



The Canadian League



Ignite Your Passion
Empower His Mission

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National President's Message

Betty Colaneri

National President



Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission

The first picture of Jesus I remember seeing was the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and it remains one of my most cherished images today. The greatest gift you can give is your heart, a priceless and selfless act of true love and dedication. The Sacred Heart symbolizes God's infinite and passionate love for humanity. Jesus' divine love, mercy, compassion and ultimate sacrifice are an outpouring of His love for all people. It reminds members of His unconditional love. The inspiration for the theme flows from the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whose love invites members to draw nearer and to respond with hearts fully united to His.

The logo I had envisioned was beautifully brought to life by my family's graphic artist, Julie D'Angela. The large heart symbolizes the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the crown of thorns reminds members that we have been saved by His Passion.

The white colour symbolizes the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven to set the heart on fire. The red and white colours together symbolize the Divine Mercy.

The crown of thorns on the right serves as a reminder of Jesus' Passion and ultimate sacrifice.

The smaller heart inside the large heart symbolizes members' hearts, enflamed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus surrounds and protects us with His own heart.

Fire not only represents God's presence but also a deep love and passionate devotion to God. Members are called to be 'on fire' for God, a fire that fuels our enthusiasm to serve and seek the Lord with all our hearts. Fire also signifies that God's Spirit is to continually burn brightly in our lives.

In Indigenous cultures, fire is a deeply revered and multifaceted symbol, representing a connection to the spiritual realm, the land and the community. It is a sacred gift, a source of life and a powerful tool for connection, healing and preservation.

God's words ignite a spiritual fire within us to love and share His love. It is that passion for the Lord that fuels us to become passionate advocates, compelling us to speak God's truth even when it's difficult, and to act. A faith that is 'on fire' is a faith that is alive, vibrant and passionate. It is that passion that compels members to



reach out to those in need, to show compassion and to share the joy of serving the Lord.

At the national executive/board meeting in October, the board chose the national focus of "Blessed Are the Poor," which is closely connected to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. His ministry included a special focus on the poor and marginalized, revealing God's compassionate care for those in need. Caring for the poor is considered an essential part of our Catholic mission and an expression of our love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Compassion fuels members' actions, allowing us to connect more deeply with Jesus' ministry and encounter the Lord through service to others. The poor are not only those who struggle financially but also those who are poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3). Poverty can also include a lack of family or social support, limited education, social injustices, discrimination and conflict.

I look forward to hearing about all the wonderful things that will be done to honour the Sacred Heart of Jesus through members' compassion for the poor. "Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).

There is a famous quote that says, "The most powerful weapon on earth is the human soul on fire" (Ferdinand Foch). May members' hearts be enflamed as we answer God's call to action. *Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission.* †

From the National Spiritual Advisor

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



Blessed Are the Poor

St. John Chrysostom (347 AD – 407 AD) was a church father and influential Archbishop of Constantinople. He was known as a great teacher and preacher—in fact, his Greek surname, Chrysostom, means “golden-mouthed.” He also had a great love for the poor. He once said that if the faithful do not encounter Jesus in the poor who stand at the church door, they will not be able to meet him at the altar. He believed that ignorance of the poor is ignorance of Christ.

On October 4, 2025, Pope Leo XIV issued his first apostolic exhortation, *Dilexi te* (“I have loved you”). In this document, he expresses the same timeless Christian principle: that the love of Christ is inseparable from love for the poor.

There are 121 numbered paragraphs spread throughout five chapters in this document. It is Christocentric with a focus on the fact that the Son of God became poor for our sake. Woven throughout the document, we also find the church’s social teaching and numerous references to the lives of the saints.

Dilexi te is a work that was begun by Pope Francis and completed by Pope Leo. This practice of finishing what someone else has started is a beautiful reminder of how each successive pope builds upon the work of his predecessor. Pope Leo added his thoughts to this work in the spirit of continuity rather than rupture.

The principal theme throughout this document is that God speaks to us in the poor, and when we serve them, it is like serving God. Pope Leo bases this on a parable of Jesus: “And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me’” (Matthew 25:40). The key phrase is “you did it to me.” It is also important to note that Jesus sees the poor as part of our human family.

Pope Leo believes that “No Christian can regard the poor simply as a societal problem; they are part of ‘our family.’ They are ‘one of us.’” Nor can Christians’ relationship to the poor be simply an ecclesial activity or function; it is an act of faith. Love for the poor becomes

a hallmark of the church that always has a preferential concern for the poor and those in need.

This can be seen in the witness of the saints and the religious orders who have embraced a fundamental option for the poor. For example, we can see this clearly in the lives of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Teresa of Kolkata (Calcutta), and in the communities they formed.

Throughout the centuries, various religious orders helped to bring the love of Christ to those most in need through acts of great charity informed by faith. When this did not happen, the poor often suffered.

Organizations like the League continue this work. For more than 100 years, members have been instrumental in assisting those in need. Throughout the years, many resolutions have focused on addressing grave injustices in Canada, especially regarding life issues. As women of faith and members of the League, you can rejoice in the fact that you have been instruments of healing and hope for so many in society.

Pope Leo concludes his document by acknowledging that, given the overwhelming challenges people face, there is a growing indifference toward the poor. He believes the remedy is love. He states: “A Church that sets no limits to love, that knows no enemies to fight but only men and women to love, is the Church that the world needs today.”

Thank you for all that you do for others, and may we never forget that ignorance of the poor is ignorance of Christ. †

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.

Leading With Humble Hearts: Igniting Our Passion, Empowering His Mission



Glenda Carson
National Vice-President

As I reflect on the new national theme, *Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission*, and my role as national vice-president, I am reminded that true leadership in the League begins with humility; humility of the kind that recognizes a need for God's guidance and that of others. The national theme focus, "Blessed Are the Poor," calls us to lead not from authority or accomplishment, but from a place of spiritual poverty; a leadership that is open to being filled by God's grace and a readiness to serve His people.

For those of us in leadership roles, being "poor in spirit" means understanding that leadership is not ownership. It is stewardship. It is the nurturing of members' gifts, encouraging their ideas and accompanying them as they fulfill the League's core values of faith, service and social justice. When we lead with compassion and gratitude, we empower others to discover their own passion for Christ's mission.

