

The Catholic Women's League of Canada

National Annual Report 2024



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.

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National Report

Introduction

Here I am Lord, Send Me!, the national theme for 2024–2025, was fully embraced by members. National President Shari Guinta (Waterloo, Ontario) chose the theme graphic, explaining it “shows a woman with her arms uplifted toward the dove, representing the Holy Spirit. The olive branch symbolizes the world’s struggle for peace. The woman is barefoot; she is aware that the road of social justice and service can be uncomfortable, but she is okay with that. The eagle feather represents the League’s outreach to Indigenous men and women.” Each member was called to reflect on where God was calling her to serve, and council activities truly reflected the uniqueness and diversity of how one central theme could become a groundswell of service to parishes and communities.

Subsidiary to the theme, the focus for 2024 was on mental health. Mental health issues are pervasive in society, found in homelessness, violence, spousal abuse, job loss, etc. Because it touches all levels of society, councils were able to choose which aspect of mental health resonated with them and respond accordingly. Over 65% of councils responded to the focus by arranging for guest speakers, attending workshops or retreats, gaining a better understanding of the topic, and providing information on how to get help for those suffering from mental health issues.

While councils served communities with a special emphasis on mental health, the board was future-focused on governance and strategies. After hearing what members and councils had to say in the Unity Outreach, the board struck three committees to address the areas of most concern to the organization internally—communications, education and training, and priority setting.

1. Information sharing was identified as a concern by councils, both gaps in communications and, in some cases, overcommunication. A communications task force was struck to examine League-wide communications processes and methods. The resulting recommendations were adopted in August 2024. The provincial councils, represented by their presidents, agreed this was a provincial level responsibility. They are to be the gateway between national level and all other levels, with all but urgent communications, website postings, and the magazine to flow through them in both directions, i.e., from member to national and national to member.
2. Vacancies in leadership roles and reluctance to take on leadership positions were also a concern of councils. After study, the education and training task force determined that there was a multitude of training resources available, the fruits of the strategic plan and the previous year's reorganization. What was missing was the training opportunities. The provincial councils, represented by their presidents, agreed this was a provincial level responsibility.
3. Finally, councils expressed being overwhelmed by the requests of their time and energy by the diocesan, provincial and national levels. It was discerned that if the three levels consulted more often and coordinated their planning efforts, the stress on parish councils would be reduced accordingly. Processes were set up to ensure that all counterparts at leadership levels were choosing and working in tandem on projects of common interest.

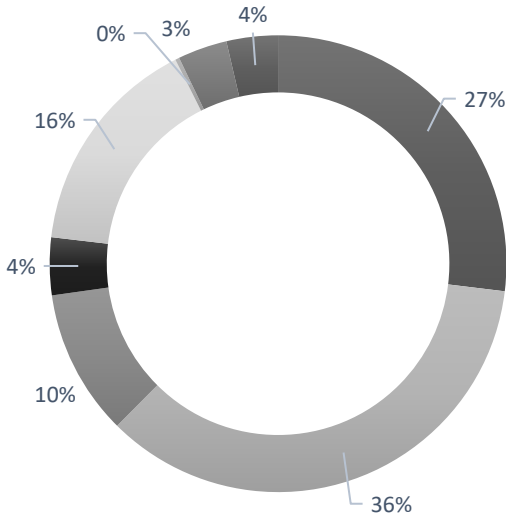
Other initiatives included modernizing the annual national convention to offer more training and fellowship and less business reporting. This change modified the agenda to include a day of plenary, a day for workshops and training and a day for business

while still meeting the statutory obligations of the organization. The change was overwhelmingly embraced by attendees. Modernizing a century-old traditional association is a multi-year effort, and the board agreed at the end of 2024 that a slimmed-down, more nimble bureaucratic structure and processes would be the board's focus for 2025.

National President Shari Guinta asked councils if they had embraced the new executive structure of president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, past president, and chairpersons of faith, service and social justice. The positive result of 82% having converted to the new structure was promising to see. As a follow-up, councils were asked if the new structure was difficult to manage. Most councils mentioned it was not more difficult to manage; however, they were encountering the same issues of vacancies, reluctance to take on leadership roles, and aging or small councils. Almost two-thirds of councils shared they still faced these challenges. The feedback indicates that while the strategy to reduce positions was successful, the outcome and practical realities for councils did not change. Food for thought for the board as it continues to be forward-looking in its planning.

The challenges with membership, which have a consequential impact on vacancy levels and leadership gaps, were reported by councils and are listed in Chart 1: Greatest Challenge with Membership.

Chart 1: Greatest Challenge with Membership



- Attracting new members
- Demographics
- Lack of attendance at meetings
- Lack of leadership
- Attracting young members
- Keeping members interested
- Lack of fellowship
- Perceived image

Keeping members interested, the League’s perceived image, lack of leadership, and, most especially, lack of fellowship were *not* considered significant challenges faced by councils across Canada. Attracting new and younger members is an age-old concern dating back to 1965-1985, when the League had reached its peak stride. With the divergence in family values between society and the church and the increasing need for women to be in the workforce, the League has become less attractive to and representative of generations of young women.

To address these challenges, and under National Vice-President Betty Colaneri (Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario), a “1” Campaign was launched. During 2024, councils were given one catchphrase per month to use to promote membership in the League. The themes were:

- ‘1’ Can Make a Difference
- Love the “1” You’re With
- The Chosen “1”
- “1” Life can Change the World
- “1” Mother for All, Mary
- “1” Sacred Heart That Burns with Eternal Love for Us
- Thankful for the Ultimate “1”
- Remembering the “1” Who Planted the Seed
- “1” Priceless Gift

There were 237 councils that used the catchphrases in their promotional efforts. Those reporting indicated the promotion was successful. Another promotional effort used was “Share the Words (52 reasons to talk about the CWL).” Two hundred nineteen councils reported using this campaign to promote the League.

Tools to assist with new members include the wide array of resources available on the national website and, particularly, the *Welcome Program*, with one-half of all councils putting the program’s practical ideas to use. As Betty shared in her spring message, “It is important to take the time to get to know other council members and show genuine interest in them. By doing so, members can discover each other’s talents and gifts and help each other grow and succeed in the League.”

Betty also led the education and training task force to address members’ concerns about a lack of training of members. It is a widely held conviction that a lack of training leads to a lack of

confidence and reluctance on the part of members to take on leadership roles. The task force

- reviewed the resources and determined the resources currently available were plentiful enough to assist with education and training. To make it less overwhelming when looking for appropriate resources, the task force developed a “Training Reference Guide,” which was published in the fall edition of *The Canadian League*.
- clarified the role of the provincial level in training. The national role is to govern, the provincial role is to train, the diocesan role is to assist parish councils, and the parish role is to serve the church and community.

The League welcomed Connie Crichton (Saskatoon), Gwen Elliott (Camrose), Paddy Fitzgerald Nolan (Sydenham), Hilarion Mitchell (Brampton), Audrey Shelton (Haileybury) and Linda Vandenberg (High Prairie) to the roll of life members.



faith

| *service*

| **SOCIAL
JUSTICE**

Membership Statistics for the Year Ended December 31, 2024

Provincial Council	Jan. 1, 2024	New	Reinstated	Didn't Renew	Paid Members	Deceased	Dec. 31, 2024
Alberta Mackenzie	7,618	615	239	607	7,865	125	7,740
B.C. & Yukon	7,216	583	320	754	7,365	115	7,250
Manitoba	1,422	57	27	139	1,367	31	1,336
Military Ordinariate	230	16	3	23	226	1	225
New Brunswick	1,193	37	22	108	1,144	29	1,115
Newfoundland and Labrador	302	20	1	27	296	5	291
Nova Scotia	2,332	73	35	254	2,186	44	2,142
Ontario	31,078	1,762	1,162	3,038	30,964	576	30,388
Prince Edward Island	1,319	31	19	82	1,287	30	1,257
Quebec	517	25	9	68	483	7	476
Saskatchewan	4,322	159	74	309	4,246	58	4,188
Total	57,549	3,378	1,911	5,409	57,429	1,021	56,408

Council Statistics for the Year Ended December 31, 2024								
Provincial Council	Jan. 1, 2024	New	Reactivated	Amalgamated	Unpaid	Inactive	Disbanded	Dec. 31, 2024
Alberta Mackenzie	141	-	1	-	-	-	2	140
B.C. & Yukon	123	-	-	-	1	-	2	120
Manitoba	39	-	-	-	2	-	1	36
Military Ordinariate	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
New Brunswick	35	-	1	-	-	-	3	33
Newfoundland and Labrador	12	-	-	-	1	-	-	11
Nova Scotia	50	-	-	-	1	-	-	49
Ontario	490	2	3	-	4	-	10	481
Prince Edward Island	27	-	-	-	-	-	-	27
Quebec	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
Saskatchewan	110	-	1	-	-	-	6	105
Total	1,054	2	6	-	9	-	24	1,029

Communications, another perennially reported challenge, was also addressed by a task force led by National Secretary-Treasurer Dorothy Johansen (Edmonton, Alberta). Taking into consideration the needs of members for timely response, and the duties and responsibilities of women who have allowed their name to stand for office at the various levels of the League, a national communications flowchart was adopted and put into practice. So too, were the national communications protocols streamlined to reduce the “noise” directed toward parish councils.

Dorothy promoted the *Members’ Communications Guide, Software to Facilitate Collaboration*, the newsletter template, the new contact information to make it easier for members to contact their local representatives, and the televised Mass for the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel. She also arranged a webinar to inform interested members about the new *National Communications Plan* and how it would impact them.

More than 90% of councils visited the national website looking for information. The most accessed information on the website was manuals, forms, supplies and the contact page. Spiritual messages from the national chairperson of faith had the greatest engagement on Facebook. Councils embraced Facebook, with 5,433 followers. The Facebook page regularly provided posts of parish council events shared by members with great pride.

Councils embraced the digital age. A full 87% of councils communicate with members by email, doing so monthly. A monthly email has become best practice for sharing League information. Almost 40% of councils also used the telephone or word of mouth to reach out to members who were not comfortable with digital communication, ensuring no one was left behind.

With the merging of the recording and corresponding secretary positions into one secretary, who also absorbed the

communications standing committee, the secretary's role in the League took on new significance. Because of the extent of the work, over 71% of parish councils recruited an extra volunteer to handle the communications activities. Another best practice emerging.

Regarding finance, parish councils made significant financial contributions to local organizations. Total contributions reported were \$2,104,035 to local organizations, \$204,440 to national organizations and \$202,217 to international organizations. Summed up, this equated to an average of \$3,654 per council.

The national treasury was in a stable position on December 31, 2024. Revenue generated for the year totalled \$1,753,177, with 82% of all revenue coming from the national per capita fee allocation, down from 88% in the previous year. The decline in per capita revenue was offset in part by other optional member service fees such as convention registration fees and national office supply sales.

Total expenditures for the year totalled \$1,406,492, which was \$179,000 less than the previous year. The Unity Outreach project ended, as did the strategic plan and the multi-year marketing campaign.

