the League, society and the country. When we show God's love, women in the

From the National Spiritual Advisor



Most Rev. Gerard Bergie, Bishop of St. Catharines
National Spiritual Advisor

On Wednesday, August 13, 2025, I had the privilege of being installed as the League's national spiritual advisor at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica (Toronto). I follow in the footsteps of Most Rev. Wayne Lobsinger, who has faithfully served in this position for the past two years.

I now assume a significant role that involves offering spiritual guidance and support to the national executive, especially the national chairperson of faith. This is a responsibility that I gladly accept.

I feel honoured to work with National President Betty Colaneri. We are both from the Diocese of St. Catharines, where I have been bishop for the past 15 years. I have come to know Betty as a faith-filled woman who deeply loves the League. She is a dedicated servant leader who fosters a spirit of collaboration and respect. These qualities will serve her well as she assumes her new role as president.

Upon reflection, I can say that my vocation as a priest and bishop has been a journey where the League has played a significant role.

Early in my priesthood, I learned the importance of the League. In all the parishes where I served, I saw the good work of the women of the League. In many ways, they were a pillar of the parish, helping to support both its spiritual and communal life.

Once I became a pastor, I had the privilege of being a spiritual advisor. This provided an even deeper understanding of the role of the League. I grew in my admiration for the work of these women of faith and humble service.

In 2013, Betty was elected Ontario provincial president. As her bishop, I became the provincial spiritual advisor. Once again, this experience provided me with learning opportunities.

This is especially true regarding the development of resolutions and the significant advocacy work of the League. My admiration continued to grow as I was associated with so many dedicated women of faith from across the province.

I am now the national spiritual advisor, and I consider this to be the next step on my journey of faith.

One of my favourite gospel passages is the Road to Emmaus found in the Gospel of Luke (Lk. 24:13-35). In

this passage, Jesus encounters two disciples on the road. They are in a sad state, confused and discouraged by the suffering and death of Jesus and the disappearance of his body. The first thing that the Risen Lord does is to walk with them and listen to their story. As he responds to them, the healing process begins and finds its fulfillment in the 'breaking of the bread.' It was at this moment that their eyes were opened—they recognized Jesus and they acknowledged his burning love in their hearts.

Over the next two years, my focus will be on walking together with our Lord and with you. May we see him in each other and in 'the breaking of the bread.' May his words give us hope and his body and blood offer spiritual nourishment. May our eyes be opened to the needs of the world, particularly to those of the poor and marginalized.

It is important to note that after their encounter with the Lord, the disciples returned to Jerusalem and were witnesses to the Resurrection. They boldly proclaimed the good news to others. As baptized women of faith, you are called to do the same.

This is also your mission as members of the League. This mandate is found in your mission statement: "The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service."

In the Gospel of John, Jesus states: "You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another" (15:16-17). When we witness to Christ in love, we bear fruit. This can be seen in drawing others to Christ and to the League.

Your new president has chosen as the national theme, *Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission* for 2026–2027. If you do this, you will bear much fruit!

During these remaining weeks of the Jubilee 2025: the "Year of Hope," I am filled with joyful expectation as I consider our future. It is an honour to walk with women of faith under the inspiration of Our Lady of Good Counsel.

May God bless The Catholic Women's League of Canada. †

Welcome to the New National Executive!



Row one, left to right: National President Betty Colaneri, National Spiritual Advisor Most Rev. Gerard Bergie (St. Catharines), National Vice-President Glenda Carson.

Row two, left to right: National Secretary-Treasurer Alice Noble, National Past President Shari Guinta, National Chairperson of Faith Karen Rossiter, National Chairperson of Service Madonna Clark.

Row three, left to right: National Chairperson of Social Justice Jessie Parkinson, Alberta Mackenzie Provincial President Betsy Fletcher, B.C. & Yukon Provincial President Christa Grillmair, Manitoba Provincial President Lucille Rossington.

Row four, left to right: Military Ordinariate Provincial President Teena Cyr, New Brunswick Provincial President Leslie Carr, Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial President Rhona Hynes, Nova Scotia Provincial President Sandra O'Connell.

Row five, left to right: Ontario Provincial President Colleen Martin, Prince Edward Island Provincial President Cheryl Boom, Quebec Provincial President Anna Bawer-Di Lallo, Saskatchewan Provincial President Helen Kayfish.

Congratulations to 2025 Bursary Recipients!

In 1988, the League received two generous donations in response to the call for lay formation in Pope John Paul II's exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*. In light of the expressed desire of the League to encourage members' service "For God and Canada," the national executive agreed by motion that these donations be used to establish a bursary fund.

The bursary fund is used to provide financial assistance to members pursuing studies, courses, seminars, conferences, workshops and diploma and degree programs that align with and promote the Objects of The Catholic Women's League of Canada.

Bursary applications are available on request from national office or can be downloaded from cwl.ca.

Congratulations to the following recipients!

Kathleen Ancker	Castleton	Ontario
Lara Bechtel	Sylvan Lake	Alberta
Laura Carandang	Richmond	British Columbia
Sylvia P. Ellison	Whitecourt	Alberta
Cecilia Fenrich	Edmonton	Alberta
Maria Hamon	Combermere	Ontario
Miriana Hamon	Combermere	Ontario
Alissa Jones	Edmonton	Alberta
Cherry-Ann London	Ajax	Ontario
Chelsea Martorella	Richmond	British Columbia
Grace Oryschak	Edmonton	Alberta
Agnes Richard	Ottawa	Ontario
Patsy Salzl	Paradise Hill	Saskatchewan



Walking Together in Hope: A Look at the 105th Annual National Convention

Catherine C.
Guest Journalist



As *Pilgrims of Hope* in this Jubilee year, members were called to join one another for the 105th annual national convention in Toronto from August 11–13, 2025. Warm smiles were found all around, with members greeting each other at the registration desk, which featured beautiful displays of items from different countries. The theme for the convention was *Come to Toronto... and Meet the World!*, which reflected the diverse backgrounds of Catholic women, all united in Christ. All were happy to meet new faces and catch up with dear friends.

The national executive/board and convention committee chairpersons gathered at St. Michael's Cathedral for a Mass and the cardinal's reception hosted by Most Rev. John Boissonneau (Toronto).

On August 9th, members were delighted to attend the Famous PEOPLE Players show, a glow-in-the-dark dinner theatre. They enjoyed a hearty and tasty chicken dinner as they listened to Founder and President Diane Dupuy speak on why she started the theatre and how it connected to her Catholic upbringing. She wanted to have a place where people with disabilities can shine and share their talents. All of

the waiters, chefs and performers who work at the dinner theatre are people with exceptionalities. Guests of the show were moved by their hospitality. Featuring black light, creative props and puppets, musical numbers were performed that brought joy to all. It was a dazzling spectacle!

The World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) North American Regional Conference was held on Sunday, August 10th. Members were honoured to have WUCWO President General Mónica Santamarina present to deliver her report. She spoke about what the global WUCWO network is and its mission in all areas of ecclesial and social life, encouraging women to live fully in their Christian vocation. The Holy See recognized WUCWO as a public international association of the faithful in 2007. It aspires to give visibility to women in the most vulnerable regions, inspiring and generating synergies with the church, states and local governments to promote the integral human development of women. This includes close research with disadvantaged women to understand the gaps they face and the support they need to overcome those challenges.





WUCWO Regional Vice-President for North America Barbara Dowding introduced member organizations in the North American region: the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada (UCWLC) and President Marlene Bodnar, National Council of Catholic Women and former president and Parliamentarian Lucy Johnson and Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary (KPCLA) with Supreme Lady Hilda Wiltz and National Lay Member of the Board Esohe Asimota.

Dr. Josephine Lombardi delivered a presentation called *Mary the Model of Synod*, which encouraged attendees to look to Mother Mary as a model for how to walk the way of truth to Jesus and the path to God. Mary is described as Lady of the Way, and from her, Catholics learn the art of listening. Dr. Lombardi emphasized how the League helps to bring order and light in the darkness when members listen to understand the plight of humanity.

Speaker Leah Watkiss presented a session titled *Justice for Migrant Workers*, which focused on the unfair and poor living conditions and broken promises that some migrant workers coming to Canada face when employers try to take advantage of them, especially in the low-wage stream of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Some individuals have closed work permits,

which prevents them from changing employers, making them easy targets for further exploitation by employers. She encouraged attendees to support migrants in their church and community to help them get the connections and resources they need to exercise their rights.

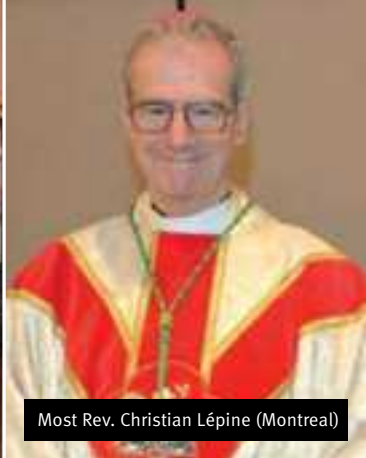
A synodal listening session led by Barbara Dowding allowed attendees to take a moment to pause and reflect on how they can get involved and influence the world around them. She reminded those gathered that it is essential to slow down and remain present when conversing with another to truly listen to what is being shared.

National Spiritual Advisor Most Rev. Wayne Lobsinger (Hamilton) delivered a talk on the *Jubilee of Hope*. He shared that synodality is the new path of the church, and it is about walking together. He said, "We need to hear the One, the Son and the many" to truly understand the voice of the Holy Spirit. Jubilee is a time of renewal and re-examining one's relationship with God, and the bishop had attendees ponder what hope means. He said, "Hope allows us to believe in God in all his promises when it would be easier to give up."

The opening Mass was held at St. Paul's Basilica with celebrant His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo, Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto. He began his homily recounting his visit to the Sanctuary of the Mother of Good Counsel near Rome while he was there for the 2025 conclave. His Eminence spoke about the significance of faith and how it needs to be more than a conviction, but also a way to live life in everything Catholics do and face. He shared that Mother Mary was a true example of a person who embodied faith to the fullest.