This call is especially important as we consider the evolving needs of this organization. Many councils at all levels are facing challenges: fewer members, fewer stepping up into leadership, changing demographics and competing demands on time. Yet within these realities lies a profound opportunity to reimagine how we connect, engage and inspire. The "poor" in our midst may not always be those in financial need. They may be women longing for purpose, seeking to belong and desiring a sense of contribution. Leaders can help reignite that spark by listening, affirming and inviting.

Leadership, at its heart, is relational. When we take the time to know each other, pray together, celebrate contributions and walk alongside each other in good times and bad, we build a community that reflects the gospel. In doing so, we mirror Christ, who drew people to Him through love, not commands.

The national theme reminds members that passion for the League's mission cannot be sustained through programs alone. It is sustained by people who see their work as ministry. The Beatitude "Blessed are the poor..." challenges us to lead with simplicity, transparency and trust, ensuring that every member, whether new or experienced, feels valued and heard.

I am continually inspired by the creativity, compassion and commitment I see across the country in this organization. You, as members, are the heartbeat of this organization. Each time you mentor a new member, share your skills or reach out to someone in need, you embody the very essence of the theme.

Answering the call to servant leadership and the mission of Christ involves a commitment to serving others with humility and integrity. When we lead with humility and courage and a heart open to God, we truly ignite our passion and empower His mission. In this way, the League will not just be an organization, but a living witness of Christ's love in action. †



National Council Regretfully Advises the Passing of Life Members:

Velma Blacquiere
Kensington,
Prince Edward Island

Catherine Lortie
Morrisburg, Ontario

Jean Mackinnon
Whitby, Ontario

Financial Support For Organizations And Members



Alice Noble

National Secretary-Treasurer

With the start of a new calendar year, councils are concentrating on accomplishing their objectives while staying within their budgets. Fundraising and sound budgeting are key to success as councils look to support those in need and their own members.

Councils demonstrate generosity through their support of the vulnerable by contributing to national voluntary funds and giving monetary gifts to selected organizations. Treasurers at all levels are filing the Treasurer's Annual Donations Report (#520) to inform council members and executives at other levels of support given to each of the national voluntary funds and other donations made under the faith, service and social justice pillars. When gifting money to other organizations, councils must ensure the organizations' practices align with the values and teachings of the Catholic church. The current national voluntary funds are: Coady International Institute (coady.stfx.ca), Development and Peace—Caritas Canada (devp.org), Catholic Missions In Canada (cmic.info) and Catholic Near East Welfare Association (cnewa.org).

Most councils rely on fundraising, in addition to per capita fees, to fund their activities and support vulnerable people and outside organizations doing good work. All financial projects must be approved by members at a council meeting. Councils are advised not to borrow funds or incur debt. Fundraising can take many forms. Embrace members' creativity, and ensure your fundraising is appropriate and reaches out to community members for support. Engaging the community in fundraising and participating in council activities increases awareness of the League, its Mission and its projects.

League councils not only help outside organizations and those in need but also support their own members by providing leadership training and encouraging participation in special events such as workshops, annual meetings and conventions. Councils should allocate funds in their annual budgets to support these member-oriented activities. Criteria need to be established, and possible recipients—including new members, newly elected members and interested individuals—should be identified. Members supported in this way should be

asked to give a report summarizing their experiences. This policy should be included in the council's policy and procedures manual.

Apart from the creative ways councils fundraise and per capita fees, there are several sources of funds for such member-oriented activities available through the national office. These include the National Development Fund, the Provincial Grant and the National Bursary Fund.

The National Development Fund's purpose is "to provide financial assistance to councils at all levels that would incur financial hardship by hosting a workshop." Councils at all levels may apply for assistance once a year. General criteria include promotion of the League to other parishes, leadership training, spiritual development and the promotion of League resources. Consult the National Development Fund Package (#512F) for full details.

History has demonstrated that attending annual meetings of members promotes leadership, fosters growth through education, motivates and inspires members, increases member awareness and creates and tightens the bonds of League sisterhood. Members may need financial support to attend these meetings, especially if they are held far from their homes. The Provincial Grant is designed "to support provincial councils wanting to increase member attendance at their provincial annual meeting of members and national annual meeting of members." It can be applied for to allow the provincial council to hold its annual meeting of members in a community that would normally not be considered or to sponsor members who would otherwise be unable to attend their provincial or the national annual meeting of members. Grant applications may be made each year. Provincial councils are eligible for a maximum of \$5,000 over a five-year period. The application form is available through national office.

The League's Mission "calls its members to grow in faith..." Individual members may receive financial support to pursue studies, courses, seminars, conferences, workshops and diploma or degree programs that align with and promote the Objects of the League. For full details, consult the National Bursary Application (#552F).

Let us continue to support others and our members. †

Let's Be Forward Thinkers

Shari Guinta

National Past President



"Today, accept reality and carry it forward, make it bear fruit, render it fruitful" (Pope Francis).

Forward thinking is sometimes difficult; however, it is necessary in any active, useful and progressive organization. I am thinking, of course, of The Catholic Women's League of Canada. I have said many times, "change is good, healthy and necessary."

The League has indeed undergone structural and organizational changes over the past few years. The strategic planning initiative, the task forces that resulted from that initiative, along with the R3 to 1, Unity! initiative and the D2L Brightspace online learning platform.

In addition to all of that, a major revision of the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* (National P&P) was undertaken by the previous national past president, Honorary Life Member Fran Lucas (chairperson), Honorary Life Member Anne-Marie Gorman, and life members Becky Kallal and Alice Noble. This committee reviewed, examined and revised the entire manual—a major undertaking. It took the better part of a year and a half. The final edits were adopted at the October national executive/board meeting.

To quote Fran, "Hundreds of hours were collectively spent by the committee who continually mentioned their delight in working together and becoming closer in our relationships. Talents of each member came to the forefront, and we completed the task, always happy to give a few more hours when we thought we would have finished. It is our hope the new National P&P will well serve the membership as they continue their service to the League."

All councils at every level should have a policy and procedure manual. It is a useful tool for new executive members and the entire council when reflecting on procedures within the council.

There are challenges with any review of documents, for sure. Checking and double-checking and making sure that the policy is understandable and does not conflict with the *Constitution & Bylaws* of the corporation, no easy task!

A special thank you to these women who took on the challenge of accepting reality and carrying it forward with hope for us! †

106th Annual National Convention Fundraiser Halifax, Nova Scotia

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

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

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My League Story

Karen Rossiter

National Chairperson of Faith



Faith is wonderful and powerful. It can move mountains and draw people together from far and wide. One never knows where our faith will take us, but as “faithful followers,” we always trust in the process and let the Holy Spirit guide us on our life journey.