The investment portfolio achieved record gains, due in large part to the big tech investment in generative artificial intelligence and the ending of uncertainty due to the conclusion of the US federal election. The investment portfolio added just over \$400,000 to the national reserves, which is designated to offset future deficits that will occur as membership declines. The audited annual financial statements prepared by Scarrow & Donald are printed in Appendix A.

Executive Director Kim Scammell (Winnipeg, Manitoba) reported that national office requires two types of resources—human resources and physical resources to operate at the national level. The staff complement was unchanged from the previous year with the following board-approved positions: executive director, executive secretary, senior accounting clerk, membership coordinator, office assistant, digital media assistant and casual office assistant. Staff is authorized by the board to provide the following services to members:

- Directing inquiries to appropriate League members
- Mailing correspondence and memos
- Planning conventions and meetings
- Processing daily and monthly financial transactions
- Processing membership and contact record maintenance
- Providing secretarial support to national officers and subcommittees
- Publishing magazines and resource material
- Selling League supplies
- Updating social media for content when supplied by members and officers

The League invested in the development of an online e-shop to streamline ordering for members, as well as the development of an updated membership system, the latter of which would be launched in 2025. No investments were made in physical fixtures.

National Past President Fran Lucas (Edmonton, Alberta) encouraged past presidents to “Be ready to jump in and help if your president reaches out to you.” The past presidents would often fill the gaps that existed in event planning and chairpersons’ roles. They prided themselves on being able to assist with whatever the council needed, from leading music to planning social activities to mentoring to taking on positions where gaps existed.

Past presidents were available to advise when the presidents sought their consult. One-half of past presidents mentioned they were consulted on matters of policy and procedure, with their primary role being the council knowledge keeper. Almost nine in 10 past presidents were a go-to resource for presidents when they sought advice or assistance. Vital to being a resource was the importance of past presidents having a copy of the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*.

One-third of all past presidents reported spending time on council archives during the year, and more than one-half shared council archival material at general meetings and events. Nationally, Fran led the archives committee through a review of the archives at national office. The committee also offered opportunities for provincial past presidents to attend a virtual teaching session on maintaining archives. Councils were encouraged to purchase the coffee table book *Vision, Faith and a Dream: 100 Years of Service*.

Under Fran's leadership, a committee was struck to rewrite the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*. The committee began the study in 2024, examining each section and offering improvements to the board at virtual meetings. The board discussed and decided upon each recommendation before the committee studied the next section. The complete revision was planned for release in October 2025.

One policy change that became effective immediately was the change to election procedures for councils at all levels. A requirement for candidates to submit a pastoral letter of good standing to their respective nominations and elections committee was added. The board believed that leaders in good standing were important to the reputation of the League and that members' standing should never be the basis for rumours or discussion among members who might question the status of a sister

member. It further believed the most sensitive and confidential means to gaining that assurance would be to involve a woman's pastor or a member of the clergy who may or may not know her. The change in procedure came into effect in September 2024.

National Chairperson of Faith Rolande Chernichan (Ile des Chênes, Manitoba) encouraged members to:

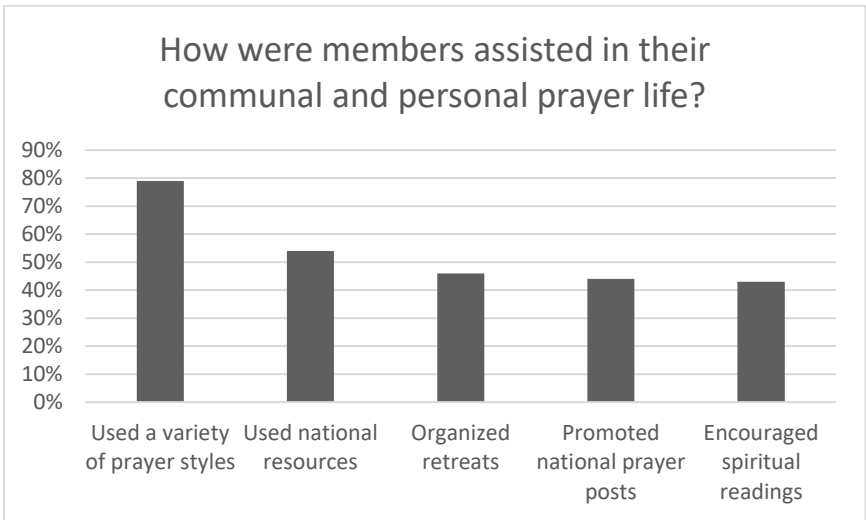
- Pray, individually and communally
- Uphold the sanctity of life
- Study Catholic teachings
- Stress the importance of the role of women in the church
- Foster vocations
- Advance ecumenism and interfaith endeavours

In her messaging throughout the year, Rolande faithfully ensured that members were given opportunities to pray individually and communally by regularly posting prayers on the website and on social media channels. These offerings became the most frequently liked and shared messages of the national level. She prepared a Novena for Members to be published in the winter 2025 edition of *The Canadian League* and organized and moderated four webinars available to members and other interested individuals. Rolande was in frequent communication with National Spiritual Advisor His Excellency Wayne Lobsinger (Hamilton, Ontario) to ensure the prayers and liturgical services she prepared had the official *nihil obstat*.

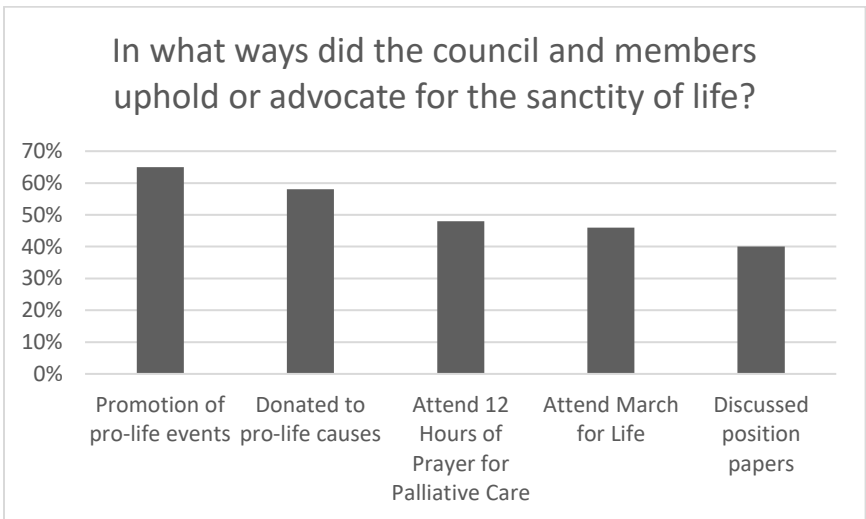
Rolande promoted *lectio divina* as a profound way to hear God's voice, encouraged members to accompany those with mental health challenges, and promoted many spiritual programs and significant liturgical dates and events in her communiqués.

Rolande was interested in getting feedback from councils on several topics. With prayer being central to the League and what sets it apart from other service organizations, councils were asked

how they assisted members in their communal and personal prayer life. The top five methods for encouraging prayer included:



The top five methods used by councils to advocate for the sanctity of life were:



Resources primarily promoted to members were those available on the Internet, while some councils still used traditional methods

such as scheduling guest speakers. Approximately one in five councils participated in the “A Great Symphony of Prayer” eight-part webinar offered by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and one in 12 promoted participation in the World Union of Catholic Women’s Organization’s “Conversation in the Spirit” webinar.

World Day of Prayer participation was a very popular choice for councils, with almost 70% of all councils choosing this as their ecumenical activity for the year. About one-quarter of councils participated in Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

National Chairperson of Service Joline Belliveau (Overton, Nova Scotia) encouraged her counterparts to:

- Promote activities in service to members, the parish and community
- Advocate for and support services that include but are not limited to homelessness, human trafficking, poverty, bullying and racism, and
- Educate members about charitable needs, especially mission assistance at home and abroad

Joline promoted National Catholic Healthcare Week, raised awareness of plastic pollution and members’ responsibility to reduce their plastics use, and oversaw the work of all three standing committees in redesigning the “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” toolkit. She promoted the Partners for Life CWL partnership with Canadian Blood Services, the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, Development and Peace – Caritas Canada, and the importance of literacy.

Joline requested councils to advise of the strategies used to raise awareness about bullying, racism, human trafficking and homelessness. Councils used a multi-pronged approach to raising awareness of issue to concern to members and the community that

included: modeling appropriate behaviour; involving volunteers; ensuring donations (food, clothes) to shelters helping the unhoused; assisting unhoused individuals in the inner city, including collecting clothing and supplies and delivering timely aid; conducting outreach programs to educate and raise awareness about human trafficking; organizing events such as guest speakers on human trafficking, fundraising meals and community meals at churches and local centers; initiating projects like food drives, donation collections, and support activities for the unhoused and at-risk groups; providing support for local schools and youth programs; engaging in broader social justice issues through meetings, letter writing, and advocacy; collaborating with like-minded organizations such as IWIN (I'm Worth It Now), the Knights of Columbus, and other local groups; and organizing church-led initiatives such as Easter lunch for the homeless, prayer services, and support for victims of human trafficking, emphasizing the church's role in social justice.

Joline's other questions of councils were evaluative in nature. She wanted to hear how councils felt about the transition from the former standing committee structure to the new structure had gone, and how effective they felt the service committee was. By a ratio of 6:1, councils reported that the resource material to guide members taking on the service standing committee was adequate for their purposes.

When asked what challenges councils faced in relation to the service standing committee, the summarized response inset reflects a lack of capacity more than a lack of understanding or interest in the committee.

Parish councils are increasingly smaller, with a predominantly elderly population (on average 48 members, mostly elderly). There are few young people involved, and engagement from younger members is limited. Further, there is a notable lack of leadership support, with only a couple of members per council looking after service-related roles. Many young members are busy with family and work, which impacts participation, whilst older members tend to be less engaged in meetings, often due to personal reasons like health or caregiving responsibilities (AI Chatbot, April 22, 2025).

These demographic factors and personal limitations combined with a division concerning roles and responsibilities, especially around social justice and community activities, have impacted the potential effectiveness of the standing committee.

When asked directly about the effectiveness of the committee, the following summary represents the majority response of councils.

The survey responses reveal the importance of supporting and empowering members, particularly emphasizing support at the local level through activities such as volunteering, fundraising and aiding vulnerable groups like the elderly and children. There is recognition of the challenges posed by structural changes within the League, which have led to new roles and responsibilities, sometimes causing tension or feelings of inadequacy among members. Despite these hurdles, the overall tone of the responses stresses adaptability, the value of community service and the need for supportive leadership, such as chairs and volunteers, to foster a collaborative and inclusive environment (AI Chatbot, April 22, 2025).

National Chairperson of Social Justice Glenda Carson (Dartmouth, Nova Scotia) encouraged members to:

- Uphold the life and dignity of the human person
- Advocate for the poor and the vulnerable and their inclusion in society
- Advocate for the dignity of work and the equal rights of workers
- Care of God's creation
- Educate members and keep them informed of relevant social justice issues
- Initiate resolutions on relevant issues

Under Glenda's initiative, councils were asked to act on Bill S-210 *Protecting Young Persons from Exposure to Pornography Act*, use the medical assistance in dying postcards available at national office, promote a medical assistance in dying and mental health webinar hosted by Cardus, and in consultation with her provincial counterparts chose human trafficking as the committee focus for 2025. In the magazine, Glenda alerted members to the issue of fast fashion and waste, and the discriminatory practice of ageism.