Welcome and greetings were given by Pastor of St. Paul's Basilica, Rev. Robert O'Brien, Ontario Provincial President Colleen Martin, Most Rev. Alan Campeau (Thunder Bay), Toronto Diocesan Spiritual Advisor Rev. Liborio Amaral, State Deputy David Gelinas of the Knights of Columbus, Toronto Diocesan President Kate O'Quinn, Monica Santamarina and National President Shari Guinta. Members from Holy Cross, Our Lady of Lourdes and Holy Rosary parish councils organized a reception that followed Mass.





Most Rev. Christian Lépine (Montreal)



Monday, August 11th, began with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Campeau. His homily reflected on loving God with all your being and how members can live out that dedication to serving others in their daily lives, even in uncomfortable situations.

Keynote Speaker Dr. Gerry Turcotte, President and Principal of Corpus Christi College & St. Mark's College at The University of British Columbia, provided a session titled *Mental Health and Social Justice*. He shared that mental health challenges are never isolated to the individual—they can impact family, work and friendships. He also shared his personal stories of mental health issues and conflict within his family. Growing up, Dr. Turcotte worked in many homeless shelters where he met people with drug addiction issues stemming from mental health problems, as many felt it was too frightening to face their troubled reality sober. He discussed the greater scale of importance that mental wellness has in society now, using examples such as Pope Francis' focus on addressing sadness, apathy and spiritual tiredness. Compassion becomes the greatest form of prayer in providing support. Dr. Turcotte concluded that even our brokenness matters, and to value human dignity, which Christ demands us to champion.

Following the National Office Luncheons was a productive Resolutions Dialogue and a moving Commissioning of New Life Members celebration.

All eyes were on the grand ballroom Monday evening for the Jukebox Dance Party. Members twisted and shouted all night long—so much so that they literally tore up the dance floor! Attendees arrived dressed head to toe in their best fashion creations of the “jukebox theme,” many in poodle skirts, “Pink Lady” jackets and retro sunglasses galore. A live band played all-time classics from the 1950s and 1960s, such as tunes by Elvis, The Beatles and Neil Diamond. A game was played to test members' knowledge of jukebox hits and a costume contest was held. It was a memorable evening of dining and dancing!

Tuesday, August 12th, started with Mass by celebrant Most Rev. Christian Lepine (Montreal). His homily focused on mercy and how one can never say they have loved enough, for there will always be more love to give. He shared, “We are faithful because the Lord is merciful.” A memorial service was held to honour the deceased members and spiritual advisors who have gone from this life to their eternal rest in Christ. A rose, a symbol of life in Christ, was presented by each provincial president as a living memorial to these women. The national president placed a pure white rose in memory of the dearly departed spiritual advisors.

Speaker Br. Richard MacPhee provided a session titled *I Am Who I Am—Living Hospitality of our World Today*. He shared that we are called to be people of hope, healing and love in a land full of wounds, as God's love calls us to move beyond fear. “Compassion requires us



to be vulnerable with the vulnerable,” he said. As chief executive officer of Good Shepherd Centres and Good Shepherd Non-Profit Homes in Hamilton and Toronto, he shared stories he witnessed of helping traumatized women find adequate shelter so they did not have to live on the streets, providing independent places for families to live, so they felt safe and “working with people from cradle to grave, or from breath to breath.” National President Shari Guinta shared that the presentation touched her, as she is very passionate and involved in managing social housing. Donations were collected for Emily’s House hospice and the Brothers of the Good Shepherd.

Convention attendees had the opportunity to join breakout sessions for in-depth learning and discussion. The “Call Me Lord to Lead and Follow” breakout session began with the reminder that Jesus is the navigator. Presenters stated that leadership is not about the love

of power, but rather the power of love. A faith-fuelled leader is someone with humility as their strength, not their weakness. They wanted members to be aware of the helpful resources provided to them on the national website, such as the *Welcome Program* (#621), *Actively Engaging New Members and Homebound Members* (#635) and *The Joy of Leadership* workshop (#835).

“Send Me Lord” was an engaging workshop that allowed attendees to engage in conversations about how their councils could plan mental health initiatives in the areas of faith, service and social justice. Great conversations at the tables led to a better understanding of how councils can and do address mental health, as well as new ideas they could embrace.

The “Lead Us Closer to You Lord” session led members through the process of creating a prayer. Time was set aside for writing the prayers using a simple pattern structure. Members had the opportunity to share the beautiful, inspirational and hopeful prayers they created. The evening concluded with provincial dinners.

Wednesday, August 15th, was a day of business, celebration and emotional farewells. National President Shari Guinta delivered her annual report, stating the year was one of change, evolution and awareness. She shared the work and developments the League undertook, including successful and engaging webinars held throughout the year, an Indigenous Relations *ad hoc* committee established at the national level, and fruitful initiatives to engage new members. Members expressed deep gratitude for the impactful growth and service she gifted to the League during her tenure.

National Secretary-Treasurer Dorothy Johansen delivered the financial report and encouraged members to apply for the League Development Fund.

National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Lobsinger delivered his final report after thoughtful conversations with fellow spiritual advisors. He shared helpful recommendations for members to build healthy relationships with one





another, strive to be instruments of unity in their parish, and to embrace dialogue and synodality on their journey. He encouraged parish councils to remain in a “growth mode” so that Catholic service is reflected in all their endeavours, in line with their core role as Catholic women of faith. He thanked the League for the honour to serve the ministry and received a standing ovation of sincere appreciation.

Director of Administration Kim Scammell delivered her final report, sharing the positive feedback received from recent surveys. Kim announced she will be retiring in the fall, after 26 devoted years of working for national office and with the national executive/board. Convention attendees rose to give her applause for her service and the League’s special traditional blessing upon her for her next chapter in life. She will be deeply missed.

Proposed resolutions were deliberated amongst members, with four resolutions adopted as follows:

- 2025.01 Federal Government to Create a Unified and Centralized Cybercrime Reporting System for Individuals in Canada
- 2025.02 Amend the Canadian *Criminal Code* Section 223(1) defining when a child becomes a human being
- 2025.03 Strengthen Support for Chaplains to Provide Faith-Based Care to Members and Families of the Canadian Armed Forces
- 2025.04 Federal Government to Complete the Development of the Office of Palliative Care

Following this was the Honorary Life Members Luncheon and presentation from the 2026 convention in Halifax. The committee hailing from Nova Scotia delighted attendees with a creative sea shanty song and colourful costumes, beckoning members to join them next year. The meeting closed with the election of officers for 2025-2027.

Members gathered at St. Michael’s Cathedral for the Closing Mass. They were joined by bishops and priests from across Canada, many of whom serve as spiritual advisors to the League. Mass was with Celebrant Bishop Lobsinger, a reading by Shari Guinta and the Prayer of the Faithful by Deacon David Quail. It was an evening of rejoicing and deep appreciation for the flame of the Holy Spirit enkindled in their hearts during the course of the convention. The Ceremony for the Installation of Officers

was performed with national officers answering the call to embark on a new beginning in service to the League.

Then it was an evening of smiles, celebrations and surprises at the Gala Banquet. After a busy and productive week, attendees gathered to enjoy a delicious meal with former and newly made friends, delegates, guests and dignitaries. Gratitude was expressed to the hard-working organizers of the convention committee in Toronto, who made it all possible through many long hours and careful planning dedicated to creating a wonderful week. The out-going executive poured out their hearts in a presentation of appreciation for out-going National President Shari Guinta. It was the finest way to conclude the successful week of the national convention on a high note! Members were renewed by the gifts of friendship and the knowledge they received during the convention, walking together in their sisterhood as *Pilgrims of Hope*. †



Updates from the National Executive

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ADVISOR



Bishop Wayne Lobsinger
Hamilton, Ontario

I became the national spiritual advisor at the August 2023 annual meeting of members, appointed as the first spiritual advisor on the new terms of reference requested by the League and approved by the bishops of Canada. Instead of a five-

year term, the spiritual advisor's term would now be two years, corresponding to the term of the president. The spiritual advisor would be the president's diocesan bishop or another bishop if the diocesan bishop was unable to fulfill this role. Although this is only my second report to you, it is also my final report as national spiritual advisor.

This past year, I have continued to make every effort to be present and available to the national executive/board, attending board and administrative committee meetings and offering support and counsel to the best of my ability. I have given guidance when asked and been a sounding board for the president and vice-president. I have worked with the national chairperson of faith to update some of the wording in ceremonies and to review and approve all liturgies used throughout the year. I worked with the team, helping to create a new prayer booklet for the League, as the previous edition was out of print. I participated with the national chairperson of social justice and the national resolutions subcommittee during discussions on this year's resolutions.

I was invited to attend a couple of conventions, unfortunately, due to timing and my schedule, I was unable to accept any of these invitations. My thanks to those who invited me.

Since my last report, I have participated in three online prayer experiences: the Advent Jesse Tree webinar, the Stations of the Cross during Lent and the Rosary for Reconciliation and Peace this May. It is my hope that these days were opportunities for faith development for all who participated.

I have enjoyed my two years serving the League as the national spiritual advisor. It was enlightening to see how the League works on the national level and to get to know

the amazing women who serve the League. I am grateful for this opportunity and will miss this ministry.

I pray that the League and its members will continue to be a great force for good in our beloved country. That you will continue to be witnesses to the gift of our Catholic faith and use all the League offers to grow in wisdom and grace.

Thank you for this opportunity and for all the kindness I have received over the past two years. May Our Lady of Good Counsel continue to guide and protect us, and may our loving and merciful God continue to bless all of us. †

NATIONAL PRESIDENT



Shari Guinta
Waterloo, Ontario

The national theme, *Here I am Lord, send me*, took effect on January 1, 2024, and will continue until December 31, 2025, having been embraced by members. The theme focus of "mental health" was also embraced, and councils

held presentations, workshops and spiritual retreats. Members have come to me at various functions, telling me how they loved the theme because it "spoke to them and called them to serve."

The resources produced through the strategic planning efforts have proven to be useful and were presented across the country to councils seeking development and education for members. These resources are also being utilized through the efforts of the online learning resource initiative, Brightspace, which will enable members to learn more about the League through leadership development.

After being analyzed, the Unity Outreach initiative data led to the formation of three task forces—communication, education and priorities—and the results were accepted and implemented. Webinars were offered as one initiative from that data, focused on faith, service and social justice, including palliative care and one on Indigenous stories.