Canada’s landscape is filled with diversity and opportunity. The number of newcomers and immigrants to this beautiful country has grown exponentially. The League welcomes other cultures as part of its Mission “to grow in faith, and to witness the love of God through ministry and service.”

This is one of those stories of love, courage and that unique bond of faith that comes from a special place deep within the soul. This story, where a life was changed and a new family formed through our common faith, comes from Prince Edward Island. This is Funmilayo (Funmi) Adegun’s story.



At a gathering in her home in Prince Edward Island, Life Member Elaine Black, from St. Francis of Assisi Parish Council (Cornwall), asked me to share a few words before we parted. My heart travelled through memories of where I started, what I found and how much the League has meant to me. A big thank-you to Cathy Favaro, also from St. Francis of Assisi Parish Council, whose thoughtfulness in organizing that send-off gave us the chance to celebrate the bond we built in faith and friendship.

When I first relocated to Canada, I had mixed feelings about leaving home and beginning this new chapter. Back home, I had a good job, a familiar rhythm and a sense of belonging. Uprooting that life was harder than I expected. Soon after we arrived, I realized I had lost a part of myself—there was a gap that needed to be filled.

Then one Sunday in church, Elaine announced that St. Francis of Assisi Parish Council welcomes all women 16 and up. Elaine said they would love for me to join them. That moment lit a spark in the gap within me.

I found a strong sisterhood of faith and a community that truly felt like home. The ladies welcomed me with open hearts and warm smiles, always thoughtful and kind.

Slowly, I rediscovered the part of me I had lost, a place to share my faith with a sisterhood that is so strong and is found within the League.

During my three years on the island, I attended three League conventions. Each time, members made sure I could get there. Their thoughtfulness never failed to touch my heart. I felt seen, which grew our bonds of faith. The conventions affirmed the strong, uniting faith I share with my fellow League sisters.

Council meetings gave me space to set aside my burdens and enjoy the company of kind-hearted women. The special sisterhood we shared brought us closer together and deepened my walk with God. Christmas gatherings were filled with joy and laughter, which I cherished. Through the League, I found community and a deeper sense of faith and purpose.

Being part of this council has been one of the greatest blessings of my Canadian journey, giving me not just a community but a family bonded together by faith, for which I will always be deeply grateful. I hope my story encourages anyone navigating a new chapter in life to find the support, belonging, sisterhood and deep faith I discovered in the League.

If I had the chance to do it all over again, I would still choose this beautiful, faith-filled sisterhood in a heartbeat.

As women of faith, members are asked to “evangelize and promote spiritual growth.” The League is a place with faith at its core. A place where members share and grow in our faith by praying together and deepening our spiritual development. Share with your communities the way the League can uphold, support and enhance a woman’s faith journey, no matter where that journey began.

Funmi’s story is one of inspiration, devotion and love. The League’s cornerstone of faith is its strength. Our faith unites us and becomes stronger as members journey together. This bond of faith is the bedrock of all we do and unites us no matter our histories. †

Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission: Blessed Are The Poor



Madonna Clark

National Chairperson of Service

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

When Catholics hear, "Blessed are the poor," their hearts are drawn to Christ's compassion for those on the margins. His call is not only to recognize poverty, but to respond with active love, faith-filled service and hearts that transform the world.

The national theme, *Ignite Your Passion, Empower His Mission*, invites every Catholic woman to rekindle the fire of service within. The Holy Spirit urges members to move beyond comfort, to notice the faces of poverty: the lonely senior, the single mother, the refugee family, the youth struggling with despair. Each life reflects Christ, waiting to be met with dignity, tenderness and hope.

The League's Mission becomes most visible when members walk alongside the poor and suffering. Service is not always grand—often, it shines in quiet acts of mercy—a warm meal shared, a listening ear, a ride to a medical appointment or a moment of companionship for someone who feels forgotten. These acts of love ignite hope.



From left to right: Orchard View Long Term Care Home's Activities Director Debbie McAllister, Chief Executive Officer Lynn Clark with National Chairperson of Service Madonna Clark and the care home's helper Robert Clark.

I had the privilege of visiting Orchard View Long Term Care Home to host a special birthday celebration for five residents and the chief executive officer. With balloons, cake and laughter filling the room, the residents, so often isolated or forgotten, were surrounded by companionship, dignity and the gentle warmth of Christ's love.

Serving the poor in spirit is not always about meeting material needs; sometimes, it is about offering our time, attention and genuine care. As we sang, shared stories and celebrated life together, each smile and moment of connection became a spark of God's grace, reminding us that love, freely given, transforms even the simplest gestures into something sacred.

To empower His mission means seeing as Christ sees, not through eyes that focus on what's missing, but through the abundance of God. Where the world sees limitation, Christ sees potential; where others see need, He sees grace. When members choose to see with His eyes, our giving becomes an act of service, and God's love is multiplied through what we offer.

Across Canada, League councils embody this gospel truth. In parish halls, food banks, schools and shelters, members serve with joy: organizing coat drives, supporting pregnancy care centres, visiting seniors, educating communities about human trafficking, advocating for justice and addressing bullying, racism and poverty. Each effort, no matter how small, lights the darkness and transforms hearts.

As national chairperson of service, I am inspired by members' dedication. Each of you carries the torch of faith that brightens Canadian communities. When members serve with humility and joy, they lift others and themselves, meeting Christ in those they serve. Dr. Stephen Trzeciak said that it only takes "40 seconds of compassion to make a meaningful difference."

May this year be a time to ignite your passion for faith-filled service. Let us listen for the Holy Spirit's whisper, guiding us to empower His mission of compassion. Together, members can transform the world, one act of mercy, one spark of love at a time. †

A Valued Resource on Poverty

Jessie Parkinson

National Chairperson of Social Justice



*“The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil,
but because of those who look on and do nothing” (Albert Einstein).*

Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) is a “national, progressive organization of members who are inspired by faith to act for social and environmental justice in Canadian public policy.” Its focus is on three key policy areas: poverty in Canada, climate justice, and refugee and migrant rights. On October 17th, CPJ released a comprehensive report, *Poverty Trends 2025: Pathways from Poverty to Rights & Well-being*, available at cpj.ca/report/poverty-trends-2025/. The report focuses on who is experiencing poverty in Canada, and what should be done about it. At the fall meeting of the national executive/board, we chose “Blessed Are the Poor” as the national focus to accompany the new theme in 2026. In making that choice, the board was truly guided by the Holy Spirit.