Glenda attended the International Symposium on Palliative Care organized by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in May, agreed to lead the newly struck CWL Indigenous Relations Committee, and led the National Resolutions Subcommittee in its work of vetting resolutions for debate at the national annual meeting of members. At the national level, three resolutions were debated and adopted at the national annual meeting of members — Resolution 2024.01 Increase Supported Housing for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness with Mental Health and Mental Illness Issues, Resolution 2024.02 National Universal Pharmacare Program to Include Coverage for Drugs Prescribed for Mental Illness and Resolution 2024.03 Grant the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise Legal Authority to Investigate Environmental and Human Rights Abuses.

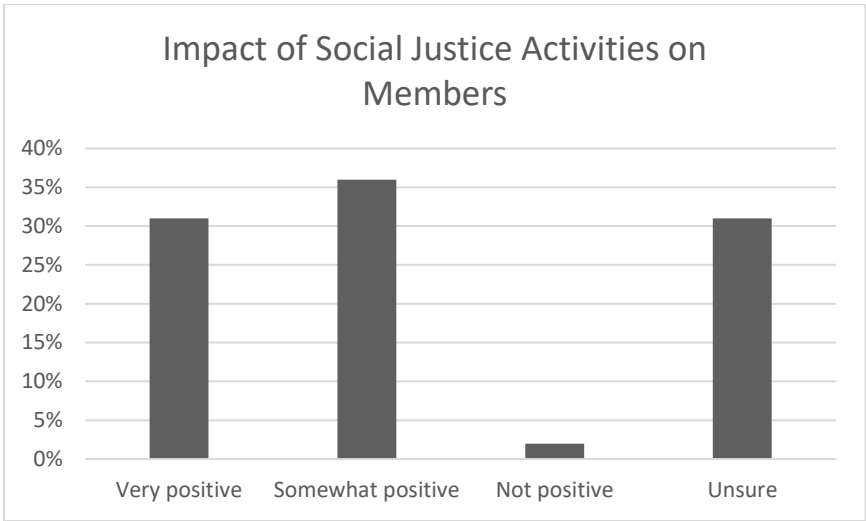
For the 2024 annual parish council survey, Glenda was curious about the involvement of councils in monitoring and responding to legislation. The results showed three-quarters of councils reported an interest in monitoring federal legislation, while one-half of councils monitored provincial legislation. About 30% of councils also monitored municipal legislation. One-half of national resolutions received attention and action from parish councils. Action included organizing postcard, petition and letter-writing campaigns.

When asked what resources the councils accessed, more than half of councils reported they do not access resources for social justice, including the social justice toolkit, *Resolutions Handbook* or guide, or legislation and advocacy workshops.

To assist with future planning, Glenda asked the councils about their main priorities. These were overwhelmingly upholding the life and dignity of the human person and advocating for the poor and vulnerable and their inclusion in society. Any focus chosen by councils at other levels would be advised to ensure that their focus topics fall within this realm of concern.

Glenda was curious about how councils' social justice activities had an impact on members.

For God and Canada!



The above chart indicates that the effort put in by social justice chairpersons to bring awareness and action to topics of concern to members has a positive impact on the council membership. This would indicate that some efforts in this aspect of League work are beneficial.

Councils reported that social justice activities had a positive and impactful effect on members and the community. Key impacts include community support and engagement, outreach, unity, personal growth and awareness. Overall, these activities fostered a culture of caring, advocacy, and active engagement, which enhanced members’ understanding of social justice and contributed positively to the community.

Final Thoughts

As communications are usually sent via provincial presidents, the national officers have only a few opportunities to ask and receive feedback directly from councils. This opportunity to receive feedback is precious and invaluable for planning, and so, the national officers asked at the end of the survey, “Is there anything the parish council would like the national board to know?” Councils

responded with 45 pages of feedback(!) which were compiled by AI Chatbot.

The survey responses from diocesan and parish councils of the League highlight a mix of resilience, challenges and opportunities. While councils demonstrate dedication to community service and spiritual growth, systemic issues such as aging membership, leadership shortages, and communication barriers threaten long-term sustainability. Below is a synthesis of key themes and actionable insights:

1. Membership Challenges: Aging Demographics and Recruitment

Key Concerns:

- **Aging Membership:** Multiple councils report membership bases predominantly in their 70s–80s, with limited capacity to adapt to digital tools or assume leadership roles. One respondent notes, “Our members are seniors in their 80s... not good at researching or working on computers.”
- **Difficulty Attracting Younger Members:** Younger women (even those aged 50+) show little interest in joining, with recruitment described as “nil.” Councils emphasize the need for strategies to appeal to busier, younger demographics.

Positive Developments:

- Some councils report progress in engaging younger volunteers, particularly through initiatives like youth awards and social gatherings. One council notes “younger women stepping up” for leadership roles.

Implication:

Without targeted efforts to recruit and retain younger members, councils risk further decline.

2. Leadership and Volunteer Shortages

Key Concerns:

- **Reluctance to Assume Roles:** Many respondents cite resistance to leadership positions due to perceived time commitments or complexity. “Members see the day-to-day requirements and don’t want to invest the time.”
- **Burnout Among Existing Leaders:** Long-serving executives (e.g., “20-year presidents”) underscore reliance on a small, aging cohort.

Positive Developments:

- Councils rebuilding leadership structures report optimism. One states, “We now have a full executive council... promoting Youth Awards projects.”

Implication:

Leadership development programs and term limits may alleviate burnout and encourage succession planning.

3. Communication and Resource Accessibility

Key Concerns:

- **Digital Overload:** National/provincial websites are deemed “overwhelming” for older members. Respondents request simplified, concise updates.
- **Request for Practical Tools:** Councils seek ready-made project ideas, speaker lists, and templates for dynamic meetings.

Positive Feedback:

- Printed resources (e.g., *The Canadian League Magazine* insert) are praised as “great resources.”

Implication:

Streamlined communication (e.g., summarized bulletins, regional support for digital literacy) could improve engagement.

4. Community Impact and Spiritual Mission

Strengths Highlighted:

- Local Outreach: Councils prioritize direct service (e.g., supporting immigrant families with school uniforms, donating to shelters). Social events, like luncheons or pre-meeting gatherings, foster camaraderie.
- Faith-Centered Work: Many stress the need to “focus on faith” through retreats, reflection days, and prayer. “None of this can happen without Our Lord,” one respondent observes.

Implication:

Amplifying stories of local impact could inspire membership growth while aligning with the organization’s spiritual roots.

5. Financial and Structural Barriers

Key Concerns:

- Membership Fees: “The \$40 fee is cited as prohibitive for low-income or rural members,” replied one respondent.
- Rural Challenges: Small councils request flexibility in national guidelines, noting “rural areas can’t work within the same structures.”

Implication:

Tiered pricing, subsidies or rural-specific policies may improve inclusivity.

Recommendations for the Board

1. Membership Revitalization:
 - Launch mentorship programs pairing younger volunteers with seasoned members.
 - Develop outreach campaigns targeting women in their 40s–60s, emphasizing flexible roles.
2. Leadership Support:
 - Offer training modules for digital tools and governance.
 - Highlight “term limit” best practices to encourage turnover.
3. Resource Optimization:
 - Curate a “best practices” portal with adaptable project ideas (e.g., community luncheons, scholarship funds).
 - Distribute condensed, print-friendly updates alongside digital content.
4. Financial Flexibility:
 - Explore sliding-scale membership fees or grants for rural/small councils.
5. Spiritual Reinforcement:
 - Share scalable models for faith-based activities (e.g., virtual retreats, parish reflection guides).

Conclusion

Survey respondents express pride in their work but seek structural support to address aging demographics, leadership gaps and accessibility barriers. By prioritizing intergenerational engagement, simplifying communication and fostering localized flexibility, the board can empower councils to continue serving as pillars of faith and community.



Provincial Reports

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

The Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council consists of five dioceses with almost 8,000 paid members. We had one council reactivate this year, but two disbanded. Statistically, we are down one council. We hope this is just a blip and we will be on an upswing for 2025. All diocesan councils report challenges attracting new members and filling executive positions.

Members report being active in most ministries in their parishes. They are involved as sacristans, sacramental prep team members, children's liturgy, lectors, greeters and behind-the-scenes work. They are a visible presence in their parishes.

The national theme, *Here I Am Lord, send me*, with a focus on mental health, has been enthusiastically embraced. The theme prayer is regularly used at meetings. Our council members are ready to step in to help with projects and initiatives. The mental health aspect has seen councils hosting guest speakers, workshops and discussions at meetings about how mental health challenges can have negative impacts on job security, homelessness and violence. Other workshops, webinars and speakers have been found that encourage our members to be involved with social justice issues and spiritual development.

Many councils reported using the "1" Campaign, and while some found it to be quite successful, other councils did not. Similarly, councils using the *Welcome Program* found it to be helpful to attract new members. Not enough councils are using this workshop. More work needs to be done here. Members did report using the national website to search for information.

Of our five diocesan councils, one diocese completed the Unity Outreach project in January 2024. Three other dioceses previously

took part in the fall of 2023, and one council declined to participate. All councils that participated really appreciated the information and sharing that took place. Approximately 82% reported finding this initiative very helpful.

For the most part, councils are using the new structure. Of those councils that have not yet started, the reasons seem to be the same for all of them: not enough members, aging members clinging to the previous structure with which they are comfortable, small councils and being unsure of how to begin. Even with only three committees, members are afraid of an increased workload rather than less. More education needs to happen to reassure our membership that they don't have to do it all by themselves, and that creating committees is encouraged.

Councils are concerned that the Letter of Good Standing may deter new members and even those who are currently in our councils. The fears seem to be confidentiality and losing current members who are uncomfortable with this new pre-nomination process. Efforts are being made to reassure our members of the importance of this letter and that confidentiality is paramount.

Once again, in May, our provincial and diocesan councils took our banners to the Alberta March for Life. There was a great turnout supporting the right to life, including members from other faith traditions. It was encouraging to see several members of the legislative assembly (MLA) who came out to observe. Of course, there is always a contingent of people who do not support this important cause. We did not engage with them but instead stood proudly for the right to life for all. Other opportunities for solidarity included "12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care," Red Sand prayer services and World Day of Prayer. Letter-writing campaigns are still popular among our membership.

We are working once again to meet with our MLAs. We will be taking issues and resolutions important to our members to this meeting. We have been mostly successful over the years in gaining meetings with these very busy people. They always listen carefully to our concerns.

Members continue to gather weekly, now on Wednesday evenings, to pray the rosary together. This gathering has been going on since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. We pray for various issues and for so many people who are in need of our prayers. It is a time of fellowship for those of us who log in early and a time for deep meditative prayer for all who join via Zoom.