VICE-PRESIDENT



Betty Colaneri

Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario

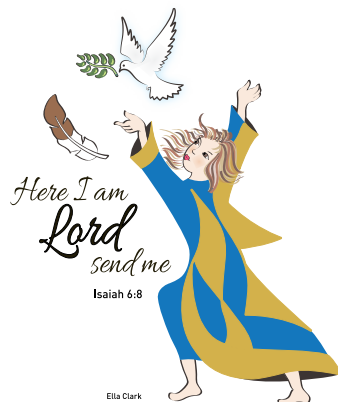
Communication was a top priority, and therefore, a plan was put into place whereby communiqués and memos were prepared by the national executive and distributed quarterly, as well as virtual meetings held with counterparts at other levels. This ensures planned communication and interaction so that collaboration can take place.

Three Core Values: The faith, service and social justice format has now been fully implemented and has proven to streamline our focus and workload for the committees. We are seeing very positive, structured and focused initiatives being worked on throughout the League, and chairpersons are reporting that they collaborate with one another on specific projects and topics. This is how it was planned to work—collaborate, communicate and focus.

Again, policy and procedure development and streamlining were a focus through the efforts of National Past President Fran Lucas and her committee who will continue to work in 2025 to review and revise the *National Manual Policy and Procedure* to reflect today's practices and work harmoniously with the the League's *Constitution & Bylaws*.

I reported last year that a focus for the national executive was on board governance, to include more streamlined decision making and corporate procedure. Over the last year an Indigenous Relations Subcommittee was led by National Chairperson of Social Justice Glenda Carson, a palliative care information including a webinar was led by National Chairperson of Service Joline Belliveau and several webinars and prayer reviews were led by National Chairperson of Faith Rolande Chernichan. National Vice-President Betty Colaneri focused on membership and leadership training, which will lead to the formation of initiatives going forward. And National Secretary-Treasurer Dorothy Johansen streamlined correspondence, financial reporting, as well as expense claims and investment reviews.

We continue to evolve, improve, streamline and collaborate. I hope that the initiatives the board has offered are embraced and used by members across the country. We have done outreach, listened and offered initiatives. This is true to the theme, *Here I am Lord, send me.* †



The national theme has continued to resonate during my term as vice-president. The '1' Campaign, which began last year, remained the focus due to ongoing concerns about declining membership. Monthly catch-phrases were sent out to the

provincial vice-presidents through communiqués to share with members, promoting League membership.

To maintain momentum, the R3 to 1, Unity! task force was introduced, retaining the same logo as the '1' Campaign. The task force is a national body comprised of the national vice-president as chairperson, one honorary life member, one life member per province and one life member per diocese. "R3 to 1, Unity!" signifies the three Rs—Recruit, Retain, Regain—coming together to form a unified organization. It serves as a call to action to assist councils in recruiting, retaining and regaining members.

Additionally, the task force aims to support councils considering inactivity or disbandment by building relationships and engaging with members through dialogue. It will also remind councils that membership provides women with a sense of purpose, faith, friendship, connection, fulfilment and leadership development. The most important question asked of councils is, "How can we help?"

Each provincial president was contacted to identify the life member in her province who would serve as the team leader. Training sessions were held in April with the selected team leaders from each provincial council, including the Military Ordinariate. These provincial team leaders will reach out to their diocesan councils to introduce themselves and ensure councils know their designated contact person, enabling councils to contact their respective team leader for support and guidance. The provincial team leaders are a dedicated and energetic group of life members eager to put this task force into action. The goal of the task force is to connect all members through communication and maintain those connections so everyone can work as '1'.

A new working group was established to develop online courses for members. The primary objectives of these online courses are to enhance leadership abilities, foster confidence and provide members with comprehensive knowledge of the League. The group consists of instructors and administrators who completed their training with a company hired to develop the program. The online courses are designed to be self-

paced, allowing learners to progress at their convenience using their Internet connection and personal computers. Members will be able to take the online courses soon. My role was to be the liaison and report to the board on their progress.

Monthly online meetings were held with the provincial vice-presidents and my three subcommittee chairpersons to maintain open communication and address any concerns in their diocese or province. This provided an opportunity for vice-presidents to share their provincial initiatives. It also allowed them to share presentations and workshops with other vice-presidents for their use.

The theme, *Here I am Lord, send me*, came into play when the national president requested my attendance at conventions on her behalf. At the conventions and other requested events, presentations on the '1' Campaign, The Vineyard of the Lord and the R3 to 1, Unity! were given. Following the presentations, copies were sent to many members who requested them for use in their diocese or province. †

NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER



Dorothy Johansen
Edmonton, Alberta

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I; send me!’” (Isa 6:8).

The communication task force developed the National Communication Plan. Following a recent review by the national executive, it was decided that more time is required to adapt to the new methods of communication. Therefore, the next review will take place in February 2027. Meeting virtually with my provincial counterparts has been one of the best parts of the plan. It is a way to hear issues and share initiatives in person, with time for questions to be asked and answered.

The League continues to utilize its social media channels to share ideas and events. Councils are encouraged to submit items for Spotlight in a timely manner so that the information is fresh for others to read and act upon.

The national website is continuously updated, featuring events on the calendar submitted by members of the national executive, as well as *The Canadian League* magazine, communiqués, memos and news items. The most recent significant change is the relocation of

resources to an area that requires members to sign in. Membership numbers are assigned to each member when they join the League. Members are encouraged to ask their council membership convenor for their number if they do not have a card.

Advertising the League to more people was a priority. In the spring, the national treasury paid for advertising on Facebook and YouTube. The campaign was very successful in reaching thousands of people, giving them more information about the organization. Plans are underway for another advertising campaign in the fall, in time for council membership drives.

The National Development Fund application process has been updated to reduce the time and effort required to complete the application and to receive notification of whether the application was successful.

Suggestions from members for improvement are always welcome, and with the new streamlining task force, the League will continue to improve its resources. †

PAST PRESIDENT



Fran Lucas
Edmonton, Alberta

Listen... did you hear his response? When thinking about how best to complete my final year as national past president, I did say, *Here I am Lord, send me*. His response was to review the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure (P&P)*

with the amazingly capable and dedicated committee of Honorary Life Member Anne-Marie Gorman and life members Alice Noble and Becky Kallal. We all agreed that we could do this!

The decision was that if reviewing the P&P, it would be thorough, from page one through 225, including all appendices. Every paragraph, every sentence, every word would be reviewed. The goal was to have a policy and procedure that helped answer questions the national executive had heard from members over the past years. The national executive added great recommendations for suggested changes and additions. This has resulted in a comprehensive manual with easy-to-follow diagrams and charts.

One gift for me, and I pray for the committee, was the chance to become very aware of every aspect of the P&P covered and to challenge its relevance for today's League. Another gift was working with Anne-Marie, Alice and Becky for 17 months. There were many meetings where we formed a closer connection on a personal level

through a never-ending discussion on what would best meet the needs of new and upcoming leaders. I trust that this fall, members will have a revised P&P to do that.

I heard another response from the Lord. That was to continue the work of the national archives committee, consisting of Anne-Marie and Life Member Blanca Stead. This work centred around efficiently gathering and cataloguing important documents to ensure the history of the League is organized and readily available. Research continues to determine the feasibility of digitizing League archival material.

All this by invoking *Here I am Lord, send me*. I encourage members to invoke that statement regularly and find the reward of helping the League, their community and definitely, themselves. †

NATIONAL CHAIRPERSON OF FAITH



Rolande Chernichan
Île Des Chênes East,
Manitoba

Faith, fun, fulfillment... the one-third components that League gatherings should include. I have been truly blessed by all three, serving as national chairperson of faith (2023–2025) and helping to guide

the League through its transition to a restructured model. Communications and initiatives echoed the national theme as a personal call: *Here I am, Lord, send me!*

Faith articles in *The Canadian League* provided a personal connection with members:

- “Called by God—Female Vocations” addressed a national convention question, affirming the League’s ongoing support for consecrated women and encouraged members to promote all vocations—religious, lay, marital or single—through prayer, support and discernment.
- “Here I Am, Lord... Pilgrims of Hope” highlighted Jubilee 2025, explaining its theme, logo and pilgrimage opportunities. Members were invited to journey in faith toward conversion, guided by Pope Francis’ Jubilee Prayer.

Sr. Susan Scott, a committee appointee, contributed “Women in the Life and Mission of the Church, Part Two,” published to coincide with the second session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of Bishops.

To foster personal and communal prayer, themed educational messages and prayers were posted bi-weekly on social media, and a series of webinars was offered:

- “Our Lady of the Rosary Webinar” marked World

Rosary Day as the Glorious Mysteries were prayed, with Marian hymn videos and reflection by National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Wayne Lobsinger.

- Advent Webinar: “A Walk Through Salvation History” used Jesse Tree symbols and scripture to reflect on people and events leading to Christ’s birth.
- Lenten Webinar: “Hope in the Midst of Turmoil” featured Timothy Duff’s Stations of the Cross for Persons with Mental Illness, blending scripture, hymns, reflections and intercessory prayer.
- “Rosary Webinar of Hope for Healing and Reconciliation,” held on National Indigenous Peoples Day, featured the Joyful Mysteries with reflections for Indigenous healing, accompanied by creation-themed hymn videos.

I coordinated the planning for a Jubilee 2025 pilgrimage to Rome. With committee assistance, a Novena for Members was developed, as was a revised League Prayers booklet. It included 18 themed prayers—13 newly written by members—reviewed and approved by Bishop Lobsinger, who also wrote the foreword.

The training webinar, “Ask, Search, Knock in Hope,” explored the role of chairperson of faith through prayer, dialogue and Q&A, with materials made available upon request.

Communiqués encouraged the study of Catholic teaching on the sanctity of life and supported life-affirming events, such as National Family and Life Week, March for Life and 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care. A joint initiative with the national chairperson of service promoted life-giving blood donations via Canadian Blood Services.

Members were urged to read Pope Francis’ encyclical *Delexit Nos*. Prayer for vocations, support for clergy and consecrated women and engagement in ecumenical and interfaith efforts—especially during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and World Day of Prayer—were promoted. Faith-in-action was encouraged through letter writing in defence of the charitable status of pro-life and religious organizations.