The report notes that poverty is a violation of the right to an adequate standard of living and quotes Article 25 of *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*: “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

For example, creating the conditions for all people to enjoy the right to an adequate standard of living requires that people have access to adequate sources of income. Wages have not kept pace with rising costs of living, particularly housing prices. “The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives estimates one would need to work between 1.5 and 2.2 full-time minimum wage jobs to afford a one-bedroom rental unit in most urban areas in Canada.” Contrast that with the fact that the 100 highest-paid chief executive officers in Canada “were paid 210 times more than the average worker’s wage in 2023.” These inequities need to be addressed.

The CPJ report creates a road map for resolution topics. While the entire report is a must-read, the

section “Telling better policy stories: What do we know works?” (beginning on page 17) offers a plethora of ideas for government action. Resolutions can help stir government action.

The report concludes with the following: “We all have a role to play in upholding our treaty and human rights and cultivating our mutual well-being. The facts and work can be heavy, but can also be a great source of agency, connection, and even joy.”

I will be following up with more from Citizens for Public Justice this year. The League received permission to quote extensively from its report, with the invitation that CPJ also participate in a webinar or podcast. As of the writing of this article, plans are underway for a joint project. So, let’s roll up our sleeves and get going in 2026! †



A Thank You to Kim Scammell



Alice Noble

National Secretary-Treasurer

After 26 years of service as the League's executive director—“almost a quarter of the years of life of the League!” (Shari Guinta (2023–2025)—Kim Scammell has retired. Below are comments sent to me about Kim from honorary life members—the former national presidents of the League.

Barbara Dowding (2014–2016) remembers when Kim was hired and her determination to meet the high expectations of the executive. Shari shared that “although Kim admitted to not knowing about the League when she was hired, she became the backbone of the national office.” Vivian Bosch (2000–2002) had “the privilege and pleasure” of working with Kim from the time she was first hired. Vivian shared that she came to “appreciate Kim's steadfast leadership assisting the members to advance the League to new heights.”

Vivian also shared that Kim “assisted and affirmed” her during her time as national president. Margaret Ann Jacobs (2016–2018) says, “Kim was truly a gift to me as national president” and felt “encouraged and affirmed when in doubt.” Betty Anne Brown Davidson (2012–2014) explained that what she most “respected and loved about Kim was how safe she felt under her wings.” Velma Harasen (2010–2012) adds that it “was great to work with Kim.” Lorette Noble (2006–2008) shared that Kim was “supportive of new ideas, would listen, evaluate and make suggestions, and helped to get things moving, always open to change for the good of the League.” Fran Lucas (2021–2023) also shared that Kim “was there to guide yet accepting of a different idea... as a new way of approaching something.”

Margaret Ann added that Kim was “always extremely professional, compassionate and caring, patient and understanding,” always willing to “share her wisdom and insight” and was “forward-thinking and had vision.” Betty Anne said she “could always trust Kim's experience and knowledge of the right way to do things.” Shari noted that she “relied on Kim for information, support and guidance, which Kim provided with professionalism.”

Barbara commented that Kim was a “wizard at all things financial, while being creative and able to write creatively on any topic!” Margaret Ann shared

that Kim “was prompt, thorough and unbiased” when asked for information and that she always respected the members of the national executive and their leadership and decision-making role. Lorette added that Kim was “reliable, accurate and organized.”

Fran shared that Kim “was a huge supporter of the League and always had our best interest at heart,” and “while leading the national office, she was dedicated to the League's mission and to the staff.” Lorette affirmed that Kim “always thought of the League and its members first.” Anne-Marie Gorman (2018–2021) says Kim “never wavered in her focus to serve the membership with all her strengths and talent,” always “going the extra mile with consideration of her League sisters.” Margaret Ann saw that Kim's “deep faith and strong Catholic values were lived out with humility and dedication.” Anne-Marie notes that Kim's “faith, loyalty and integrity are without parallel.”

Fran remembered how Kim “helped ‘navigate the ship’ during the months and years implementing the strategic plan.” Anne-Marie remembers the COVID-19 pandemic and Kim's “grounding calm” and support. Barbara remembers how Kim would “challenge her to reach higher, always trusting in God's providence.” Velma remembered how Kim was the “perfect mediator to handle and manage strong leaders.”

It was not all work all the time, either. Kim attended several World Union of Catholic Women's Organization events and, as Betty Anne says, League members in attendance had “fun times.” Lorette remembers “sharing many jokes and laughing all the time with Kim.” Margaret Ann “valued her friendship and joy-filled outlook.”

The honorary life members expressed how much they will miss Kim's experience and how much they loved working with her. They all thanked Kim for her 26 years of service to the League, especially to national presidents, members of the national executive and national office staff. They wish Kim a happy and fulfilling retirement.

On behalf of all other members, past and present, of the League, thank you, Kim! We wish you much joy on this new journey and know that our prayers are with you. God bless. †



WELCOME ABOARD THE 2026 NATIONAL CONVENTION!



A Salt-Kissed Welcome to Halifax

The 2026 annual national convention returns to Nova Scotia after 10 years, taking place August 9–12, 2026. The host venue, the Halifax Convention Centre, is located in the heart of downtown, close to Halifax's vibrant waterfront and surrounded by restaurants, shops and cultural attractions.

The convention promises days filled with sisterhood, faith and meaningful engagement. The planning committee is working hard to bring you an unforgettable experience enriched with unique social events and opportunities to connect with sister members from across the country. The convention registration form will be available in the spring issue of *The Canadian League*.

All convention activities will be held at the convention centre, with proposed special events including a harbour cruise, a tour to Peggy's Cove and a winery visit in the Annapolis Valley. The opening and closing Eucharistic celebrations will be at the historic Saint Mary's Cathedral Basilica. The Resolutions Dialogue returns to Monday, while plenary and breakout sessions will invite thoughtful engagement with key issues and interests of the League. Monday evening will feature an exciting immersion into Acadian culture with a lively, down-home Acadian kitchen party.

The Maritime Charm of Halifax and Beyond

Attending the convention also provides a perfect opportunity to explore one of Canada's most beautiful regions. At its heart lies Halifax, a city where rugged coastline and warm hospitality blend with a rich, living history.