Included in the reports received were extra comments made by councils. Some of those comments are listed below:

- Why do elderly council members who are in long-term care and are unable to participate fully need to continue paying membership dues
- *The Canadian League* magazine needs an overhaul; it's looking dated
- Need our priests to be more involved
- The survey questions do not address the parish council's focus and activities
- Many councils are small and do not have the membership numbers to fill positions

“For God and Canada!” ✚

BC & Yukon Provincial Council

Members have worked tirelessly to make this world a better place by caring for the poor, upholding the sanctity of life, writing to our elected officials, journeying with immigrants, caring for our common home, praying for and visiting the sick, suffering, dying and spreading the Good News.

We finalized our decision about the life members' stories. We will wait until we have 25 new stories before printing a new edition of our life members' book.

Our members were encouraged to visit our older members in care homes, hospitals and hospices. By our visits, we can ease the loneliness of our elderly members.

At our midterms, talks were given on the Catholic Girl's League, how to make our executive positions easier, tips on giving an effective speech and the three core values. We were privileged with Lenten and Advent retreats given by Provincial Spiritual Advisor Fr. John Garden.

Our 2024 provincial convention's theme was *All for God's Glory*, and it really was a glorious convention. We had a workshop on immigration. We gave statistics on who was arriving in Canada, practical tips on journeying with them and how to invite the women to join the League. Members were encouraged to wear their country of origin's native dress, and the provincial executive spoke of where their families had come from and why they immigrated. Songs like "This Land is Your Land" and "It is a Small World" were sung. We also had a multicultural rosary that was said in five different languages. Our main convention speaker was Dr. Gerry Turcotte, principal of Corpus Christi and St. Mark's colleges in Vancouver. He gave an inspiring, practical, humorous talk on social justice. Spiritual Advisor Fr. John Garden, a registered counsellor, spoke to us on mental health issues. A colouring contest titled "*All for God's Glory*" was held. The winner submitted a masterpiece!

Another contest was introduced in 2024. It was a literary contest asking participants to write about "The Joys and Rewards of Being a Catholic Women's League Member."

Approximately 202 members died in 2024, including former provincial president Lorraine Faherty. They will be remembered forever in our *Book of Life*.

During midterm social times, we played charades, put on skits, dressed up as our favourite saints, played biblical and saints games, and enjoyed each other's company and friendship. There was always much laughter and fun, which is so good for our mental health!

Communication is a big priority in BC & Yukon. Email is the single most common way used to communicate with our members. Church bulletins, announcements from the pulpit, telephone calls and face-to-face encounters were used as well. Pop quizzes at meetings were used to find out if members got the information and understood it correctly.

Members said communication is good (81%).

Spirituality is very important. Survey after survey tells us the members want access to good spiritual resources. The national theme, *Here I am Lord, send me*, was incorporated into spiritual programs by sharing how they have responded to God's call, praying the theme prayer at meetings and awareness of Catholic resources on the Internet. The sanctity of life was promoted by attending pro-life events such as the March for Life, donating to pro-life causes, supporting pro-life thrift shops, and writing letters to the federal government on abortion and medical assistance in dying (MAiD). One council had Masses said for life issues.

A large number, 98% of councils, encouraged their members to personally invite prospective members, 58% use the *Welcome Program*, and 85% visit the national website for information. Other suggestions were put forward; however, national is already working on those suggestions, so I won't list them.

Three-quarters of our councils make an annual budget, and 96% give a financial report at their monthly meetings. We are a generous province; large sums of money were given to local, national and international charities.

Past presidents were very helpful to their presidents by mentoring. Archiving, revising policies and procedures, recruiting new leaders and fulfilling election duties were also done by the past presidents. One past president organized her parish's 10th anniversary, another decorated for major social events, and one put on a palliative care workshop.

My provincial executive members have been very diligent with their duties by fulfilling their job descriptions.

How did councils raise awareness about bullying, racism, human trafficking and homelessness? Namely through the service standing committee by discussion and donations to local outreach charities. One council made up blessing bags full of goodies to hand out to the less fortunate, and one council promoted Pink Shirt Day to raise awareness about bullying. Another council collected personal care items during Lent for an abused women's shelter. Donations to soup kitchens and deliveries of socks, toques and mittens to a homeless shelter were also made. Prayers were said to St. Josephine Bakhita for human trafficked persons. Loneliness was addressed by having seniors' luncheons.

One woman said, "Service is the glue that keeps us together," while another mentioned the importance of mentorship through the service committee. Congratulations to one service chairperson who was named "Citizen of the Year" in her community for all her good works. Another member mentioned how grateful they were to her diocesan president, who coached and advised her council to stay active. Several workshops on parliamentary procedure were held. Those workshops provided the members with more

confidence, enabling them to take on leadership roles. One council started a youth choir, while another promotes one-time projects to its members.

Because the three core values are in their infancy stage, more education needs to be done.

Our councils monitored and took action on bylaws and legislation. Federal action was 84%, provincial action was 53% and municipal action was 18%. Action was taken through letter writing, postcards and petitions. Forty-nine percent of councils used national resources from the website, such as the *Toolkit for Social Justice* and the *Resolutions Handbook*.

Almost 100% of councils upheld the life and dignity of the human person, and 78% advocated for the poor and vulnerable and their inclusion in society. Care for our earth was a priority in over 50% of councils.

What impact did social justice activities have on councils? One-half of councils said they felt social justice issues had a somewhat positive effect on councils. A film on plastics in our garbage dumps was shown. The film also promoted eco-friendly cleaning products and locations for buying products without plastic packaging. Their parish kitchen also has a policy of using only biodegradable dishes and cups.

There were writing campaigns to the federal government on palliative care and mental health.

Others supported a domestic abuse society and their thrift shop. MAiD and mental health postcards were sent to the federal government.

There were a multitude of things our councils wanted national to know, such as, “Keep up the good work. Please continue supporting

us through communiques.” One member wants more pictures of families on the national website. Councils want national to know about all the great things they do in their parishes, and they are very appreciative of all that the diocesan, provincial and national councils have done. One tech-savvy council said they keep in touch through Facebook.

Another council said they are a good group of women who look out for each other and work together. They also have a great deal of fun.

Another council said they are a busy council that supports their parish, the clergy and their community. Another positive response was that their council liked the new resources, especially the newsletter template. A high five goes to the council that said, “We are a small council, but over the past couple of years, we have brought in new young members who have been excellent at helping with activities such as dinners, fundraising and social activities.” A suggestion to have material printed specifically aimed at university students and young mothers was noted. Other items councils want national to know are they are inviting Filipinos to get involved, they really like the new three core values, and the new survey was easy to fill out. One council said they are raising awareness on environmental issues by researching safe, efficient energy and reducing their own environmental footprint.

My activities have been many and varied, namely because I enjoy the position of provincial president so much. Keeping in contact with my executive through communiques, emails, memos, telephone calls, and Zoom meetings has been a priority. I have really emphasized journeying with immigrant families and inviting the mothers to join our League. I also explained the three core values with an interactive workshop with suggested projects. Having fun at our midterms and conventions has also been

important. I was able to get *tng*, a consulting company, to provide the *Good Governance: Board & Director Fundamentals* books for my entire executive. I consistently asked women to join the League and pray the Our Lady of Good Counsel prayer daily. I mentioned earlier that I initiated a literary contest titled “The Joys and Rewards of Being a Catholic Women’s League Member.” Three prizes will be awarded for best written, most creative and most humorous at our 2025 provincial convention. In the fall, I visited four councils and found their dedication and work very inspiring. I have attended all the national midterms and the national Saskatoon convention and was thoroughly inspired by it all.

I had a very unique experience in the fall of 2024. I met with the bishops in B.C. to thank them for all their support and update them on what was happening at the national and provincial levels. One bishop made the suggestion that we open up the D2L Leadership Program for all Catholic women. This gesture could increase our membership. Holy invocations were interspersed throughout my agendas for midterms and the convention because Jesus told us to pray constantly.

We have amazing women in the League, and I am so proud to be a part of it. Some of them include a young mom with seven children, including a new baby, who is her parish president. In one council, a 93-year-old member was in charge of their League phoning committee. Her president said when she phoned and asked for something, you didn’t say “no.” We also have a 102-year-old member who picks up litter along the highway once a week and donates the bottles she finds to the local Catholic school. These women inspire us all.

God bless you! ✚

Manitoba Provincial Council

On February 10, 2024, at our Provincial Day of Celebration, through Zoom magic, our provincial council was able to have representatives and co-founders of IWIN, Paul Rubner, a retired Calgary police officer and Kristin Fahlman, who has a business degree and a law degree and now works as a lawyer in the field of criminal justice. Kristen is also a member of the CWL in Calgary. Much good information was shared with dialogue taking place on human trafficking. Red sand was distributed to councils at this presentation so they could do the red sand ceremony at their church to bring awareness of human trafficking and youth exploitation.

On April 20th, at the Winnipeg convention, there was a keynote speaker, Tara Snider, CEO of Sara Reil Foundation, regarding mental health and addictions.

In September, Winnipeg Diocesan Council held its fall workshop with guest speaker Lisa Raven, who gave a presentation on “Roots of Reconciliation.”

At the St. Boniface convention, the keynote speaker was Archbishop Emeritus Sylvain Lavoie, who did a presentation on the “12 Steps to Everything” (comparing all addictions relating to our mental health); as well, our national vice-president gave a presentation on the ‘1’ Campaign.

At a luncheon on April 21st at Mary, Mother of the Church parish, the guest speaker was Sheryl Giesbrecht from the Canadian Mental Health Association. Her topic covered mental health and wellness.

The St. Boniface Diocesan Council held its Day of Reflection on October 5th, with a guest speaker who gave a testimonial as a residential school survivor. This was followed by a drum healing workshop.

Keewatin-The Pas Diocesan Council held a workshop on resolutions prior to its annual meeting of members (AMM). This workshop resulted in a resolution being subsequently forwarded to national council and was adopted at the national AMM. They also hosted the Manitoba Provincial Convention, where our members from the south came by chartered bus. The provincial convention had speakers Sr. Delia Rubio RVM and Sr. Bing Ferrandiz RVM, who shared their journey in following God's call in their healing ministry, which brought them to Canada and Keewatin-The Pas Diocese. During this provincial AMM, we also had speakers on CWL resources such as the Skills Bank and a PowerPoint share on how legislation works.

Many parish councils report on supporting our national theme focus on mental health by offering guest speakers and discussions at their meetings or special events, with homelessness also being discussed and activities being done to help in this regard.

A lot of parish councils have reported feeling as though they have not accomplished much after completing the annual report survey, as what they are doing is not adequately represented in the survey. While many questions are important, many councils feel defeated when completing the survey due to not having participated in the specific themes mentioned.

Recruiting members is a problem across our province. Even though we try to go "outside the box" in recruitment, there are still a lot of parish and diocesan councils that do not have a full slate of officers, and with their members aging, they are not attending meetings. They continue to try, and with prayers to Our Lady of Good Counsel and God's help, anything can happen! ✚

Military Ordinariate Provincial Council

The Military Ordinariate Provincial Council (MO) had a successful year and is very proud of its accomplishments. The members have a strong connection to the military and are very passionate about the Catholic Women's League.