Attentive to God’s call and responding to Pope Leo XIV’s call to a mission of peace and synodality, members journey together as *Pilgrims of Hope*. †



NATIONAL CHAIRPERSON OF SERVICE



Joline Belliveau
Overton, Nova Scotia

I submitted communiqués, which are available on the national website. Topics included youth and mental illness, Development and Peace—Caritas Canada, Share Lent, the Palliative Care Kit and the elderly and exercise.

In February, the three standing committee chairpersons, Glenda Carson, Rolande Chernichan and I met (virtually) to review the Palliative Care Kit for this year.

I met with provincial chairpersons of service twice, once on January 23rd and again on April 7th. At the April meeting, chairpersons discussed setting up a webinar on intimate partner violence, which I hope to see on the national website in September 2025.

In their newsletters, reports and communiqués, my provincial counterparts addressed the following topics: end-of-life care, gender-based violence, bullying, racism, homelessness, webinars on medical assistance in dying and mental health, healing and compassion (related to substance abuse) and understanding adverse childhood experiences. †

NATIONAL CHAIRPERSON OF SOCIAL JUSTICE



Glenda Carson
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Social Justice subcommittees and members:

- Social Justice: Life Member Sharon Ciebin, Nancy Boucher and Shelley De-Serres.
- Resolutions: Life Member Patricia Weller and Margot de la Gorgendiere.
- Indigenous Relations: Life Members Faith Anderson and Connie Crichton, Terry Mae Sinclair and Renee Spohn.

The national theme, *Here I am Lord, send me* reflects a Christian commitment to respond to God's call to service through acts of advocacy and compassion, as inspired by Jesus' ministry. The national standing committee of social justice has focused on encouraging and supporting members to take up their call with initiatives aligned with this mission.

A social justice article linked to the Jubilee year theme, *Pilgrims of Hope*, was published in the spring edition of *The Canadian League*. Members were encouraged to act as agents of hope, stepping forward in faith even when social justice outcomes seem uncertain and even hopeless. The article emphasized that a solidarity of action rooted in faith can bring light and hope to complex social justice situations.

Human trafficking was the year's first national social justice initiative. A webinar and two articles in *The Canadian League* (winter edition) shared personal stories of the experience of human trafficking as well as information and practical actions, reaffirming the League's stand against modern slavery.

Environmental advocacy became a spring focus. In time for Earth Day, a comprehensive toolkit was released to help parish councils explore environmentally focused initiatives. This resource supports members in living out their call to be stewards of creation.

The new Indigenous relations subcommittee worked to identify strategies to guide members in building relationships with Indigenous peoples and League sisters. On June 3rd, as part of National Indigenous History Month, a webinar was presented during which subcommittee members shared personal journeys of discovering their Indigenous heritage. It highlighted the potential for meaningful relationships to grow between open hearts.

A focus on legislation prioritized two key areas of concern: protecting the charitable status of pro-life and religious organizations and addressing proposed changes to medical assistance in dying consent procedures. Parish councils received advocacy materials, including speaking notes, letter templates and petitions. The recent federal election provided members with an opportunity to engage in dialogue with members of parliament, ensuring timely awareness should new legislation be introduced on these matters.

The national resolutions subcommittee revised the *Resolutions Handbook* to support members in developing strong and well-structured resolutions. The updated version offers more in-depth guidance for developing resolutions. Resolutions are one of the League's strongest tools for action. When members identify a pressing issue, research it and propose a resolution, they are answering the call to serve by addressing real needs in society.

Social justice activities are a powerful way for members to live out the League's national theme. Through outreach and education, members have been supported to put faith into action, whether it's raising awareness about human trafficking, supporting Indigenous reconciliation, promoting effective and ethical legislation, or caring for creation. Members act as visible witnesses of faith and compassion, saying yes to God's call: *Here I am Lord, send me*. †

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION



Kim Scammell
Winnipeg, Manitoba

How does national office amplify the theme *Here I am Lord, send me?* By answering the call to be adaptable and flexible, to be present to members within the limits set by the board, and to be faithful and good stewards of members' time

and treasure.

Staff members are adaptable. They often rise to new opportunities placed before them. It may be to use technology to summarize a 900-page annual report survey into 60 pages. It may be to determine how to track downloads on a website. It might be how to be present as an assistant at a board meeting. It may be how to work with councils that don't want to be contacted. It may be to expand the knowledge of how to manage an Excel spreadsheet of convention registrants. It may be how to summarize the results of the immense amount of feedback from the Unity Outreach. It may be how to pay expenses via e-transfer. It may be in the development of an e-shop for the sale of supplies. Whatever the project and no matter the complexity, staff must be and are ready to learn each and every day. They are DIY, do-it-yourselfers. With a team of five, this is a must. They expand and broaden their experiences well beyond their position descriptions.

Staff members are empathetic. While they are hired to provide administrative support to national board members, they will respond to grassroots members and regional leaders who reach out. They listen with care and compassion to the stories they are entrusted with, to the curiosity, the achievements, the pride, the frustration, and, yes, the overwhelmed. Staff members help these members navigate this very complex and complicated organization we call the League, by helping them find the local leader who is best placed to answer them. Staff members do so with tact and kindness, treating members as they would members of their own families. They are present to members within the limits set by the board.

Staff members are prudent. They are aware of their duty to manage carefully the fiscal and human resources given to them through a board-approved budget and board-approved staff position decisions. They examine ways to complete tasks in the most efficient manner so as not to consume labour hours unnecessarily. They make frugal choices when a purchase is required and often delay purchasing decisions as far as is reasonably possible so as not to misuse the fees that members

provide. They manage the assets they are entrusted with carefully and with due regard to ensuring excess funds do not sit idle but are invested in a socially responsible manner; they know every extra dollar of investment income reduces the need for future per capita increases. They are faithful and good stewards of members' time and treasure.

Staff members amplify the theme in all they do. The Lord has sent them to serve in the League—to be adaptable, empathetic and prudent. They do so in awe of and support for the mission of this great organization. †

ALBERTA MACKENZIE



Betsy Fletcher
Cold Lake, Alberta

The members of Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council continue to embrace the theme *Here I am Lord, send me*. The theme speaks to our faith, to our call to service and social justice. Members felt that call and have responded generously

with their time and talents. Eyes have been opened more fully to the needs of those around them, and councils have jumped into action in their communities and parishes. Councils volunteer at food banks and long-term care facilities, host meetings in seniors' residences, provide help to women's shelters and offer clothing to those who are unhoused. Calgary Diocesan Council exceeded its goal of raising \$2 million for the CWL Chair for Catholic Studies at St. Mary's University (Calgary). The desire to help others in the community is strong in Alberta!

Councils continue to use the theme prayer at meetings, online rosaries, conventions and digital meetings. By now, many no longer need to use a prayer card to remember the words to this beautiful prayer. The Alberta Mackenzie Wednesday evening Zoom rosary has been going strong since the COVID-19 pandemic began. While the number of attendees fluctuates weekly, a strong core of participants consistently shows up with beads in hand.

Members attended various webinars organized by the national council, as well as digital meetings with diocesan and national counterparts. Webinars on human trafficking and Indigenous issues as well as retreats hosted by National Chairperson of Faith Rolande Chernichan, National Spiritual Advisor Most Rev. Wayne Lobsinger and National President Shari Guinta, were well received. These meetings, webinars and

opportunities to pray together are a terrific way to stay informed and provide education for executive members.

Alberta Mackenzie participated in a quilt project. The handmade twin-size quilts were created by individual members or councils and donated to campus-based treatment centres for youth in Lethbridge, Edmonton and Lac La Biche. These treatment centres are for at-risk youth, and the quilts are intended to remind them that there are people who care about them. The youth will take these quilts with them as they leave the treatment centre.

At the 2025 provincial convention, Provincial Spiritual Advisor Bishop Gary Franken spoke about answering the call, using various individuals from scripture and saints who answered the call to serve the Lord. It was very inspirational and informative. Other speakers also provided guidance using the theme. Three resolutions were adopted and forwarded to the national resolution subcommittee, while three others will remain in Alberta Mackenzie.

The chairpersons of faith, service and social justice have been working together to help their counterparts learn how to fill their positions and work together to achieve a goal. They prepared a presentation for the provincial convention entitled "Compassion, Support and Action." This workshop was very well received.

Work is progressing on preparations for the national convention, scheduled to take place in Edmonton in 2028. Committees have been assigned to diocesan councils, while the fundraising committee is working on ideas. Co-chairpersons Life Members Cathy Bouchard and June Fuller have everything in hand.

"For God and Canada." †

B.C. & YUKON



Christa Grillmair
Nanaimo, British Columbia

The 7,300 members in 120 councils in British Columbia and the Yukon support the national theme *Here I am Lord, send me* with creativity, generosity and hard work. The national sub-theme of mental health is also embraced through spiritual reflections, prayer and promoting education by inviting speakers on good nutrition, actively aging and looking one's best.

An appalling 592 arson attacks have been made on places of worship in Canada between 2010 and 2022. At the 2025 provincial convention, a resolution developed

by the social justice committee of Kamloops Diocesan Council, "Enforce Existing Terrorism Laws when Prosecuting Arson Attacks on Places of Worship," was adopted.

Members are incredibly generous with their time, talent and treasure, supporting many charitable organizations both at home and abroad. They care about the poor, unhoused, lonely and marginalized and are doing great things to prove it. Members work in soup kitchens, support weekend lunches and dinners for the poor, hand out Blessing Bags, collect food for the food banks, make lunches for hungry school children, support Chalice, Catholic Missions In Canada, Catholic Near East Welfare Association and World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, work in thrift shops and pray at Masses for all these intentions. Many members visit the sick, suffering, dying and lonely members of the League. Some councils also pay membership fees for members older than 80 years. Several councils raised awareness about human trafficking and are promoting BRAVE Education for Trafficking Prevention (braveeducation.org).