Halifax's waterfront, nearly four kilometres long, is a hub of artisan shops, cafés and the Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market, the oldest continuously operating market in North America. As you stroll, you'll witness the city's enduring connection to the sea, with container ships, fishing boats and tour vessels sharing the harbour.

The Maritime Museum of the Atlantic brings this heritage vividly to life, from wooden boat building to wartime convoys and from the Titanic to the Halifax Explosion. Nearby, the Halifax Citadel National Historic Site offers sweeping views and an immersive look into 18th-century military life. The Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 tells moving stories of the thousands who began new lives in Canada through Halifax.

A coastal day trip brings you to Old Town Lunenburg, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its colourful buildings and historic waterfront. For those seeking breathtaking scenery, the Cabot Trail on Cape Breton Island offers dramatic coastal cliffs, forested highlands and unforgettable ocean vistas.

Where to Stay

The Sutton Place Hotel Halifax, steps from the convention centre, is offering a group rate of \$329.00/night (plus 15% HST, 3% marketing levy and \$2.00 eco fee) as the convention hotel. Book using this link: reservations.suttonplace.com/113161?groupID=4075653 and code CWLC26. You can also reserve by calling (902) 932-7548 or toll-free (888) 378-8866 and providing the group code. For other accommodation options, parking and flight discounts, visit the national website.

Join your Maritime League sisters in Canada's "ocean playground" where the sea welcomes you, the community uplifts you and your spirit will feel truly renewed. †





NOTICE OF MOTION

Notice of Motion is hereby given that the following amendments to the *Constitution & Bylaws* (2023) have been proposed as follows:

PROPOSED AMENDMENT #1:

Proposal to Amend Part III, Section 1

To replace Section 1 with:

The crest, as designed and adopted in 1922, shall be the cross, symbolic of faith, surmounting 13 maple leaves, symbolic of the provinces of Canada and three territories, with the words "THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA FOR GOD AND CANADA" enclosed in an unbroken circle, symbolic of constant service to God and Canada. The colours of the crest shall be blue, chosen for Our Lady, and the papal colours, white and gold.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT #2:

Proposal to Amend Part IX

To replace (a)(i) with "The spiritual advisor, in cooperation with the chairperson of faith, shall provide advice and guidance for the spiritual program. (Part VI)"

PROPOSED AMENDMENT #3:

Proposal to Amend Part XIV, Section 6

To replace Section 6(d)(ii) with "transportation expenses and registration fees for honorary life members to attend the national annual meeting of members"

PROPOSED AMENDMENT #4:

Proposal to Amend Part XIV, Section 9

To replace Section 9 with "Notice of the date, time and place of a meeting of members shall be given to each member entitled to vote at the meeting as follows:"

PROPOSED AMENDMENT #5:

Proposal to Amend Part XV, Section 1

To replace Section 1(b) with:

- (i) Each parish council in the diocese concerned may appoint TWO accredited delegates to the annual diocesan meeting of members and ONE accredited delegate to the annual provincial meeting of members.
- (ii) Each diocesan council in the province concerned may appoint TWO accredited delegates to the annual provincial meeting of members and TWO accredited delegates to the annual national meeting of members.
- (iii) Each provincial council may appoint TWO accredited delegates to the national annual meeting of members.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT #6:

Proposal to Amend Part XVI, Section 2

To replace Section 2(b) with:

- (b) An elected or appointed officer shall serve but not exceed one full term in the same office except the chairperson and treasurer (secretary-treasurer at national level) who may be elected to a second consecutive term. A chairperson shall be given a different standing committee during each term. A treasurer may serve a total of two terms only in this position.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT #7:

Proposal to Amend Part XVII, Section 2

To replace Section 2(a) with "At parish level, all financial projects shall be approved by the members at a council meeting."

PROPOSED AMENDMENT #8:

Proposal to Amend Part XX

To replace subsection (b) with "The amendments committee shall be composed of the national past president as chairperson, the national president, the national vice-president and other members as required, appointed by the national president."

2025 New Life Members

June Brown

National Life Member Liaison



Life membership is not a retirement gift or a reward. The recipient has demonstrated her love of the League, her encouragement of others and her ability to participate in studies, research and workshops. She must be available and willing to continue serving the League at all levels upon the request of the national president. She has been nominated by her diocesan or provincial council in accordance with the established criteria.



Gladys Brown

Gladys Brown has been a member of the League for 41 years and is currently a member of Our Lady of the Angels Parish Council (Fort Saskatchewan).

Gladys has two children, son Kevin and daughter Elaine (husband Carl) and two beautiful granddaughters, Raylei and Jorja. She is a widow as her husband passed away in September 2019 from cancer.

Involved with the League for many years, Gladys has been both parish council president and secretary. She served as Edmonton diocesan president (2011–2013), during which the League celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Catholic Women's League of Edmonton, founded by Katherine Hughes. It was at this time that the Edmonton Diocesan Council hosted the national convention in August 2012. Excitement was in the air.

Gladys served on her provincial council as chairperson of the community life and Christian family life standing committees and as vice-president. Serving on the provincial council gave her the opportunity to meet women in the League throughout the province. It was a wonderful experience for her. Gladys cherishes the League because she has met wonderful, caring and loving women who are filled with faith, hope and love.

In her parish, Gladys serves as the liturgy coordinator, scheduling volunteers for the various ministries and as an adult server. She organizes social events, attends Mass during the week, recites the rosary, visits shut-ins and volunteers in the parish office when required. She is also involved in various organizations within Fort Saskatchewan.

Gladys loves the League as it has shown her the faith, hope and love of people who serve the parish, community, Canada and abroad.



Marilyn Gay Garvey

Gay joined St. Dunstan's Basilica Parish Council (Charlottetown) in 1982 and has remained a member ever since. Born in Toronto, Ontario, she received her Catholic education and graduated from St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing.

Gay married in 1967 and moved to Prince Edward Island with her husband Tom, in 1971.

As a mostly stay-at-home mother with five children, Gay found the League a welcoming, spiritual and educational organization to belong to. She served on most committees at the parish level and for four years on the provincial council as chairperson of the Christian family life and resolutions and legislation standing committees. Gay has volunteered with the Canadian Youth Pro-life Organization organizing pro-life and Chastity Challenge youth conferences. She also had the opportunity to complete Annotation 19 of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises in daily life, which had a tremendous effect on her spiritual formation. In 2002, due to family illness and her role as a primary caregiver, Gay stepped down from active League work and focused on her family and her job as director of nursing at a long-term care facility. During this time, her mother died in 2004, her husband in 2015 and her oldest son in 2019.