I am pleased to report that nine councils submitted their annual survey results before December 15th, and three councils submitted their surveys separately. One council only has four members and submitted a summary of what they accomplished but did not fill out the survey. Congratulations to the base councils for close to 100% completion!

Challenges continue within the MO for a number of reasons. In 2024, there was no funding from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) for the MO executive to meet, either for mid-term meetings or provincial convention. We are very thankful that we received funding from the League's Provincial Council Grant and the National Development Fund to assist with hosting the convention, travel, accommodation and guest speakers. Due to this support, the 56th provincial convention was a success! The theme was *God never forgets His own: A Focus on Faith, Mental Health, and Sisterhood*. The convention included a mini retreat over 1.5 days and the annual meeting of members. Members participated in person and online. Members from the local civilian diocese were invited as well.

Membership

One hundred percent of councils encourage their members to personally invite women to join the League. Two of the councils used the "1" Campaign, and it was successful for one of the councils. The councils are visible within the chapel communities by promoting the League at Mass and in the bulletin, hosting coffee hour after Mass and including the parish community in fundraising

activities and events. The greatest challenge is attracting young members, followed by attracting new members.

Councils are trying to increase the number of women attending meetings by experimenting with different meeting times, changing the frequency of meeting in-person meetings, having hybrid meetings or 100% virtual meetings in inclement weather and having guest speakers.

There are many challenges when trying to recruit more members. Two of them are the size of the chapel community and the inability to promote the League. It is very difficult to increase membership in many chapels as the size of the chapel community is very small. Some chapels may only have Mass once or twice per month, with a Liturgy of the Word being held on the other Sundays. It is very difficult to grow a chapel community with the inconsistency of having a weekly Mass. Historically, promotional materials could be distributed by chaplains, put on their office walls, be distributed by League members within the military housing community and put in common areas. This is no longer the case.

Even with these challenges, some councils have seen an increase in membership.

Leadership

All of the councils have transitioned to the new structure; however, many councils do not have a sufficient number of members volunteering for leadership positions. The councils are small, and the membership is aging. While members will often help, it is difficult to find members to take leadership roles. I don't believe that it is due to a lack of leadership knowledge and ability; I think that the members are tired.

Unique approach: Some councils have rotating chairs for their meetings and are filling vacant chairperson positions on a rotating basis. One council has chosen to have co-presidents (unofficially).

While updating the archives and capturing historic information may not have been a top priority for all of the past presidents, nearly half of the councils had someone complete these activities. Seven councils reported an accomplishment that their past presidents were proud of, and they were all different, demonstrating how unique councils can be and how each member brings their individual gifts and interests to their role. Accomplishments included sharing council history with members, organizing a community event, bringing new members, acting as a liaison between the chapel, the council and the military community, sharing advice and information with the executive, believing in the League and keeping the council together, and updating council records.

Base Council Activities

Helping Others

Even though the number of members in the Military Ordinariate is small, and the chapel communities tend to be small, over \$15,000 was donated to charities. This included donations at the local level and to various national voluntary funds. Charities at the local level included organizations that provide food and cooked meals, emergency and supportive housing, mid-to-long-term housing for veterans, and providing clothing such as socks, hats and mittens to those in need.

Nearly \$2,000 was donated to the MO voluntary funds. This includes the Convention Fund, which is used to help members attend a provincial or national convention, and the Mickey Scott Fund, which pays for the registration and accommodation for a MO member to attend her first convention.

Prayer and Spirituality:

Councils used a variety of prayer styles, and some have developed their own unique styles. They incorporated the national theme of *Here I am Lord, send me* in their programs by sharing with one

another how members have responded to God's call in their own personal lives. Members achieved greater awareness of the role of women in their lives and in the mission of the Catholic church through the written word, webinars, other web-based content, and guest speakers.

Members took part in or organized ecumenical and interfaith activities, including the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the World Day of Prayer, drawing in members from other churches in their area and educating one another about other faiths.

Councils supported and promoted religious vocations by hosting special events for their priests on the occasions of their birthdays and the anniversaries of their ordinations.

Support was given to vocations through monetary funds and sponsoring memberships for consecrated women.

Many different methods were used to advocate for the sanctity of life. One council hosted Simon Walley from MaterCare, who spoke about its mission to improve maternal healthcare and provide essential maternity services in Rwanda and Uganda.

All MO members were invited to participate in Ember Days with Bishop Scott McCaig CC, Military Ordinary, and all members of the Military Ordinariate. These are days in which the whole diocese can unite in prayer for reconciliation, healing, holiness, and outreach.

Provincial Project

All base councils were invited to participate in the provincial project on "Houselessness in Canadian Veterans." The project was set up as an exploration within their communities of the housing needs and resources for veterans. Most councils embraced the project, and a few presented their findings during the provincial convention in June 2024. Others mentioned their projects or gave updates in the provincial newsletter, *Maryline*.

Provincial Administrative Committee Activities

The provincial administrative committee hosted the 56th annual provincial convention again in Ottawa as it is difficult to host conventions on a base.

It is difficult for the committee to get together in person as they are spread out between Nova Scotia and Alberta, with the vice-president being in Florida. Meetings are held virtually on a regular basis and all members are comfortable with the Zoom platform.

The provincial vice-president led a Development Day workshop in February, where she referenced many other workshops. The vice-president and the faith chairperson hosted a workshop for Our Lady of Good Counsel in April called “Mothers of Love and Faith,” which is League workshop #827. Both workshops were well received by those who attended.

The provincial secretary published the provincial newsletter called *Maryline*. This newsletter, published electronically twice a year, helps to keep the councils connected. It includes submissions from every council, as well as the provincial officers, spiritual advisor and the Military Ordinary (Military Ordinariate bishop).

What's in Store for 2025

The provincial administrative committee has chosen a few priorities for 2025: continue to implement the provincial project on mental health, which is “Houselessness in Canadian Veterans,” continue to update the provincial website and connect with each base council. The 57th annual provincial convention will be virtual with provincial elections.

Support for the Catholic chaplains, the Catholic chapels and the Catholic faithful, in general, is still decreasing. In recent years, the number of Protestant services offered in base chapels started to decrease; now, the Ladies Guild is dissolving, although a few local chapters will remain, and protestant chapels are closing. We do not

want this to be the future of the Catholic military community and League. We will continue to pray together and seek strength from the Holy Spirit for a strong military Catholic community. ✚

New Brunswick Provincial Council

With 1,115 members across 33 parish councils, the input from the presidents has been invaluable as we collaborate to strengthen our faith-filled organization.

As leaders, our mission is to enhance the connection among members by recognizing their unique gifts and addressing their specific needs. We aim to create an environment where each individual feels valued and supported in their faith journey.

The provincial council is dedicated to identifying areas where additional training may be beneficial. By offering targeted support, we seek to equip our councils with the tools necessary to thrive in their distinct roles and responsibilities.

In all of our efforts, we are focused on fostering unity within our community, ensuring that each parish council feels supported while honouring their individuality. Together, we work to strengthen the bonds that tie us all together, promoting collaboration and mutual understanding.

This report highlights key areas such as the council's engagement with the national theme, mental health initiatives and the new leadership structure. It also examines how councils have adapted to these changes and challenges.

A majority of the council's activities aligned with the League's mission "to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service." These activities included retreats to reflect on the theme, guest speakers discussing service, faith and social justice, workshops focused on serving others or exploring faith, and

participation in online webinars. Additional activities were mentioned but not listed in the survey, suggesting high engagement, especially through online platforms. Mental health was another significant focus for councils. Responses varied, with councils hosting speakers on mental health, providing resources and guidance, and discussing the broader social impacts, such as homelessness, job insecurity and violence. This shows a strong commitment to mental health support at both the individual and community levels.

The new leadership structure was embraced by many councils, though some reported challenges in fully adopting it due to reduced membership or difficulties filling leadership roles. Aging memberships and a lack of active participants contributed to this struggle, with some councils relying on interim positions or shared responsibilities. The absence of committee chairpersons, particularly for faith, service and social justice, was a recurring concern. Despite these challenges, councils have worked together to adapt to the new structure as best as they can.

Parish activities and special projects included bible study, religious education, Eucharistic ministry, parish pastoral councils, choirs, bereavement committees, and school breakfast/lunch programs. Members volunteered at hospice facilities, special care homes, and Meals on Wheels. Many members were willing to volunteer for fundraising activities but preferred not to chair them. Some also knitted prayer squares, blessed by the parish priest and distributed to the sick and elderly. Other projects included a campaign to bring clean drinking water to a community in Nigeria. Councils supported the “Share the Words” campaign, publishing “52 Reasons to Talk about the CWL” in weekly bulletins and on the provincial Facebook page.

Anniversaries in 2024:

- 85 years – Saint John the Evangelist Parish Council, Belledune
- 80 years – Holy Spirit Parish Council (formerly Saint Rose of Lima, Saint John, which closed in 2024)
- 70 years – Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Council, Rothesay
- 65 years – Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish Council, Red Bank

The year 2024 had its challenges, but there were more successes than setbacks. As president, I had the pleasure of visiting councils across New Brunswick and attending numerous anniversary celebrations. It was a joy to celebrate Bellelle Guerin award recipients: Georgina Babcock from St. Anthony's Parish Council (Glen Levit) and Martina McCarthy from St. Michael's Basilica Parish Council.

The policy review was an important task, completed after several GoTo meetings. The vote at the pre-convention meeting went smoothly. I also participated in monthly Zoom meetings with national and provincial presidents from across Canada, which were both informative and engaging. The monthly meetings with provincial presidents had strong participation, allowing presidents to share ideas and experiences.

The 76th annual convention was a memorable experience, with the committee doing an excellent job. Guest speaker Bishop Michel Proulx's (Bathurst) message shared was very thought-provoking, especially his interpretation of Exodus 3:2-14. The idea that a convention could act as a detour in our lives, guiding us toward deeper faith and collaboration with God's will, is quite powerful. His reflection, "Here I am," as an expression of readiness to align with Jesus' resonates deeply, guiding us to seek God and deepen our understanding. Repeating "Here I am" could be a way of expressing to Jesus, "I'm ready to collaborate with your will."

A \$950.00 donation collected at the convention was made to Passage House Inc., a shelter for women and child victims of violence, which was greatly appreciated.

The provincial service chairperson gave an insightful presentation on Development & Peace—Caritas Canada (D&P), emphasizing the benefits of a \$10.00 lifetime membership. Members were also reminded to save stamps for D&P fundraising and can tops for muscular dystrophy.

The parish president of Immaculate Conception Parish Council delivered a workshop on caring for a loved one. She shared her personal experience caring for her husband and provided valuable information on available resources.

Throughout the year, communication with Archbishop Guy Desrochers (Moncton), Bishop Christian Riesbeck (St. John), Bishop Claude Champagne (Edmundston) and Bishop Proulx, remembering them at Easter, Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas, as well as congratulatory notes on their recent appointments.

As president, I had the honour of representing the province at various events, including the launch of Mary Ryan's book, *Wading into Life's Changing Tides*. This emotional and empowering story highlights Mary's experience in long-term care. Mary is a long-time member and a recipient of the Bellelle Guerin award.