All members are encouraged to reach out and invite ladies to join the League. As part of a "Recruit, Retain and Regain" campaign, a membership contest attracted 280 new members. Members contributed wonderful essays and poems to the topic "What are the Joys and Rewards of Being a Catholic Women's League Member?" At the provincial convention, certificates were awarded for the most creative, most humorous and best-written entries, and were then posted on the provincial website, bcyukoncwlc.com. Councils are encouraged to show gratitude to members by acknowledging them for their tireless work at meetings and by sending thank-you notes.

Faith continues to play a large part in all programs. Councils prayed a multitude of prayers, participated in Masses and liturgies and encouraged members to use the national spiritual programs. One particularly great presentation by the provincial spiritual advisor was on Our Lady of Genazzano, the original image of Our Lady of Good Counsel. Members are ever mindful of the priests and bishops by having Masses said for them, recognizing ordination anniversaries and birthdays. They are God's gift to us, and members are grateful for

Mission Statement

The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.

their guidance and ministry, as well as their support in all our endeavours.

The Catholic Women's League is truly a gift from God and a great antidote for loneliness for every age and ethnic group. Members of B.C. & Yukon Provincial Council will continue to encourage women to join us as we prayerfully serve our parishes and communities and advocate for social justice. †

MANITOBA



Lucille Rossington
Flin Flon, Manitoba

The year 2025 has been a busy one so far for all councils in Manitoba, as they have immersed themselves in serving the Lord in many ways, including helping those in need.

Members attended seminars, lectures and special events that focused on homelessness, food insecurity, forgiveness and "Finding Hope Against Human Trafficking."

The provincial Day of Celebration, prepared by Provincial Chairperson of Social Justice Chris Carlyle, included Dr. Paul Daeninck and Simone Stenekes, RN, both with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Palliative Care Program. They addressed the criteria for admission to the program, support for patients and families, hospices, in-hospital units, death-at-home support and healthcare directives. Members were very pleased with the information shared. That day, members also heard from Steve Chipman, who spoke on food insecurity and his experience with a drop-in for 20-plus years (in Winnipeg) and mentioned all the changes occurring. As an example, the needs are increasing dramatically, but donations of meals from churches and service clubs have decreased by 50%, from 40 participating organizations to only 20 in 2025. Provincial Chairperson of Faith Pat Ward included a reflection titled "Prayer for Human Trafficking Awareness Day."

Winnipeg Diocesan Council, at its convention, featured a speaker on prison ministry—Greg Dunwoody, a long-time chaplain within the Manitoba justice system and educator in the Winnipeg Archdiocese. Two members of the St. Augustin Parish Council also shared their experience of prison ministry.

St. Boniface Diocesan Council hosted Leah Perrault as a speaker at its convention. She spoke on the national theme, *Here I am Lord, send me*, and had meditation time.

Keewatin-The Pas Diocesan Council had provincial council executives provide information on the three pillars

and led a red sand ceremony to raise awareness about human trafficking.

Manitoba Provincial Council met with the provincial government, represented by two members of the legislative assembly, as the premier was unable to attend. Initially, a 40-minute time frame was allotted; however, the dialogue lasted two hours, with the discussion covering all the resolutions prepared in the brief. We were invited to return in the fall for a follow-up. The brief booklet included the current 2024 and past provincial and national resolutions. †

MILITARY ORDINARIATE



Teena Cyr
Panama City Beach, Florida

In conjunction with the national theme, *Here I am Lord, send me*, the Military Ordinariate Provincial Council asked parish councils to find resources for veterans experiencing houselessness.

"Houselessness" is the preferred term for "homelessness" and is defined as someone who stays in a shelter, lives in transitional housing or sleeps in a place not meant for human habitation, such as a car or outdoors. Those experiencing houselessness are at increased risk of contracting various diseases and experiencing higher levels of stress and anxiety. They also face more barriers to accessing health and social care than those who are not houseless.

Councils went above and beyond in their research efforts. For some, this support has become deeply personal. After connecting with a local NATO Veterans Organization and providing direct assistance to a struggling community member, one council supplied coats to an individual, who took it upon himself to distribute them to others in need. Another council reported that members took turns preparing lunch for a local veteran after Mass. Yet another council regularly supports a veterans' home with donations of food, funds and personal visits. Councils also reported connecting with veterans' support groups and collecting food and socks for the houseless.

For some councils, their local research efforts were where they truly shone. They compiled lists of organizations supporting the houseless in their communities and even identified one specifically serving veterans, the Homes for Heroes Foundation. This organization was developed in response to the

growing number of military veterans who face crises upon returning to civilian life and find themselves at risk of being unhoused. Veterans Villages have been established in Edmonton, Calgary, Kingston, and soon, Winnipeg. Through the delivery of a comprehensive supportive housing program, the goal is for each resident to achieve stability, secure employment and live independently. In addition to sharing information from the foundation's website, one council spoke directly with a case manager, who explained the application process, timelines and shared success stories.

Although this project is coming to a close, members are encouraged to continue supporting Canadian veterans through advocacy, community action, personal encounters, prayer and reflection. †

NEW BRUNSWICK



Leslie Carr
Fredericton, New Brunswick

Members were active in attending and organizing World Day of Prayer services. Some councils reactivated the event in their communities, while others continue to support long-standing opportunities. One council saw seven other churches join

in the presentations. During Lent, members in one area attended a "living rosary."

The Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel was widely celebrated with groups of parish councils gathering for prayer services, Masses and meals with their sisters and others in their parish community.

Members continue to take advantage of the webinars and seminars presented by national executive/board members, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations and other organizations to further increase their faith as well as knowledge into issues of concern to the League, including medical assistance in dying, human trafficking, Indigenous relations and Development and Peace—Caritas Canada.

At the parish level, guest speakers were invited to give presentations on mental health, anxiety and other concerns within their communities. Awareness of mental health concerns was encouraged on social media by posting reminders during Canadian Mental Health Week. Provincial officers were given a talk on "masking" and how it affects not only the sufferer but also those who love them.

Parish council presidents continued to support the regular online meetings, happily sharing time with their

counterparts from around the province.

A lively group of 111 gathered in the beautiful community of Florenceville-Bristol for the 77th annual convention. Opening Mass was celebrated by Bishop Claude Champagne (Edmundston), along with Provincial Spiritual Advisor Fr. David Fulton, three parish spiritual advisors and one priest from a local Indigenous community. Drumming opened Mass, and the celebration ended with the singing of "The Honour Song" in Wolastoqey. Guest speaker Hon. Graydon Nicholas gave a presentation on medical assistance in dying (MAiD) entitled "MAiD in the Overlap of Psychiatry and Law: Exploring Legal and Ethical Implications." He later shared his presentation to the Federal Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights' study of Bill C-14 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying)*. National President Shari Guinta spoke on her theme, *Here I am Lord, send me*, with faith and hope. She spoke about service and what leads people to service. She asked members to reflect on the story of Mary and Martha.

Faith was demonstrated throughout the weekend with a focus on Jubilee 2025, praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet and the very moving Deceased Members Service. Members listened as the chairperson of service shared information on Development and Peace—Caritas Canada, encouraged letter writing in opposition to recommendations to the federal finance committee and in support of national Resolution 2024.03 Grant the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise Legal Authority to Investigate Environmental and Human Rights Abuses. Members received postcards on MAiD and were encouraged to send them to their respective members of parliament. An overview was also provided, introducing the CCCB resource "Horizons of Hope: A Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care."

Life Member Marg McCallum gave a presentation on the R3 to 1 Unity! task force and Life Member June Brown spoke on the importance of archiving. †

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR



Rhona Hynes
Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador

Councils in Newfoundland Labrador embraced the theme *Here I am Lord, send me* and implemented the focus of "mental health" with members through meetings, presentations and workshops.

NOVA SCOTIA



Sandra O'Connell
Sydney, Nova Scotia

Community-based programs and services offer support for mental health, the needs of youth and seniors, Indigenous people, and others in isolation and more rural areas. Although reports around mental illness are well known and more common than in previous years, there are still people who do not seek assistance or help because of the lack of adequate support in their region and the overall stigma that surrounds mental health issues.

Communiqués from the three provincial chairpersons of faith, service and social justice were circulated to keep members continuously updated on mental health topics and other related issues. The use of the national magazine, website and Facebook page (national and provincial) was another informal way councils had access to all the information, especially about mental health issues.

Councils were encouraged to advocate with the federal and provincial members for health services for youth and to voice their objections to policy changes proposed to allow mental health issues as criteria for medical assistance in dying.

Councils included topics such as palliative care, mental health, the dignity of life and ecumenical service, which were shared and discussed at monthly meetings. From this list, councils shared:

- International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking
- Walking together with Indigenous people
- International Women's Day (fight for equality and liberation, focus on violence and abuse against women, gender equality)
- Development and Peace—Caritas Canada (Solidarity Sunday Campaign, addressing issues such as poverty and inequality)
- Jubilee 2025 (*Pilgrims of Hope* - Hope does not disappoint)
- Ecumenical service was held at the Salvation Army Citadel with seven different denominations in attendance.
- National Day of Awareness (Red Dress Day, awareness of missing Indigenous women)

Webinars offered through national council were well received by councils:

- Walking together with Indigenous sisters
- Rosary of Hope, Healing and Reconciliation
- Ask, Search, Knock in Hope
- The Fight against Human Trafficking
- Hope in the Mist of Turmoil

The materials listed were taken from the parish council presidents' reports and the communiqués from the three chairpersons. Councils and members certainly followed the national theme, *Here I am Lord, send me*, with enthusiasm and inspiration. †

In Nova Scotia, both diocesan councils embraced the theme *Here I am Lord, send me* in all League activities.

At the Antigonish annual meeting of members (AMM), Sr. Jovita MacPherson presented an insightful talk on "Living Our Faith in Action" in conjunction with the theme. Four councils worked together to present "St. Peter's Journey: A Story of Faith, Repentance and the Transformative Power of God's Grace," a theodrama based on St. Peter. The presentation challenged those attending to consider the journey of St. Peter. Members are called to lead the people of God by the example of their own lives. The template for this presentation will be made available for future programs. A handout entitled "Mental Health and Mental Illness: Speakers, Resources, Services" was prepared by the diocesan chairperson of service. She also contributed a newsletter article titled "Unmasking Mental Health" that was distributed.