In 2012, Gay returned to active membership as the parish president of St. Dunstan's Basilica Parish Council. She encouraged younger church members to join, and welcomed newcomers with "Meet & Greet" receptions after Mass.

In 2016, Gay became more involved with medical assistance in dying (MAiD) versus palliative care issues. She was again elected to the provincial council as chairperson of resolutions and legislation. In 2018, she was elected as president-elect (organization) and was

challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic and the many restrictions and changes that came about. In 2021, she became provincial president and completed her provincial past presidency in May 2025.

Gay hopes to encourage more newcomers and younger women to join the League and become active members, to serve Christ. This is a spiritual challenge.



Mary Hunt

Mary has been an active member of the League in Edmonton for more than 30 years, serving at all levels and currently as past president of the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council. She treasures the privilege of

meeting countless women who possess a profound calling to care.

Married to Larry, they have two children and three awesome grandchildren. Born in Calgary, Mary attended the University of Calgary. She has a diverse career background, including director of Hire a Student, landman, and assistant to five lieutenant governors of Alberta. She is currently working at Touchmark at Wedgewood.

Mary is the lector's ministry lead at her parish and has also served as liturgy chairperson and parish council chairperson. In keeping with her belief in the sanctity of life, Mary served as chair of the Alberta March for Life for three years and chaired an Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council and Society of Saint Vincent de Paul initiative to "Help Feed the North," where in 60 days, almost \$70,000 was raised to help Hay River and Fort Smith after the fires in their communities. For her volunteerism in the community, Mary was presented with the King Charles III Coronation Medal in 2025.

She leads the R3 to 1, Unity! task force in her province, focusing on membership and leadership development. Mary is a member of the organizing committee for the 2028 national convention and is excited to welcome her League sisters to Edmonton.



Helena Lessard

Helena has held membership in the League within Peterborough since 1990 and is currently a member of St. Mary's Parish Council (Lindsay).

She was awarded the maple leaf service pin in 2014 and life membership in 2025.

Helena actively represents members' needs within Peterborough diocese. She has attended parish council meetings with diocesan officers and collaborated with life members on projects and committees. Helena has

also presented retreats on the Holy Land and Fatima for parish councils and diocesan spiritual development days. Other past projects include advising the Ontario provincial convention youth forum, assisting with *Catch the Fire!* workshops and developing diocesan treasury systems for solid financial record keeping and reporting. She maintains a good rapport with members at all levels within the League and regularly attends and participates in conventions at all levels.

Helena has served in a variety of positions within the League, including the parish level, at the diocesan level as corresponding secretary, treasurer and chairperson of resolutions and legislation, and as a member of the community life and faith standing committees at the provincial level. Helena has also served as registration and credentials chairperson at diocesan conventions and on credentials and protocol committees at provincial conventions.

Helena has a degree in political science and a diploma in human resources. She has been employed in human resources in the insurance and government sectors, and balanced an analytical role of bookkeeping with a creative role of designing and creating competitive dance and gymnastic wear. She is currently active with a variety of organizations within the community and the church.



Cathy McKinney

Cathy is a proud third-generation member of the League and has been serving "For God and Canada" for 44 years. As a devoted member of St. Gregory's Parish Council (Sault Ste. Marie), she had the privilege of serving as council president for two terms, guided

by the wisdom and support of some truly remarkable mentors.

Her mother, a life member herself, inspired Cathy's journey. Watching her serve the League at the diocesan, provincial and national levels gave Cathy a deep appreciation for her dedication and the strength of women in the League. Her mother's legacy continues to influence Cathy's path and perspective.

During Cathy's term as diocesan past president, she also served on the regional council as the spiritual chairperson for Sault Ste. Marie, offering her another opportunity to support and uplift members through faith-filled leadership. One of the most meaningful highlights of her League journey was chairing the 2010 diocesan convention hosted in Sault Ste. Marie.

Cathy was honoured to contribute to the League's future by serving on the marketing working group under the League's strategic planning implementation committee. This five-year mandate brought together passionate and visionary women from across Canada

to help shape a renewed direction for the League—a deeply enriching and inspiring experience.

Cathy is blessed with a loving husband, Ted, of 35 years, and together they have raised two beautiful, healthy daughters who are now strong, independent women thriving in their careers. She recently retired from a fulfilling career as a regulated pharmacy technician with a large retailer in Sault Ste. Marie.

In her leisure time, Cathy enjoys travelling with Ted, gardening and spending peaceful days at their cottage on Lake Superior.

Cathy's work with the League has shaped her into a better wife, daughter, mother, sister and friend. For Cathy, it has truly been a calling and a blessing in her life.



Jessie Parkinson

Jessie Marie Parkinson is a retired lawyer living in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, with her husband of 43 years, David. They have one daughter, Caitlin, who lives in Halifax.

Jessie grew up in New Glasgow, attended New Glasgow High School (1965), Marianopolis College, University of Montreal (1968) and Dalhousie University Law School (1971). She was called to the bar in Vancouver, British Columbia, and practiced law there for almost 30 years. In 1999, she moved back to New Glasgow with her family.

Jessie is the inveterate volunteer: past chair for Women Alike Abreast a River Dragon Boat Team and for the board of directors of Tearmann Society for Abused Women. She currently serves as corporate secretary of the Catholic Women's Leadership Foundation, president of the Federation of Music Festivals of Nova Scotia, treasurer of the Women Alike (Breast Cancer Survivors) Society, board member of Aging Well Nova Scotia and fundraising chair of the New Build Glen Haven project, involved in a new nursing home to be built in her home town.

Involved in music ministry in her home parish of St John the Baptist (New Glasgow), Jessie was involved in the catechetical program for many years, the marriage preparation program, and has served as a lector and extraordinary minister of communion. She has served the League in Nova Scotia at all levels as president and chaired the spiritual development, resolutions, legislation and social justice standing committees. Jessie received her maple leaf service pin in 2012 and her life membership in 2025.

Besides volunteering, she loves to paddle in a dragon boat, bake, garden, read and teach piano and voice lessons to eight little students.