I attended several significant gatherings, such as the World Day of Prayer, the Lenten Encounter of Prayer and Reflection, the Prayer for Christian Unity, a Development & Peace Share Lent Workshop, and a Blanket Exercise. Other notable events included the 60th anniversary of the Women's Inter-Church Council in Fredericton and the 50th anniversary of St. Mary's Parish of the Military Ordinariate.

Additionally, I was a presenter for “Be Not Afraid: An interactive workshop on Crafting Resolutions” at the national convention and served on the national priorities task force.

The provincial council purchased a copy of *Faith, Vision and a Dream: 100 Years of Service*, a book celebrating the League’s 100th anniversary.

Sad News: It is bittersweet to report that St. Patrick’s Parish Council (Stanley) continues, but councils at the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception (Saint John), Holy Spirit (Saint John) and St. Joseph’s (Bath), have closed.

Highlights of the Year: Visits to parishes across the province. Attending anniversary celebrations and presentation of service pins.

Closing Thoughts: I extend my heartfelt thanks to all the parish presidents in New Brunswick for their warmth and generosity in welcoming me into their councils and homes. It was truly a privilege to be a part of their lives. As we reflect on the year 2024, I express my sincere gratitude for their dedication and hard work. Their leadership, commitment and unwavering faith have made a lasting impact, fostering a community where women unite in faith and service to fulfill the mission of the Catholic Women’s League with grace and dedication.

The Province of New Brunswick embraced the theme *Here I Am Lord, send me*, which calls us to respond to God’s invitation with open hearts and minds. Members answered this divine call by offering their time, talents and resources to help others and promote justice in the world. This theme challenged each of us to become open vessels, ready to meet the pressing needs of today’s world. New Brunswick truly embodied the spirit of service, making a tangible difference in the lives of so many.

As New Brunswick moves forward, we will continue to answer God’s call with the same passion, devotion and commitment, always ready to serve where we are needed most. †

Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Council

Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Council had 12 parish councils and 300 members ending in the year 2024. Their dedication and commitment to their councils in the many projects and activities in 2024 were exceptional.

The national theme, *Here I am Lord, send me*, has been embraced not only by the 12 councils but the provincial council as well through meetings, workshops, prayer services, programs, and donations.

Programs our councils offered and celebrated with their members throughout the year include:

- Prayer for Christian Unity—celebrating prayer and encouragement
- The International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking/Ambassadors of Hope
- Happy International Women’s Day—strong faith and determination that makes us strong
- Feast of Our Lady of Fatima—celebrating and honouring our Blessed Mother Mary
- Feast of St. Joseph’s Table—attributed to the end of a devastating drought, after the rain came, the harvest was over; to show gratitude, the farmers prepared a table with special foods to share with the poor and to honour St. Joseph
- World Food Day—right to foods for a better life
- World Day of Prayer—Christians from other denominations come together to participate in various liturgical and community activities

- Prayers for the Sick—coincided with the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes
- Deceased Mass to remember our sisters in the League who have died
- Mother’s Day Celebration—giving a mom’s bookmark to all moms during a Mass weekend
- Remembrance Day—participating in the parade and laying a wreath at the War Memorial to remember our fallen soldiers
- Prepared a newsletter where all councils participated

Donations and fundraising:

- Toiletries items collected for high school students and the young adults’ community centre
- Collections of different types of books, puzzles, etc., for Her Majesty’s Penitentiary
- Food for food banks and Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
- Donations to Kids Eat Smart Foundation (breakfast program)
- Donation of knitted wear to organizations and churches in need

Three councils celebrated 50th anniversaries:

- Holy Redeemer Parish Council (Corner Brook)
- Immaculate Conception Parish Council (Deer Lake)
- St. Pius X Parish Council (St. John’s)

All three councils celebrated and were given their 50th anniversary certificate from the provincial council.

Communication within our councils:

- Councils within their own towns meet monthly
- Provincial chairperson receives communiqués from the national chairperson and shares them with our councils
- Oral and written reports
- Emails/postal service, when required, is the primary method of communication

- Provincial Facebook page is an excellent communication tool

Focus for 2025:

- Update the provincial policy and procedure manual
- Update the materials in archives
- Plan a retreat for the East and West Coast
- Review and implement a membership drive for Newfoundland and Labrador

Membership:

All councils are experiencing an aging population, and we had several members passed away in 2024. Our councils are declining in numbers and struggling to stay active. Hopefully, plans for a membership drive and reaching out to other provinces for suggestions and feedback will change this.

2025 will be an election year for the provincial council, we are women of faith, and with Our Lady of Good Counsel to guide us, we will continue to serve our League the best way we know through prayer. †

Nova Scotia Provincial Council

As of December 31, 2024, Nova Scotia had two diocesan councils and 49 parish councils—27 in the Diocese of Antigonish and 22 in the Diocese of Halifax-Yarmouth. In 2024, one parish council closed—St Theresa’s Parish Council (Halifax), as the building was condemned—with all members transferring their memberships to other nearby councils.

There are 2,142 paid members in Nova Scotia. In 2024, we had 73 new members and 35 reinstated members. We had 44 deaths. Unfortunately, 254 members did not renew, leaving us with a net loss for the year of 146. This cannot continue. While every effort is being made to recruit new members, and we are slowly gaining ground, the failure of our existing members to renew their

membership must lead us to focus on that area over the coming years. This has been an ongoing trend in our province.

St. Joseph Parish Council (Kentville) celebrated 99 years of service with a special Mass celebrated by Archbishop Brian Dunn (Halifax-Yarmouth) and a lovely luncheon prepared by council members. Their plan was to celebrate this milestone one year in advance of their 100th anniversary, as they had agreed to host the provincial convention in 2025. Still busy after all these years. Other councils across the province celebrated anniversaries, including St. John the Baptist Parish Council (Springhill), 75 years; St. Ignatius Parish Council (Bedford), 40 years; St Joseph Parish Council (North Sydney), 50 years; Our Lady of Fatima Parish Council (Sydney River), 65 years; Immaculate Conception Parish Council (Heatherton), 70 years and Holy Rosary Parish Council (Westmount) 75 years.

Both diocesan councils held annual meetings of members (AMM) in 2024 with theme development and guest speakers. Mental health and medical assistance in dying (MAiD) were the main topics. The Halifax-Yarmouth Diocesan Council awarded eight Marguerite Burns bursaries of \$500 each to children of members enrolled in post-secondary education. The Antigonish Diocesan Council, through its voluntary fund, contributes to the Cape Breton University and St. Frances Xavier University scholarship programs. Individual parish councils provide bursaries to graduating students in their parishes.

In June, the provincial council held an AMM at St. John XXIII Church in Dartmouth with a wonderful theme development presentation by National Chairperson of Social Justice Glenda Carson. At this time, Archbishop Dunn announced a new provincial spiritual advisor, Fr. Vincent Onyekelu and a new Halifax-Yarmouth diocesan spiritual advisor, Fr. Robert Nicholas.

Members from both dioceses attended the national convention and AMM in Saskatoon in August, as did some spiritual advisors. I attended as president along with our vice-president, several council members and our spiritual advisor.

Councils have embraced the new structure, with all councils now having eight executive positions. Despite the reduction, councils still report that they have difficulty filling positions on their executive. In many instances, the duties of chairpersons are shared responsibilities. There is a need for an adjustment period, but generally, members are committed to making it work. Both diocesan councils have attempted to alleviate this problem by hosting workshops on leadership and training for incoming officers.

One of the blessings coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic was the ability for councils to meet virtually. Both diocesan councils now meet monthly via a platform, allowing them to get together more often than in the past. This has enabled them to do more planning for resources which they can deliver to councils, fulfilling their mandate to inform and educate. Leadership workshops were held in both dioceses in 2024. Both diocesan councils held diocese-wide training days.

Our parish councils continue to work in their communities, meeting the needs of their parishes and beyond. They pray together, have fun, volunteer and raise money for charity. They support the church completely, and as one parish priest noted, “Were it not for these women, our parish would collapse.” As we prepared for the Jubilee Year of Hope, we reminded ourselves of the importance of prayer. In my Christmas message, I asked councils to focus on prayer, not only in their meetings but also in bringing prayer groups, prayer services, novenas, and the like to their parish communities. For those councils no longer able to involve themselves in fundraising and volunteer work, they are reminded

that prayer councils are an important aspect of fulfilling our mandate “For God and Canada.”

Members of the provincial council met virtually with their national counterparts throughout the year. At our monthly meetings held virtually, our chairpersons reported that these meetings are most helpful, and they feel connected to the national council in a way they never did before. In addition, they are interested in learning how their counterparts across the country are dealing with issues, and many have formed a close bond. One member shared that this experience encouraged her to continue to let her name stand for office at the provincial level. We encourage diocesan councils to meet more often with their parish counterparts, as this is seen as leadership development.

In November, the provincial council held an Advent retreat weekend. In addition to our business meeting, we enjoyed an extended spiritual program organized by our chairperson of faith and our spiritual advisor. Members of the council enjoyed the opportunity to “get away and unwind” before the busy seasons of Advent and Christmas.

The expansion of MAiD is a continuing concern in our province. From 2022-2024, 3,645 referrals were made, with 956 natural deaths before referrals could be completed. In 2024, 577 referrals were made. This appears to show a slight decrease. One issue that arose in the spring was a decision by the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Nova Scotia to pass a policy that doctors who have a conscientious objection have a duty to refer the patient to another healthcare provider who does not object to the service. Forty-one physicians in Nova Scotia signed a letter stating they would not comply with the policy. Larry Worthen, a deacon and executive director of the Christian Medical and Dental Association of Canada, initiated a campaign of postcard writing and advocacy. Both

diocesan councils supported this initiative, and parish councils in both have invited Mr. Worthen to events promoting the campaign across the province.

Members have supported Resolutions 2024.02 National Universal Pharmacare Program to Include Coverage for Drugs Prescribed for Mental Illness and 2024.01 Increase Supported Housing for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness with Mental Health and Mental Illness Issues in a variety of ways. Most importantly, members have been educating in their parishes on the importance of increased funding for those experiencing mental health issues. In 2016, the Nova Scotia Provincial Council passed a resolution calling on the federal government to initiate a dental health program for vulnerable populations. Although this resolution did not meet the standards required for the national convention, it kept this issue at the forefront in Nova Scotia. Members are proud of the fact that this initiative may have played a role in recent developments.

Nova Scotia is busy preparing for the national convention and AMM to take place in Halifax in 2026. The next 18 months will be busy and filled with a joyful noise. It has been an honour of my life to represent the women of Nova Scotia as their president. I am in awe of the women who have come before me and those who will follow in this path. Let us cherish their presence and pray that God keeps them safe on their journey. ✚

Ontario Provincial Council

2024 was an election year in Ontario, so Linda Squarzolo and Colleen Martin shared leadership.