Diocesan officers presented a workshop, "A Three Pillar Approach to Mental Health," which was delivered to 57 participants from 12 councils. One council hosted a guest speaker who spoke on seniors' mental health, and another council had a speaker who discussed the signs of mental illness in youth and shared advice to guide responses of grandparents and concerned adults.

Halifax-Yarmouth Diocesan Council invited a Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer to educate members about human trafficking, with the hope that councils throughout the diocese would organize information sessions in their communities to raise awareness. At its diocesan workshop in March, the theme was *Council Care*. A council challenge was initiated to promote more communication and collaboration between councils. Councils continue to provide contact with shut-ins through the diocese. Visiting members, providing rides, Eucharistic ministry to nursing homes and respite visits are all examples of members reaching out to provide comfort and companionship to sister members.

The provincial convention/AMM was honoured to have National President Shari Guinta as guest speaker. Shari developed the theme and asked members to consider how they can have a Mary heart in a Martha world. Members were asked to reflect on whether they are focused on faith or service. Who are members

listening to? If they listen, will they hear a voice? Shari also outlined how a theme is developed.

Parish councils are encouraged to use the national website to access resource materials to help with their projects. The “Calendar of Faith Events” was promoted to give members a schedule of upcoming events. National webinars were promoted and shared. Most councils make prayer an important part of their ministry, whether by reciting the rosary, hosting prayer services, assisting with the Way of the Cross, or helping on a bereavement team. Councils continue to help food banks, homeless shelters and nursing homes by providing assistance and companionship.

Nova Scotia members have benefited from the theme *Here I Am Lord, send me* by continuing to grow in faith, helping their communities and country, and by promoting The Catholic Women’s League of Canada. †

ONTARIO



Colleen Martin
Thunder Bay, Ontario

Ontario embraced the national theme, *Here I am Lord, send me* with the addition of *Being the Difference!* and to do so joyfully. It created an interesting blend of study of the gospels regarding joy and those that encourage

members to make a difference by answering the call, as Isaiah 6:8 does.

The national theme logo was promoted by including it on documents for events such as workshops, conventions, special retreat days, minutes and promotional material for the League. The theme prayer was used in all types of gatherings including convention programs, webinars, workshops on a variety of topics related to improving individual and community mental health, study of resolutions, in visits with shut-ins, studying connections between mental health and a variety of social issues, listening to the stories of those who suffer with poor mental health, and in member’s personal prayers across the 12 dioceses.

In Hearst-Moosonee, members responded with *Here I am Lord, send me!* and travelled many hours north of Cochrane by train to bring needed materials, facilitate spiritual programs and promote the values of the League.

In Kingston, a diocesan retreat titled “Belonging to our Heavenly Father” incorporated the national theme in a talk by Diocesan Spiritual Advisor Fr. Stephane Pouliet on “I am Loved; I am Valued; and I am Missionary.”

In Peterborough, the 2024 diocesan convention

included Msgr. Tramontini, speaking on the theme and the psychology of faith. The diocesan president testified to the powerful role of faith in her life, and the thread was completed by the provincial representative, who spoke on responding to God’s call through the national initiative, the power of ‘1’. In Sault Ste. Marie, the theme was promoted by inviting members to be the light, by living and serving joyfully with their response, *Here I am Lord, send me!*

St. Catharines Diocesan Council responded to the theme and mental health focus by creating a year-long project to study homelessness and how mental health is often a contributing factor. They established a steering committee and met with municipalities and many organizations serving the unhoused, then had a wrap-up event with speakers to raise awareness of the need and what individuals can do to make a difference in the lives of people experiencing homelessness.

In the London, Ottawa-Cornwall, Pembroke, Thunder Bay and Toronto dioceses, the theme was embedded in all activities. Members chose to respond *Here I am Lord, send me!* by taking part in prayers for the unborn, and faith programs and webinars specific to the theme.

One can see from this report that each community in Ontario, from parish to diocesan to provincial, chose to respond to the national theme and focus in a way that was most meaningful to them, where they were physically and emotionally at that moment. This is the joy and strength of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada. It is where we lead with love and listen with grace, and where connection begins by making space for everyone’s story and every voice. †

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND



Cheryl Boom
Kinkora, Prince Edward Island

Since January, provincial council activities undertaken on Prince Edward Island in support of the national theme *Here I am Lord, send me* are as follows.

On February 22nd, Area Meeting West was held at St. Paul’s Parish, Summerside. The guest speaker was Sr. Sue Kidd, CND, who spoke on Catholic social teaching and end-of-life care.

On March 1st, Area Meeting East took place at St. Dunstan’s Basilica, Charlottetown. The guest speaker was Sr. Rosemary MacDonald, CSM, who spoke on Catholic social teachings and end-of-life care. Both guest speakers offered a powerful reflection, inspiring

QUEBEC

members to respond with compassion, dignity and faith in service to others.

The provincial convention took place on May 2nd and 3rd in Summerside, with a few guest speakers. Friday evening, a spiritual reflection on “Living our Vocation” was given by Provincial Chairperson of Faith Crissy Czank, Provincial Chairperson of Social Justice Isabel Quinn, and Provincial Spiritual Advisor Father Danny Wilson, followed by Staff Sergeant Derrick Blanche (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), who spoke on human trafficking. Saturday morning, Provincial Past President Karen Rossiter spoke on synodality—people of God who journey together.

On May 31st, the League and the Knights of Columbus hosted the first rosary pilgrimages across the diocese, one beginning in the West and the other in the East. All joined together at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Cornwall for Mass and a reception. It was very well attended and a huge success!

The provincial council has an annual budget of \$1,500 and offers a \$200.00 subsidy to councils that apply and host an event which incorporates the theme. Two councils applied for the 2025 subsidy. Corpus Christi Parish Council held a mini-retreat June 1–3, with 14 ladies in attendance at Donovan Residents in St. Andrews by the Sea. On September 13th, St. Paul's Parish Council will hold a spiritual retreat at Marguerite Bourgeoys Centre in Summerside titled “Mental Health Through the Eyes of Faith.” The guest speaker will be Fr. Walter Flynn.

On June 27th and 28th, a mini-retreat and orientation at Our Lady of Hope Retreat Centre were held for the newly formed provincial leadership team. As Catholic women called to serve and lead at this pivotal time, they are stepping into a shared journey of collaboration, vision and Spirit-led renewal. There was time for prayer and fun activities, which provided an opportunity for everyone to get to know each other better, understand their role and be more prepared to work in partnership as they serve members over the next two years. One highlight was a lantern activity and prayer service. There was time to create a unique lantern to take home and remember that all have their own special light and to be the light for those they serve and one another!

When members have their eyes set on Christ, they can do amazing things together! †



Anna Bawer-DiLallo
Candiatic, Quebec

Councils across Quebec embraced the League's new structure and wholeheartedly responded to the national theme, *Here I am Lord, send me*. Many focused their efforts on mental health through faith, service and social justice.

After the Quebec provincial executive attended a presentation on the healing properties of flowers native to the province, a beautiful initiative blossomed—the creation of the *Bouquet for Mental Health and Wellness*. This living document is designed to promote well-being through faith, service and social justice.

One council comes together on the first Saturday of each month to pray the rosary, with a special focus on mental health. They openly reflect on topics such as depression, suicide, addiction and other mental health challenges. Each gathering includes heartfelt testimonials from individuals who have experienced these struggles, offering a space of compassion, understanding and hope.

Another council hosted a bagel breakfast featuring Provincial Spiritual Advisor Dr. Cory Labrecque, who delivered a powerful talk on medical assistance in dying. His presentation addressed the ethical and spiritual dimensions of the issue. The event was well-attended, and a generous donation was made to a local palliative care centre. Members of this council also volunteer with Our Harbour, an organization committed to supporting individuals living with mental illness.

Many councils support women's shelters, providing essential items and resources. Some councils provide sandwiches, which are distributed to the homeless. One council offers a weekly lunch for those in need in their community. The participants are also provided with a bag of groceries to take home.

Parish presidents were sent a survey asking for their input on how the provincial council could best support members and address challenges councils were facing. The presidents indicated that they wanted workshops in advocacy, leadership and recruitment and retention of members. In March, an interactive workshop day was scheduled that provided teaching, hands-on learning and additional resources related to the three pillars. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Attendees requested future sessions on computer literacy, the election process, mentoring, spirituality and social justice issues. An interactive workshop is scheduled in the fall to address these topics.

For God and Canada

At the Montreal diocesan convention, the chairperson of social justice led an interactive session on addressing homelessness in Montreal. The workshop began with a “housing first” video that debunked the widely held belief that individuals suffering from mental health challenges who are experiencing homelessness cannot live alone. Armed with articles that outlined the latest innovative approaches, breakout groups were given various problems and asked to explore solutions.

National President Shari Guinta attended the provincial convention. She gave a presentation entitled, “Here I am Lord, Send Me—with Faith and Hope.” Shari reminded members that service to the League is a vital part of Christian life, and that members must never forget that the reason why they serve is just as important as how they serve.

Members across Quebec have truly lived the national theme, *Here I am Lord, send me*, through acts of kindness, mercy and steadfast service to those most in need. These gifted women are a powerful source of hope, strength and inspiration. †

SASKATCHEWAN



Helen Kayfish
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

In 2025, I attended several council anniversary celebrations, bringing greetings and presenting certificates. I held a winter executive meeting in March, which was attended by the full provincial executive.

I forwarded the name of Life Member Chantal Devine to represent the province on the R3 to 1! Unity task force to recruit, retain and regain members in the League. From there, life members are working in each diocese. The idea of disbanding the three diocesan councils in Saskatchewan was discussed; however, it was felt that this was not wanted. Each diocesan president was encouraged to reach out to

members in her diocese to encourage them to take on leadership roles.

When attending diocesan conventions, I spoke on maintaining membership in the League. I spoke directly about the possibility of disbanding the diocesan councils if members were not stepping up to fill the roles of president and other council positions. I attended the Knights of Columbus’ state convention, where I spoke about the fact that both organizations are strong, representing the church in the province, and the need to encourage members in the pews to join. I asked women attending the banquet to stand if they were members and encouraged those who weren’t to join the League and to work with our brothers.