Janette Reiger

Janette joined the League in 1996. At that time, she was a busy mother with a young family, but when she heard her council president speak at Mass about how important it was for Catholic women to have a voice in the country, that message resonated with

her and she joined. She remained a prayer partner for a few years. When her children were older, she started attending her council meetings and has been active in the League ever since!

After serving in various positions on her council, she became president. From there, she was asked to become the Regina regional chairperson in fall 2012, and was also the secretariat chair for the 2013 national convention in Regina. That fall, Janette was asked to take the vacant position as Saskatchewan provincial recording secretary, a position that she was appointed to a second time when there was a vacancy. At the same time, Janette had let her name stand for the Regina Diocesan Council, as she thought her time on provincial was done. She was elected and served on the diocesan council from 2015 to present as chairperson of the spiritual development, resolutions, legislation and organization standing committees, president and past president. Janette created many PowerPoint presentations that she shared with members at meetings and conventions throughout the years.

Janette joined a Year 2 strategic plan working group, which created *The Joy of Leadership*. She is a graduate of the Catholic Women's Leadership Foundation course (2nd cohort; 2019-2020). Currently, she is serving on the national service subcommittee under National Chairperson of Service Madonna Clark.

Janette has a degree in political science and a diploma in dental assisting. She managed her husband's office and was the bookkeeper for more than 35 years. In her retirement, she continues to enjoy quilting, crocheting, gardening and preserving the produce. She remains active in her parish, currently facilitating the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults program. Her husband, five children, and especially her four little grandchildren keep her busy. †





Leslie Carr
New Brunswick
Provincial President



Although Leslie spent her preteen years in the United States, she embraced her Canadian home with deep loyalty. She studied as a medical laboratory technologist, obtaining national certification and worked in hospital laboratories for 13 years before transferring to the environmental field. Leslie remains an advocate for both health care and environmental protection. She loves to travel and has visited all 10 provinces and several European countries.

Leslie is blessed with two sons, a wonderful daughter-in-law and three grandchildren. Sadly, she lost her husband several years ago after 35 years of marriage.

Leslie has always had a deep connection to her faith and has served as a catechist, sacristan, Eucharistic minister, greeter and member of her parish pastoral council. She completed a year of study in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults, acting as a sponsor to her late husband.

Leslie's membership in the League began 39 years ago, after she relocated to a new community for her husband's work. The friendships she has made have given her strength through many life-changing events. She served as secretary and vice-president/chairperson of organization at the parish level. At the provincial level, Leslie served as chairperson of communications, was a member of the planning committee for the 2023 national annual meeting of members, presented workshops on the strategic plan resources, particularly those pertaining to leadership and assisted with Unity Outreach presentations. She was a presenter of the workshop "Lead Us Closer to You, Lord," at the 2025 national convention.

Leslie is forever grateful for her faith and for the friends she has made along her journey, and she looks forward to many more. †

Sandra O'Connell
Nova Scotia
Provincial President



Sandra has lived in Sydney, Nova Scotia, since birth. A member for 35 years, she served at the parish level for 12 years, the diocesan executive for 14 years, and at the provincial executive for the last eight years. Sandra attended her first meeting at St. Anthony Daniel Parish Council (Sydney) with a friend who had joined a year earlier. The sense of welcome from other members and the realization of what the League does within the parish and community made an impact that evening. When elections were held the following year, Sandra let her name stand for a standing committee. That was the beginning! She is currently a member of the amalgamated parish of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish Council (Sydney). Sandra was honoured to serve as diocesan president (Antigonish) from 2013–2015 and as provincial president for 2025–2027.

Over the years, Sandra has served her parishes as a lector, Eucharistic minister, member of the liturgy committee and of the parish council. She has worked on League projects such as Project Grow, Leading the League, S'mores and *Catch the Fire!* She has also facilitated at leadership workshops throughout her diocese. Sandra received her maple leaf service pin in 2010 and was awarded life membership in 2021. Mentors have played a large part in Sandra's League journey. Donna Bates, Joan Bona, Cecile Miller, Debbie Samson and others offered guidance and were always available as sources of knowledge and experience.

Sandra's goal is to educate parishioners about the importance of the League and to help them realize the gift a League council in a parish can be to the community. Focusing on parish relationships and working on projects that benefit the parish, diocese, province and country will be the main objective. A goal of a 2% net increase in membership will also be introduced, hopefully enticing councils to actively recruit, retain and regain members.

The Diocese of Antigonish employs Sandra in the business office as the senior financial clerk. She was married in 1986 to Jim, with whom she has one son, Phillip, and one grandson, Parker.

Her daily goal is to find JOY and to give JOY to another. With JOY in your life, anything is possible. †



HAPPY Birthday

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING CENTENARIANS

Angeline (Angie) Charlebois

107 years old on December 18, 2025
St. Bartholomew Parish Council
Levack, Ontario

Rita Murphy

102 years old on September 19, 2025
Precious Blood Parish Council
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

Marie Bock

100 years old on September 15, 2025
St. Mary Parish Council
Fort Frances, Ontario

Bern Brown

105 years old on January 31, 2025
Holy Family Parish Council
Amherst, Nova Scotia

Barbara Roy

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

Pearl Guitard

100 years old on September 4, 2025
St. Gabriel Parish Council
Belledune, New Brunswick

Adeline Wingert

104 years old on June 2, 2025
St. Peter Parish Council
Regina, Saskatchewan

Kay Pugsley

101 years old on September 18, 2025
Holy Family Parish Council
Amherst, Nova Scotia

Brigitte Kurowski-Wilson

100 years old on September 21, 2025
Cathedral of St. Peter-in-
Chains Parish Council
Peterborough, Ontario

Marion Rutledge

103 years old on August 15, 2025
Holy Cross Parish Council
London, Ontario

Marguerite Nadeau

100 years old on November 21, 2025
St. Jerome Parish Council
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

Maria Hermes

102 years old on November 17, 2025
St. Martin of Tours Parish Council
Terrace Bay, Ontario

Vicky O'Brien

100 years old on November 23, 2025
St. Patrick Parish Council
Lucan, Ontario

Maria Michielsen

102 years old on August 26, 2025
Sacred Heart Parish Council
Parkhill, Ontario

Cora Rommens

100 years old on September 29, 2025
St. Mary Parish Council
Brooks, Alberta



Notice of Correction: Ann Kneale of St. Joseph Parish Council (Grimsby), turned 109 years old on April 10, 2025. She was incorrectly listed as Ann Kneale Turner in the Fall 2025 issue of *The Canadian League*. Ann passed away in September 2025.