Initiatives specific to the national theme and focus on mental health:

Members responded through the national theme, *Here I am Lord, send me* by “Bee-ing the Difference!” and living the joy of the gospel. They used the national theme and prayer at meetings at all levels and explored mental health through:

- events to educate on mental health
- diocesan presentation, convention focus
- donations
- visits to lonely and meal delivery
- telephone calls
- theme weaved into all events
- volunteering at related agencies
- letter writing and petitions signed
- presentation from an individual suffering with poor mental health
- resolution research and development on the elimination of the use of mature minor doctrine
- studying the connections between mental health and homelessness, job security, intimate partner violence, and food security

Councils at the diocesan and parish levels responded to the promotion of national initiatives to study and effect change related to:

- human trafficking
- pornography
- support for immigrants
- homelessness
- mental illness
- medical assistance in dying (MAiD)
- access to palliative care
- Indigenous issues

- postcard campaign
- compassionate community care day
- promotion of Development and Peace—Caritas Canada’s “Stand for the Land” campaign
- challenges of people living with brain injuries

Unique projects parishes expressed pride in completing included:

- Craft kits created and sent to children in Ukraine.
- Focus on the involvement of younger members with positive results.
- Embracing the “1” Campaign and *Welcome Program* with positive results.
- Being present in Catholic schools, praying the rosary and celebrating the sacraments of first communion and confirmation.
- One-day diocesan-wide food drive, “Hunger knows no season,” including local and social media engagement and participation of a Catholic high school in a cereal drive.
- A feast and cultural day in conjunction with St Patrick’s Day to meet new residents and experience their culture through food.
- An ecumenical, community outdoor meal for more than 50 people of all ages.
- Traveling to remote parts of a diocese to support Indigenous women and reactivate a council.
- Sending regular shipments to meet needs communicated by a remote First Nation.

Councils in Ontario continued to call “members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service” through charitable acts, volunteerism, spiritual programs, mentors to youth, hosting World Day of Prayer, and serving the parish in ministry roles.

The provincial council hosted a breakfast reception at Queen's Park, the Ontario Legislature, with all members of provincial parliament invited. Four council members met with attendees to discuss the League and its resolutions.

The 77th annual convention was hosted in Sudbury by Sault Ste. Marie Diocesan Council. There were 77 first-time attendees due in part to a registration subsidy of \$100.00 supported by a national grant and the provincial council. Members experienced a night at Saint Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church with a \$1,100 donation presented to its priest for the Ukrainian Refugee Fund, masses, presentations by National President Shari Guinta on her theme, Provincial Spiritual Advisor Bishop Thomas Dowd (Sault Ste. Marie), members of the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre, provincial executive and diocesan presidents; a sunrise ceremony at the diocesan grotto; and other business.

The provincial council was last to embrace the new structure as of its election in July. Before that, time and effort were invested in revising the provincial manual of policy and procedure and the guidelines to reflect the new structure. The policy committee had the goal of building a team of subcommittees and leads for areas requiring significant time investment, which more than doubled the team. Communications was the area of largest need with a communications lead, newsletter editing team, social media post digital creator, and podcast committee. Many parish councils acknowledged a team approach was most effective with the new structure.

Recommendations:

- One portal for communication where information input is distributed automatically to the contacts needing it rather than through levels.
- Reporting of survey results back to parish councils participating.

- Maintain the primary goal of faith formation and spiritual growth.
- Continue to provide resources to support parish council leaders. A guideline on how to operate a council would be beneficial.
- Support and appreciate spiritual advisors and keep them informed of council activities.
- Continued explanation of the new structure roles and how to work collaboratively, particularly with communication responsibility.
- Consider changes to the annual report survey to address parish concerns and provide report information to support reporting at all levels rather than just national. †

Prince Edward Island Provincial Council

Prince Edward Island councils continue to work hard following our mission and under our core values for their parishes, communities, province and country. We were able to maintain our 27 parish councils this past year despite the current challenges of an aging population and recruitment difficulties. We did have an increase in new memberships in 2024. Unfortunately, the number of members who did not renew outweighs the new members, but members are working on this and are trying to see what can be done to reinstate these members. This is an ongoing process, and we are hoping our membership numbers continue to increase.

There was an improved uptake of the national annual report surveys that were completed by parish councils this past year, with 19 out of 27 councils completing this survey despite the postal strike. This shows our members are wanting national to know what they are doing and are interested in what is happening across the country.

Most of the 27 parish councils have transitioned to the new structure of the League. Those councils that have not transitioned are either too small, do not have enough members who regularly attend meetings to fill those positions, or are having trouble getting members willing to step up to executive positions. Provincial council continues to assist all councils whenever assistance is needed, and we constantly encourage members to step up when called upon to fill leadership roles.

All of our councils are very active, and despite some not having all positions filled in, their executive are still doing all that is asked of them and more. Some of the many activities that our members have participated in include CWL Sunday Masses, Advent events like a drive-through event called “The Journey Through Bethlehem,” coffee and Valentine’s parties, Coats for Kids programs, collections for food banks and various other organizations. Members even participated in the “Coldest Night of the Year” fundraiser and, of course, participated in League prayer services and honour guards at funerals. Our councils are actively engaging in social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. They are using these to advertise and showcase events. They are also sending in articles for the Spotlight section of our national website. They were very pleased to have made it into *The Canadian League* magazine this past year. We at provincial council showcase our councils’ great work through a newsletter and on our provincial Facebook page by sharing the photographs and articles sent to us by members.

Councils are increasingly showcasing their own members by having membership award ceremonies for years of service, which makes members feel important and shows that councils are also starting to host welcome socials for new members who join.

Making sure we recognize all members, new and seasoned, is a very important part for our councils. We need to recruit, retain and regain as many members as we can to bring the League into the future for Prince Edward Island and Canada.

The collaboration between the League and the Knights of Columbus is continuing to grow on Prince Edward Island. More councils from both organizations are reaching out to the other when an event is being scheduled. Some of these events included *ceilidhs*, community dinners, and Christmas parties. This shows that both organizations are working hard for our communities and province. There are several events that the Knights and the League are collaborating on during this Jubilee Year of Hope.

There were two provincial executive meetings held this past year, in April and October, that included the 27 parish council presidents, as well as a couple of virtual meetings as required. These were well attended and offered some information and education on current provincial and national events and enabled provincial to continue our work for parish councils across the province.

Area meetings were hosted by provincial council in February with a workshop on the national theme, *Here I am Lord, send me*, along with a spiritual workshop entitled “Rainbows and Flowers” from the national website and a reflection on the four cardinal virtues.

Provincial council held its annual fall meetings in October this year with the continued theme of mental health under the *Here I am Lord, send me* umbrella. There were speakers on mental health from the Canadian Mental Health Association, as well as on euthanasia by Pat Wiedemer from Life Canada. There was a “part B” to our fall conferences this past year that brought in John Ruetz from the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada as a facilitator for the workshop. Speakers included Michelle Dabrowski from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops on *Horizons of Hope: A*

Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care; Dr. Hazel Markwell, who is theology, ethics, and policy advisor for the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada and the faculty of theology at St. Paul's University who spoke on end-of-life care; and Sr. Rosemary MacDonald, CSM and a palliative care group who used a synodal-like approach of listening and learning to capture all the workshop's information. Both events had wonderful participation with great fellowship and education.

I was able to visit 16 of the 27 councils across Prince Edward Island over my term. The members were very excited to have someone from the provincial council visit their parish. It was such an enlightening and spiritual experience to meet and feel the passion and excitement for the League. I will cherish these visits for years to come.

I am so blessed to have been given the opportunity to be the provincial president for Prince Edward Island. The hard work and dedication our members show in following our three pillars of faith, service—serving and social justice is unwavering and inspirational and will carry me forward as I continue my own League journey.

May we continue to grow in faith and service to the Lord and our parishes, communities, province, and country with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the help of Our Lady of Good Counsel for many years to come, "For God and Canada." God Bless. ✚

Quebec Provincial Council

2024 was a year of transitions. Quebec saw councils across the province embrace the new structure and launch new activities to reflect the theme, *Here I am Lord, send me*. Projects and activities were focused on the various aspects of mental health. Paid membership was at 485, including 15 life members and Honorary Life Member Lorette Noble. Fourteen parish councils remain.

One hundred percent of Quebec’s councils responded to the 2024 annual report survey for the second year in a row. Councils were active in their churches and communities, embracing the national theme. Results of the presidents’ annual reports focused on various aspects of mental health and its effects on the homeless, economically disadvantaged and the elderly. Aging membership and recruiting new and younger members has been a concern for councils for the past few years. Quebec councils have made conscientious efforts to address these ongoing issues by focusing on recruiting younger members and ensuring all members have a role in council activities. Councils indicated resources on the national website were useful tools for dealing with these issues. Several councils reported success in recruiting new members.

The results and the parish council presidents’ annual reports also indicated that there was more participation by spiritual advisors with their councils, more emphasis on the importance of the spiritual growth of members and education on Indigenous issues, and concerns over environmental issues and the effects mental health on the homeless, the vulnerable and the elderly. Faith-driven initiatives and providing support for the vulnerable in society were at the heart of Quebec councils.

Two councils celebrated important milestones: Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Council (Chateauguay) and St. Thomas A. Becket Parish Council (Pierrefonds) celebrated their 60th anniversary. Congratulations, and thank you to the dedicated women who built, mentored and led these councils over the years.

The Quebec provincial executive participated in a presentation on the healing powers of many flowers which grow in Quebec. It was decided that the Quebec provincial council would lead an initiative to put together a document, “Bouquet for Mental Health and Wellness.” This living and evolving document will be developed

based on feedback from all parish councils across the province. The document will be made available to all members across the province over the next two years.

To launch this project, every council in Quebec was sent a presentation on the symbolism and healing powers of flowers. Each council was asked to pick at least one flower and to identify initiatives that they would undertake as a council for the duration of the project that focused on mental health and wellness under the three pillars of faith, service and social justice. As part of the initiative, parish councils were asked to bring a centrepiece using their flowers, which was displayed at the annual provincial convention. Councils were also asked to provide a summary of their council's plans. Councils identified the

- Sunflower as a symbol of resilience and strength and acts of kindness towards seniors and the homeless.
- Lily of the Valley, which helps alleviate depression by visiting the lonely and supporting the vulnerable.
- Forget-Me-Nots, a symbol of memory ensuring that no members are forgotten.
- Chamomile, used to treat anxiety and insomnia, reaching out to those needing comfort.
- Lavendar, whose fragrance alleviates stress and anxiety, seeing members delivering care packages to mental health facilities.
- Hydrangeas represent the complex nature of mental health issues, encouraging the need for continued education by experts.
- Roses, whose perfume releases endorphins and symbolizes friendship and love, extend a hand to the suffering.

Quebec's bouquet for mental health and wellness will include summaries of initiatives, activities, resources, prayer services, and anything councils think should be included and may help other councils and their members.