I had invited Fr. Greg Elder, chaplain of John Paul II Collegiate Catholic High School in North Battleford, and Mr. Victor Quijada, student counsellor for the same high school, to provide a presentation titled “Understanding Anxiety in Teens” at the provincial convention. It was received very well, as many members either have teens or grandchildren who are teens, and it may be difficult to understand all of what the young people struggle with today, especially in the area of mental health.

Provincial Vice-President Donna Aldous and I presented a workshop on “Leadership in the League, *Here I am Lord Send Me.*” We spoke of our personal journey and provided a questionnaire that included silent reflection and gift sharing.

I also gave a presentation on a project that has been running in parts of Alberta and Saskatchewan, called “Bags of Love,” also known as “It’s my Very Own.” These bags assist children of all ages who have been removed from their homes due to neglect or whose parents are abusing drugs or alcohol, with items needed for everyday use. These bags have the essentials that children need and are intended for them to keep. These children are taken with absolutely nothing of their own and often don’t know what is happening. Each bag is a homemade bag and not a garbage bag. I explained many ways members could participate in this project, such as making bags and blankets, buying items for the bags, or even beginning a chapter in their council or community. This is another way to support the mental health of the most vulnerable individuals in Saskatchewan communities. †

National Council Regretfully Advises the Passing of Life Members:



Patricia Crossman
Kentville, Nova Scotia

Ann McGray
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Elsie Sullivan
Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec

Helen Gordon
Vancouver,
British Columbia

Patricia O’Toole
Hammonds Plains,
Nova Scotia

Marilyn VanDongen
Kamloops,
British Columbia

105th National Annual Meeting of Members

RESOLUTIONS

2025.01 Federal Government to Create a Unified and Centralized Cybercrime Reporting System for Individuals in Canada

Resolved, that national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in 105th national annual meeting of members assembled urges the federal government to create a unified and centralized cybercrime reporting system for individuals in Canada as recommended by the auditor general of Canada in its "Report 7—Combatting Cybercrime."

Action Plan

1. Write letters to the prime minister and members of parliament, including the minister of public safety and emergency preparedness urging them to develop a national strategy to combat fraud beginning with a unified cybercrime reporting system for Canadians of all ages, where centralized reports are directed to appropriate agencies for action.
2. Organize local parish information sessions with programs such as Compassionate Community Care and Community of Hope Outreach: Connecting with Seniors Project—a new nationwide calling service.
3. Conduct in-person sessions with bank personnel to build trust, create comfort and educate the public on banking effectively and protecting financial records.
4. Host information sessions with law enforcement agencies.
5. Work collaboratively within communities to encourage law enforcement organizations to eliminate the under-reporting of cyber fraud and scams.
6. Support education for older adults and interested citizens offered by municipalities and police departments such as courses and workshops.

2025.02 Amend the Canadian *Criminal Code* Section 223(1) Defining When a Child Becomes a Human Being

Resolved, that national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in 105th national annual meeting of members assembled urges the federal government to amend Section 223(1) of the Canadian *Criminal Code* to align with 21st century scientific evidence of the embryonic and fetal stages of a human being's development from the moment of conception to birth therefore defining when a child becomes a human being.

Action Plan

1. Encourage members to raise awareness of the scientific inaccuracies in *Criminal Code* 223(1) by writing to the federal minister of justice and attorney general, urging the government to amend this section to reflect the scientific stages of human embryonic development.
2. Encourage councils to offer educational opportunities to members and parish communities to promote a culture of life (e.g. pro-life speakers, participation in pro-life events).
3. Encourage councils and members to build relationships with and participate in local pro-life group activities and events, especially efforts to advance recognition of preborn babies as human beings.

2025.03 Strengthen Support for Chaplains to Provide Faith-Based Care to Members and Families of the Canadian Armed Forces

Resolved, that national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in 105th national annual meeting of members assembled urges the federal government to strengthen support through funding for resources, staffing and time for chaplains to provide faith-based care to the members and families of the Canadian Armed Forces through the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service and Military Ordinariate.

Action Plan

1. Write letters to the minister of national defence, minister of veteran affairs and associate minister of national defence asking the federal government to:
 - reinforce the position of chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) so they can continue to foster the spiritual, religious and pastoral care of CAF members and their families; and,
 - strengthen support for the Catholic chaplains assuring that they are able to remain faithful to the guidelines of the Catholic church and the basic expectations of the Military Ordinariate.
 2. Educate members on the ways that the federal government has eroded the structure of the chaplaincy within the CAF and provision of support for the Catholic faithful.
 3. Monitor the federal government's response to this issue.
- retract the "Chaplain General Direction on Chaplain's Spiritual Reflection in Public Settings" dated 11 October 2023.
 - not accept the recommendations of the *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination with a focus on Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black Racism, LGBTQ2+ Prejudice, Gender Bias, and White Supremacy – Final Report* regarding Part III(6) Re-Defining the Chaplaincy.

2025.04 Federal Government to Complete the Development of the Office of Palliative Care

Resolved, that national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in 105th national annual meeting of members assembled urges the federal government to complete the development of the Office of Palliative Care to ensure early, universal and equitable access.

Action Plan

1. Write letters to the prime minister, minister of health and local members of parliament urging the government to develop an Office of Palliative Care to provide early, universal and equitable access to early community palliative care through creation of national policies and standards.
2. Increase communication, education and advocacy efforts in parishes, schools and communities through guest speakers, hosting the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Horizons of Hope: A Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care* program, participating in "12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care" and/or distributing pertinent postcards/information.
3. Continue to monitor/follow-up with government on the progress related to this resolution.
4. Begin conversations to promote increased access to palliative care.

Introducing



Christa Grillmair

B.C. & Yukon
Provincial President

Christa was born in Vienna, Austria and immigrated to Canada with her parents when she was 10 years old. Married for 56 years to Norbert, they have two children and four adult grandchildren. After living in Calgary, the Okanagan and the Lower Mainland, they are now enjoying retirement in Nanaimo. At Holy Trinity, Christa is a member of the parish executive committee, chairperson of the pastoral council and serves as Eucharistic minister.

Christa's education and work history primarily focused on management, marketing, sales and training. She has developed, implemented and managed marketing programs and provided strategic direction and relationship management to clients. Since retiring, she has held consulting contracts at Vancouver Island University, focusing on change management and policies and procedures.

Christa joined the League in 2008 at St. Claire of Assisi Parish Council (Coquitlam) and soon became chairperson of organization and president. After moving to Nanaimo in 2013, she joined St. Peter's Parish Council and held positions in resolutions, communications, organization and president.

When she served as diocesan president (Victoria) from 2018 to 2021, she launched a new council at Holy Trinity and hosted the 2019 B.C. & Yukon provincial convention in Nanaimo. From 2021 to 2023, Christa served on the B.C. & Yukon Provincial Council as chairperson of communications and 2nd vice-president.

In 2019, Christa became a member of the strategic plan implementation team, where she facilitated working groups from across the country to create resources for marketing, effective communications, training and development, recruiting parish leaders and evaluating spiritual programs. In 2020, she was awarded the maple leaf service pin.

During her 17 years as a member, Christa has developed and delivered educational workshops and webinars on topics including leadership, mentoring, communications, misconceptions, recruiting, and social media. She has written several articles that have been published in *The Canadian League* magazine and *The Diocesan Messenger*.

Christa values each person's unique talents and contributions. As B.C. & Yukon's new provincial president,

she encourages her team to be open to new ideas and to build an inclusive and engaged provincial council, fostering hospitality and belonging. †



Teena Cyr

Military Ordinariate
Provincial President

Teena joined The Catholic Women's League of Canada in 2008 as a new military spouse while posted to Greenwood, Nova Scotia. She wanted to learn about her faith and connect with

other Canadian Armed Forces families, as well as help her new parish. That same year, she was awarded funding through the Military Ordinariate Provincial Council's Mickey Scott Fund to attend the provincial convention in Halifax.

Since then, while maintaining her qualifications and working in various positions related to human services, having and raising three children, being posted to Winnipeg, Bagotville, Trenton and Ottawa, obtaining a bachelor of arts in sociology from Athabasca University, and supporting her spouse in various operational and instructional roles, she has held various positions at both parish and provincial levels.

Throughout her years of service, she has remained committed to supporting both her faith community and her family. She actively encourages her children's involvement in music, karate, Catholic Youth Ministries and volunteer work. As vice-president, she enjoyed learning through the mentorship of then-President Theresa Schopf and looks forward to continuing her service and fully embracing her new role as president. Teena is currently posted to Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, where she works as a substitute teacher. †



Called to Consecrated Life and the League



Sr. Margaret Sadler, SEJ

My life as a consecrated woman with the Sisters of the Child Jesus was first touched by the League while serving in pastoral ministry at Hollow Water First Nation, located on the eastern side of Lake Winnipeg. Each autumn, a rural council of League members would collect winter clothing, boots and other necessities and deliver them to me for distribution to families on the reserve.

In the 1990s, I was invited by Most Rev. Peter Sutton, OMI, to serve the First Nation missions of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas in northern Manitoba. My congregation of sisters encouraged me to accept the remote posting of Lynn Lake, a town with about 700 people. Upon visiting the town before I accepted, three women asked me, “If you come, will you join the CWL because we are the only three?” Their question brought to mind my dear mother, who had been a devoted member for years, and who had recently passed away. That was my little nudge to say ‘yes’. To honour my mother’s memory, I accepted their invitation to become a member.

The women of St. Maria Goretti Parish Council (Lynn Lake) welcomed me, and I immediately felt at home, serving as the council’s spiritual advisor. Those women were a driving force in their parish and community. If anything happened or got done parish-wise or diocesan-wise, it was largely due to the League. The members were very ecumenical-minded, often partnering with the Anglican, United and Mennonite churches. We were a team, like family, caring about the people, the elders, their situations, about the religious education of the children, and all kinds of other things. I had joined the family that cared about what was happening around them. About two-thirds of the parish were Indigenous, as were the missions of Leaf Rapids, South Indian Lake and Kinoosao (Saskatchewan), to which I often travelled alone, first in a car provided by my congregation, then eventually in a 4x4 provided by the diocese to minister to the people. For those long trips on rough roads, I was very appreciative of having the company of a League member, the pastor and sometimes, the bishop. I didn’t let the winters stop me.