Magazine Deadlines

Spring issue
February 15, 2026

Fall issue
July 15, 2026

Winter issue
November 15, 2026



Congratulations!

Congratulations to councils celebrating anniversaries!

100 YEARS

**St. Anne of the Prairies
Parish Council**
Trochu, Alberta

90 YEARS

St. Joseph Parish Council
Langley, British Columbia

85 YEARS

Sacred Heart Parish Council
Victoria, British Columbia

80 YEARS

**Our Lady of Lourdes
Parish Council**
Stellarton, Nova Scotia

75 YEARS

**Our Lady of Sorrows
Parish Council**
West Aylmer, Ontario

25 YEARS

**Mary Mother of God
Parish Council**
Oakville, Ontario



Spotlight!



Pilgrimage to Medjugorje — For Jubilee 2025, *Pilgrims of Hope*, members of several parish councils in Alberta and Saskatchewan came together in October to make a pilgrimage to Medjugorje, a village in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Our Lady of the Assumption Parish Council, Stratford, Prince Edward Island —

Our Lady of the Assumption Parish Council recently presented “Kitbags of Kindness” to Bethany Robertson, Director of Blooming House, a local transitional housing organization for women. Blooming House also provides meals, social activities and supportive information related to permanent housing. The purchase of the kitbags was funded by Hillsboro Funeral Home, with members and parishioners donating personal necessities to fill the kitbags.



St. Patrick Parish Council, Carbonear, Newfoundland and Labrador — St. Patrick’s Parish Council sponsored an Orange Ribbon Day on September 28th, for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Members placed orange ribbons on the tree of reconciliation in remembrance to never forget the plight of Indigenous children and their families. A prayer of reconciliation was offered.





St. Charles Borromeo Parish Council, Toronto, Ontario — On July 7th, St. Charles Borromeo Parish Council made a Jubilee 2025 pilgrimage to Martyrs' Shrine in Midland, Ontario. Members began the day with Mass, followed by a self-guided prayer walk around the church, learning about the lives of the Canadian martyrs, St. Jean de Brébeuf and his companions. They enjoyed a picnic lunch and explored the vast grounds, outdoor altars and rosary path.

St. Joseph Parish Council, Highland Creek, Ontario — Members of St. Joseph's Highland Creek Parish Council gathered in orange shirts on September 30th to mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation with a prayer service. They also held a Red Sand Prayer Service to educate and bring awareness to human trafficking. IWIN (I'm Worth It Now initiative) assisted the council in preparing to perform the prayer service.



St. Ann's Parish Council, Abbotsford, British Columbia —

On July 17th, members from St. Ann's Parish Council visited the member of parliament (MP) for Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford to express concerns about revoking charitable status from religious organizations.

On August 18th, members visited the MP for Abbotsford—South Langley with concerns regarding medical assistance in dying. Both MPs were very welcoming and supportive to their discussions.



Members with Brad Vis, Member of Parliament for Mission—Matsqui—Abbotsford.



Members with Sukhman Gill, Member of Parliament for Abbotsford—South Langley.

A Journey to Rome as Pilgrims of Hope

Betty Colaneri

National President



A delegation of 40 pilgrims from across Canada arrived in Rome on Thursday, November 20th, joining the multitude of faithful who have travelled to Rome to take part in Jubilee 2025, a tradition with biblical roots. Rome is the spiritual centre of the Catholic faith during the Holy Year. Our first stop was for a Eucharistic celebration at the Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul. Bishop Alan Campeau (Thunder Bay) joined members on the journey and celebrated the Eucharist each day of the pilgrimage.

On Friday morning, we began our pilgrimage to the Seven Jubilee Churches at the *Scala Sancta* (Holy Stairs), which tradition holds are the steps that Jesus climbed when He appeared before Pontius Pilate. This was followed by Mass at St. John Lateran, the former residence of the popes. We continued to the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, the chapel of St. Helen, which enshrines the relics of the cross, thorns and nails brought from Jerusalem and the Holy Land. We then visited Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore.

The bus ride on Saturday gave us time to pray the rosary on our way to the Abbey of Tre Fontane, the Monastery of the Three Fountains, believed to be the site of St. Paul's martyrdom. Tradition says that when he was beheaded, his head rolled three times and three fountains miraculously appeared. We continued to St. Sebastian Outside the Walls to celebrate Mass, followed by a moving visit to the catacombs beneath the basilica, where the tombs of early Christians, martyrs and saints are found. From there, we travelled to St. Paul Outside the Walls to venerate the tomb of St. Paul the Apostle.

On Sunday, we made our way to Santo Spirito in Sassia, the Shrine of the Divine Mercy, to celebrate Mass. We then went to St. Peter's Square for Mass with Pope Leo, followed by the Angelus. In the afternoon, we visited the *Santuario della Madonna del Divino Amore* (Shrine of Our Lady of Divine Love), which St. John Paul II added to the Seven Pilgrim Churches of Rome during Jubilee 2000.

Members travelled to Assisi in Umbria on Monday, where St. Francis spent most of his life. The basilica, built in the 13th century, is adorned by a series of frescoes and houses many of St. Francis' possessions. We also visited Santa Maria Maggiore, also known as the "Sanctuary of Spoliation" of St. Francis, to pay our respects at the resting place of the first millennial saint,

St. Carlo Acutis. We celebrated Mass in the Cappella S. Bonaventura, before returning to Rome.

On Tuesday, we entered another country, Vatican City State, to visit the museums and the Sistine Chapel, where the pope is elected and where Michelangelo's famous Last Judgment mural is located. We walked through the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, the world's largest church and viewed the famous La Pietà, Michelangelo's renowned sculpture. We were told Mary's face appears young because a mother's love never grows old. The Basilica of Saint Mary Major (*Santa Maria Maggiore*), is another church of amazing architecture where we were able to pay our respects to the late Pope Francis, who is resting there in a very simple grave engraved with the inscription "Francesco," adorned with a single white rose.

Wednesday's highlight was the papal audience at the Vatican to receive a blessing from His Holiness Pope Leo. The pilgrimage concluded with a celebration of the Eucharist at Sacred Heart Church.

Our journey was a wonderful, faith-filled and inspirational experience that has enriched our spirits and given us the gift of memories to cherish for years to come! †





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

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40007536