The Montreal Diocesan Council hosted the 76th Quebec provincial convention, which was held at St. Thomas A. Becket Church. The weekend began in the church hall, which was decorated to reflect the theme, *A Night at the Casino*. Although there was no monetary betting, winners received tickets that entered them into an end-of-evening draw for gift cards from local vendors. The next day was the business session of the convention. The room was decorated with pictures of illustrated flowers and centrepieces created by the councils as part of the “Bouquet for Mental Health and Wellness” project. All those in attendance participated in a smudging ceremony led by a Métis member of the Quebec provincial executive. A resolution was brought forth by one of the parish councils entitled “Increased Supported Housing for Homeless Persons with Mental Health Issues.” The resolution was read, discussed and adopted. The resolution is asking both the federal and provincial governments to provide support and increase funding for more alternative housing models, such as community-based long-term supported housing programs for individuals with mental illness. It was to be sent to the 104th national convention for consideration in August.

There were two guest speakers, Dr. Cory Labrecque and National Vice-President Betty Colaneri. Dr. Labrecque gave a presentation entitled “On the Value of Tears: Seeing Vulnerability through the Eyes of God.” Betty Colaneri presented on the “1” Campaign. Fr. John Torrance, provincial spiritual advisor, and three members of the provincial executive prepared an interactive activity related to the mental health project. A special moment was set aside by the provincial council to thank Fr. Torrance for his spiritual guidance and insights during the last 16 years as spiritual advisor. After serving his diocese for over 30 years, Fr. Torrance announced his retirement. Dr. Cory Labrecque accepted the position of spiritual

advisor. The provincial council is blessed and looking forward to journeying together with Dr. Labrecque.

At the Eucharistic celebration, Dr. Labrecque was installed as the Quebec provincial spiritual advisor. Following the installation of the spiritual advisor, a new executive was installed. The convention was a great success, blending business, learning and fun!

At the 104th annual national convention held in Saskatoon in August, after some discussion and editing, Resolution 2024.01 Increased Supported Housing for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness with Mental Health and Mental Illness Issues was adopted. This resolution was one of 12 resolutions to be presented by the national executive to the federal government during their yearly meeting. There were 11 members from Quebec who attended the national convention, as did Archbishop Christian Lepine (Montreal). The members from Quebec were proud to have submitted and have an adopted a resolution at the national level.

Communication has been a cornerstone of planning. Effective, streamlined communication was worked on by the national board to ensure that all information was shared in a timely and scheduled manner. The national executive meets virtually monthly with provincial executives across Canada. These virtual meetings are informative and productive forms of communication and were greatly appreciated by members of the Quebec provincial executive.

At the provincial level, we have created a systematic approach to ensuring that members and councils receive information from national in a timely manner. Following the national convention, councils were sent out a publication entitled “Newsflashes & Links: Vital Information to Know and Share.” The provincial newsletter, *The Quebec CWL Journey*, is sent out approximately two weeks following the quarterly mailings of communiqués from national

office. A subcommittee, with members from three regions (Quebec City, the South Shore and Montreal), was responsible for putting together and sending out the newsletter. The newsletter opens with messages from the provincial president and spiritual advisor. Each member of the executive writes an article to reflect the latest national communiqués and any other information she wants to share. The diocesan and single parish councils send articles and photographs about recent activities, events and celebrated milestones. The challenge is to make sure that each member receives a copy of the newsletter in a timely manner, whether by post or electronic mail.

During all mid-term meetings, provincial officers and chairpersons put emphasis on using the national website as a principal resource for councils and members. Visits to the national website have increased. Interactive workshops are scheduled in the New Year to provide information and support the needs of the parish councils.

Members are present in all ministries in the parish as choir members, lectors, altar servers, and Eucharistic ministers. Many members are also involved in most parish activities, as well as local community activities. Members continue to advocate for the most socio-economically disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals. To increase their visibility within the community, members wear their pins, scarves and shawls at church and community events. Members make use of their church bulletins, community boards and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube and Pinterest to promote their good works.

Councils across Quebec continued to participate in various workshops, League position papers, webinars (Our Lady of the Rosary), prayer services, pilgrimages, retreats, and faith-based activities, including “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” and Lightning Prayers for Peace. Four councils participated in World

Day of Prayer. One council provided a weekly lunch for those in need within their community; those in attendance were also provided a bag of groceries to take home. This council also collected school supplies, which were donated to the local area schools in September. Councils are supporting communities in need by providing food for homeless shelters and local food banks, supporting the Mission to Seafarers, and providing support for veterans, seniors and refugees.

Most councils are focusing on the environment by minimizing the use of non-recyclable plastics and encouraging members to “Lug-A-Mug” (reusable mug) to meetings. Most members can be reached through electronic mail or the use of social media. During meetings, agendas are projected to reduce their carbon footprint. Moving towards a “green church” is a change all councils are undertaking. Councils are capitalizing on the use of virtual meetings to exchange and share information.

Several members of our provincial executive have participated in national *ad hoc* committees on policy and procedure as well as resolutions subcommittees.

Councils are embracing the new structures and becoming more familiar with resources that are available on the national website. Councils need to revise and update their policy and procedure manuals to reflect the new structures. Mentoring needs to continue to be central to leadership development. Life members have the knowledge, experience and years of service in providing the guidance that councils need. Mentors and mentoring empower members with knowledge and help build confidence to overcome various challenges.

Quebec councils embraced the new theme, *Here I am Lord, send me* through numerous acts of mercy and kindness. Women working together and sharing their gifts and talents are essential to

forming links and connections amongst all levels of the League empower members to look to the future. Through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel, we pray that our councils will grow and thrive for many years. †

Saskatchewan Provincial Council

Saskatchewan Provincial Council consists of three diocesan councils and 94 parish councils, with two new councils waiting for their charters.

Both smaller and larger councils still had challenges in filling executive and leadership positions. This has resulted in several smaller councils and even a city council disbanding. At the diocesan level, we are also noticing some challenges in filling positions. We at the provincial level have been addressing this by visiting councils and offering assistance when asked. We will be continuing at the diocesan and provincial conventions. We had discussions on whether to disband the three diocesan councils in Saskatchewan or not. We will not do so at this time, though we need to encourage our membership to take on positions at the diocesan level.

Not all the parish councils completed the annual survey. Some had difficulty logging into the survey.

The provincial past president continues encouraging parish councils in preparing a policy and procedure manual, and she has also finished updating the provincial policy and procedure manual.

Once again, we have offered a new member contest that began in January 2025. The council with the largest increase in new members will receive free registration to the provincial convention, and each new member will receive a gift from the provincial council. We have several new members, and I can't wait to tell you how many. I have been encouraging and reminding members how important it is to reward the members with years of service pins. I

find having this ceremony during Mass one Sunday shows the women in the pew that they too, can be members of the League.

I have attended many council anniversaries and sent anniversary certificates to those councils I was unable to attend. Many councils are finding that with no new members and no younger members joining, they are aging, and it is difficult to continue.

The provincial executive continues to produce a quarterly newsletter combining messages from all positions. Some comments have been received that the national website was easier to use. We continue to see a rise in members using social media to share activities happening in their parishes.

Many fundraising activities were reported that provided donations to voluntary funds, parish needs and needs within the community. Many members reported that being able to attend a national convention in our province was a wonderful experience. Councils reported that welcoming new families to their communities has been going well. Some councils are keeping the history books updated by continuing to take photographs at all the events. Taking part in the webinars hosted by the CCCB and the national executive has been encouraging. Having guest speakers on religious topics has been done by many councils in the province. Many councils participate in the Week of Christian Unity and either host or participate in the World Day of Prayer. Many councils reported that they have Mass before their meetings, and if not Mass, then a prayer service.

All in all, it appears that the councils in Saskatchewan are striving to work "For God and Canada." With more prayer and hope, in this jubilee year of hope, we will continue to see the councils moving forward. †

B: National Bursary Fund

The League gratefully acknowledges the following donations designated to enhance the National Bursary Fund:

- Annunciation Parish Council, Kingston 50.00
- Annunciation Parish Council, Prince Rupert 50.00
- Blessed Trinity Parish Council, Toronto 50.00
- Church of the Ascension Parish Council, Parkville 100.00
- Holy Family Parish Council, Medicine Hat 50.00
- Holy Family Parish Council, St. Albert 50.00
- Holy Trinity Parish Council, Calgary 100.00
- Immaculate Conception Parish Council, Delta 100.00
- Notre Dame De Lorette Parish Council, Lorette 25.00
- Notre Dame de Lourdes Parish Council, Prince Albert 50.00
- Notre Dame Parish Council, Dawson Creek 60.00
- Our Lady Mercy Parish Council, Vancouver 25.00
- Our Lady of Fatima Parish Council, Antigonish 25.00
- Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish Council, Candiac 50.00
- Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish Council, Surrey 50.00
- Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Council, Kingston 100.00
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Council,
Labrador City 50.00
- Our Lady of the Lake Parish Council, Kamloops 10.00
- Precious Blood Parish Council, Scarborough 50.00
- Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Parish Council,
Belleville 100.00
- Sacred Heart Parish Council, Kimberley 50.00
- Sacred Heart Parish Council, Terrace Bay 75.00
- St. Aidan Parish Council, Scarborough 50.00
- St. Albert Parish Council, St. Albert 100.00
- St. Andrew Parish Council, Vancouver 50.00
- St. Anne Parish Council, Osoyoos 25.00

• St. Anne Parish Council, Penticton	75.00
• St. Anne Parish Council, Saskatoon	200.00
• St. Augustine Parish Council, Brandon	100.00
• St. Augustine Parish Council, Vancouver	50.00
• St. Bernadette Parish Council, Surrey	50.00
• St. Columba Parish Council, East Point	50.00
• St. Francis de Sales Parish Council, Kingston	100.00
• St. Francis of Assisi Parish Council, Fredericton	20.00
• St. George Parish Council, St. Catharines	50.00
• St. Gerard Parish Council, Calgary	100.00
• St. John Cantius Parish Council, Winnipeg	50.00
• St. John the Evangelist Parish Council, Whitby	50.00
• St. John Vianney Parish Council, Barrie	100.00
• St. Joseph Parish Council, Fort Smith	48.00
• St. Joseph Parish Council, Kingston	75.00
• St. Joseph Parish Council, Langley	65.00
• St. Joseph Parish Council, Mississauga	150.00
• St. Jude Parish Council, 100 Mile House	50.00
• St. Jude's Parish Council, Vancouver	50.00
• St. Louis Parish Council, Louisdale	20.00
• St. Luke Parish Council, Maple Ridge	150.00
• St. Mark Parish Council, Prescott	50.00
• St. Mary Parish Council, Chilliwack	50.00
• St. Mary Parish Council, Edmonton	75.00
• St. Mary Parish Council, Kingston	100.00
• St. Michaels Parish Council, Kingston	25.00
• St. Mother Teresa of Kolkata Parish Council, Halifax	20.00
• St. Nicholas Parish Council, Langley	50.00
• St. Padre Pio Parish Council, Kleinburg	100.00
• St. Patrick Parish Council, Kingston	50.00
• St. Paul Parish Council, Summerside	200.00
• St. Paul Parish Council, Vancouver	100.00

- St. Peter Parish Council, Calgary 100.00
- St. Peter Parish Council, Ingonish 50.00
- St. Peter Parish Council, Winnipeg 175.00
- St. Thomas More Parish Council, Halifax 10.00
- St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Council, Red Bank 25.00
- Sts. Joachim & Ann Parish Council, Vancouver 50.00