To lessen the workload of the pastor who served seven missions, my ministry included doing baptisms, leading worship services with the Word of God and distributing communion. I would provide pastoral care to the sick and

dying, and when a death occurred, the community would organize itself for the wake. If able to attend, I would lead a prayer ceremony. I trained people in the mission communities to eventually organize services and find leaders among themselves who could lead prayers and address other spiritual needs within their community. Knowing that I was temporary, but they would continue to live there, I trained them for whatever needed to happen in the absence of a priest. I took youth to participate in events organized for them in the diocese. I accompanied 10 young people to World Youth Day in Toronto (2002) and three to World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany (2005). I had worked with the youth who had done all the fundraising for their trips.

In serving the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas for almost 30 years, I have been supported by members at all levels. One of my great joys has been serving as a spiritual advisor and sharing in conventions with League sisters.

I have supported the leadership styles of Archbishops Sutton, Sylvain Lavoie and Murray Chatlain—teaching Indigenous people to believe in themselves, to believe in the church and to take responsibility for their faith.

In 2016, I left Lynn Lake to move to British Columbia, but I am not retired. Sisters do not retire—they just get retreaded. We find different ministries that suit our particular situation. At age 90, I no longer teach high school or run a mission. I continue to live our congregation’s charism, which is “to be a presence of love for the awakening and deepening of faith.” I remain involved in the League and hold membership with St. Mary’s Parish Council in East Vancouver. I try to be present to the people in the parish.

Membership and the service I was able to provide, coupled with the friendships and sisterhood I received, were just what I needed in my vocation as a consecrated woman religious. I believe I was where God called me to be at that time in my life. †



Congratulations!

CONGRATULATIONS TO COUNCILS CELEBRATING ANNIVERSARIES!

105 YEARS

Montreal City Parish Council
Montreal, Quebec

100 YEARS

**St. Anthony of Padua
Parish Council**
Winnipeg, Manitoba

St. Joseph Parish Council
Kentville, Nova Scotia

St. Patrick Parish Council
Quebec City, Quebec

St. Stephen's Parish Council
Olds, Alberta

95 YEARS

**Immaculate Conception
Parish Council**
Kelowna, British Columbia

85 YEARS

Holy Redeemer Parish Council
Sudbury, Ontario



75 YEARS

St. Basil Parish Council
Lethbridge, Alberta

**St. Mary of the Angels
Parish Council**
Perth-Andover, New Brunswick

St. Patrick Parish Council
Atikokan, Ontario

50 YEARS

Divine Mercy Parish Council
St. John's, Newfoundland
and Labrador

Saint John XXIII Parish Council
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

ANNUAL DISBURSEMENT OF NATIONAL VOLUNTARY FUNDS

The national voluntary funds constitute monies forwarded by councils to national office for disbursement annually to the appropriate agencies. Collected from July 1st to June 30th each year, the amounts are announced at the national annual meeting of members. The 2024–2025 collection amounts for these funds are as follows:

Catholic Missions In Canada	\$33,627.77
Catholic Near East Welfare Association	\$15,332.09
Coady International Institute	\$18,455.55
Development and Peace—Caritas Canada	\$31,789.61

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING CENTENARIANS

Ann Kneale Turner

109 years old on April 10, 2025
St. Joseph Parish Council
Grimsby, Ontario

Florence Bickerton

102 years old on July 7, 2025
St. Patrick Parish Council
Medicine Hat, Alberta

Clara Brazeau

102 years old on July 13, 2025
Sacred Heart Parish Council
Roblin, Manitoba

Brenda De Jong

102 years old on August 28, 2025
Immaculate Heart of
Mary Parish Council
Grand Bend, Ontario

Betty Ann Richard

102 years old on July 26, 2025
St. Charles Garnier Parish Council
Kelowna, British Columbia

Jean Barton

101 years old on April 13, 2025
Holy Spirit Parish Council
Stittsville, Ontario

Mary DeGroot-Vanloy

101 years old on August 8, 2025
All Saints Parish Council
Strathroy, Ontario

Yvonne Patterson

101 years old on April 26, 2025
St. Mary Star of the Sea
Parish Council
Mississauga, Ontario

Rena Arbic

100 years old on April 3, 2025
St. Joseph Parish Council
Acton, Ontario

Florence Bates

100 years old on March 21, 2025
Our Lady of Fatima Parish Council
Sydney River, Nova Scotia

Ursula Benoit

100 years old on March 10, 2025
St. Annes Parish Council
Tecumseh, Ontario

Rolande Bolduc

100 years old on October 10, 2024
St. Thomas A Becket Parish Council
Pierrefonds, Quebec

Natalie Carley

100 years old on June 18, 2025
St. Charles Parish Council
Edmonton, Alberta

Isabel Innes

100 years old on April 23, 2025
Christ the King Parish Council
Courtenay, British Columbia

Mary Korchouski

100 years old on April 20, 2025
St. Joseph Parish Council
Belleville, Ontario

Marguerite Leveille

100 years old on May 28, 2025
Blessed Sacrament Parish Council
Chatham, Ontario

Rita MacDonald

100 years old on May 18, 2025
St. Vincent de Paul Parish Council
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Mary Louise McLaughlin

100 years old on July 14, 2025
St. Theresa Parish Council
Edmonton, Alberta

Eileen Nierenhausen

100 years old on July 27, 2025
Good Shepherd Parish Council
Ottawa, Ontario

Celine Reghelini

100 years old on April 9, 2025
Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Parish Council
Sherwood Park, Alberta

Spotlight

St. Mary Parish Council, Tillsonburg, Ontario –

St. Mary's Parish Council made a \$10,000 donation to provide playground equipment to St. Joseph's Elementary School in April. The council was able to provide this donation through fundraising efforts from spring and fall rummage sales, as well as its Mistletoe Bazaar held in November.



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Council, Sherwood Park, Alberta –

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Council hosted a Red Sand Prayer Service on May 25th to raise awareness of human trafficking in Canada. Seventy-five parishioners participated and sprinkled red sand over the sidewalk, symbolizing those who fall through the cracks, and the blood of Christ poured out for all. generous in their donations towards the community.



Our Lady of Sorrows Parish Council, Vancouver, British Columbia –

Our Lady of Sorrows Parish Council celebrated a delightful Ladies' Tea at the end of May. Adorned in hats and fascinators, members and guests enjoyed food, laughter and joy, made even more special by the Knights of Columbus, who—dressed smartly in suits and bow ties—graciously served the ladies. It was a truly memorable occasion, highlighted by the warmth of friendship.



St. Simon & St. Jude Parish Council, Belle River, Ontario – St. Simon & St. Jude Parish Council commemorated the 200th anniversary of the parish cemetery with a park bench to honour the legacy of their deceased members. The council is thankful that the members and council will be memorialized in this sacred place. A Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Ronald Fabbro (London) on September 7th, with the new park bench to be blessed.



Holy Spirit Parish Council, Barrie, Ontario – Holy Spirit Parish Council's Spiritual Advisor, Fr. Pawel Zborowski, announced that every Friday in Lent, a different ministry would host a soup fundraiser and lead parishioners in the Stations of the Cross. On March 7th, the parish council served eight different varieties of homemade meatless soup. Parishioners were very generous in their donations towards the community.



St. Peter the Apostle Parish Council, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan – On March 22nd, St. Peter the Apostle Parish Council hosted a Lent Retreat held at its church. The speaker for the afternoon was Sr. Teresita Kambeitz OSU, who spoke on the topic of forgiveness.

106th Annual National Convention Fundraiser Halifax, Nova Scotia



Wear a daily symbol of thankfulness with this elegant **Blessing and Gratitude Bracelet**. Each bead serves as a gentle reminder to pause, reflect and acknowledge five blessings in your life—deepening your awareness of God's presence every day.

Buy one or more for yourself or as a meaningful gift. It comes packaged in a delicate gauze bag, and a heartfelt message:

"This is a Blessing and Gratitude Bracelet.

Whenever you wear it, acknowledge a blessing or something for which you are grateful.

*God is present and active in our lives daily.
We forget to thank Him for all we have and all we are.*

Each bead gives you an opportunity to silently find five things, situations or people you are grateful for.

This gratefulness will help to grow awareness of God's presence in your day."

Price: \$10.00 per bracelet (+ postage or shipping)

Order yours today by emailing
natnlcwlconv2026@gmail.com



Magazine Deadlines

Winter issue

November 15, 2025

Spring issue

February 15, 2026

Fall issue

July 15, 2026





Life Member Janette Rieger



Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada President Marlene Bodnar







Keynote Speaker Dr. Gerry Turcotte



Life Member Marilyn Gay Garvey



Life Member Hilarion Mitchell







WHO DO I CONTACT?

Contact National Office For:

- Council anniversary requests
- Council news for posting to national social media
- Crest permission requests
- Development fund requests
- Forms
- Notification of deceased members
- Membership payments
- Membership records
- Orders of League supplies

For policy, programs, activities and all other **other inquiries**, use the table below:

Person Inquiring	Person Who Responds
General and Associate Members	Parish President
Parish Executive Members	Diocesan Executive
Diocesan Executive Members	Provincial Executive
Provincial Executive Members	National Executive

What if my question is about a national or provincial program or decision?

For matters of a national nature, members may inquire directly of the provincial president who represents them on the national executive. For matters of a provincial nature, members may inquire directly of the diocesan president who represents them on the provincial executive. For matters of a diocesan nature, members may inquire directly of the parish president who represents them on the diocesan executive. Contact information may be found at <https://www.cwl.ca/contact/>.

What if I am not satisfied with the response I receive?

1. Contact national office and request that the issue be escalated.
2. You will be asked to document the concern in writing and submit it to the office.
3. National office will forward the written document to both the original respondent as well as the respondent's more senior counterpart. (For example, if a parish executive member's question is referred to the diocesan executive, but the member is not satisfied with the response, both the diocesan and provincial president will be notified and asked to intervene.)
4. The respondent and her senior counterpart will examine the issue and respond directly to you.



RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO
CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT
C-702 SCOTLAND AVENUE
WINNIPEG, MB R3M 1X5
E-MAIL: MEMBERSHIP@CWL.CA

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