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## The CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE of CANADA

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# MEMO

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To: Parish Council Chairpersons of Community Life

CC: Parish Council Presidents, Diocesan Presidents, Provincial Presidents and Life Members (on request)

From: Doreen Gowans, National Chairperson of Community Life

Date: April 22, 2016

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“‘being Christian means acting: doing the will of God’. And on ‘the last day — because we will all have one — what will the Lord ask us? Will he ask us: “What have you said about me?” No! He will ask about the things we have done’. He will ask us about ‘practical things: “I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.”’”  
(*Not talk but action*, Pope Francis, February 23, 2016)

Welcome! To everyone, I pray your journey will be friendly, educational and spiritually enriching as you form the best sisterhood. As Pope Francis and National President Barbara Dowding have called you to action in the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, I hope to give you some food for thought on how your parish councils can become actively involved in doing God’s will.

### **Refugees**

To parish councils actively sponsoring or donating to refugee families entering into Canada, thank you! This is a huge undertaking and needs everyone’s help in some way. According to Canada’s immigration plan for 2016, between 280,000 and 305,000 permanent residents will be admitted this year. If you are interested in sponsoring a family or require further information, go to the Catholic Crosscultural Services website at [www.cathcrosscultural.org](http://www.cathcrosscultural.org).

The federal government has announced it has restored all refugee health care benefits to pre-2012 levels. Through the resolutions process, members can and have made a difference! (See *Resolution 2014.01 Restoration of Health Care for Refugee Claimants*.)

By February 2016, Canada had welcomed 25,000 Syrian refugees. More than half of these will have their costs covered by the federal government in their first year, and the rest are supported by private groups, or a mix of the two. If you or your council is involved in helping refugees, please let me know. I am compiling data on how we, as Catholic women, help those in need.

### **Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP)**

At the 95<sup>th</sup> annual national convention in Vancouver, I challenged all members to help increase donations to the 1% Program by 15%, or 11 cents per member, which would generate almost \$10,000. Have you or your council donated 11 cents per member? Ways to help achieve or exceed that goal include asking members to donate their loose change at each meeting or having a fundraiser such as a bake sale or a “no bake” sale with all proceeds going to the 1% Program. (For the “no bake” sale, envelopes are placed in the pews seeking donations from parishioners who would otherwise have spent money preparing baking or purchasing goodies at a bake sale.)

Have you given up your Starbucks or Tim Horton's coffee for Lent? Donate the money you would have spent to CCODP. Let us do our part to educate the women and support their families in Afghanistan, Nigeria and Haiti. Have you shown the PowerPoint presentation at your meeting or distributed the CCODP 1% Program pamphlets? The PowerPoint presentation can be found on the national website at [www.cwl.ca](http://www.cwl.ca) under "Resources" and "Promotional Materials", and the pamphlets are free of charge from national office. Will you help make the \$10,000 goal a reality? Wouldn't it be great to report at the 96<sup>th</sup> annual national convention in Halifax that the \$10,000 goal was reached, knowing that you helped? As sisters helping sisters, send your contribution to national office as soon as possible.

### **Help the Homeless**

Have you seen the movie *The Lady in the Van*? It is based on the true story of a homeless older woman (played by Dame Maggie Smith) living in a van on a residential street in London. She eventually moves the van into the driveway of a writer's home and lives there for 15 years. Her story is revealed through flashbacks, a reminder that each homeless person carries a story. How can you help those suffering from homelessness? Remember, we all will be held accountable.

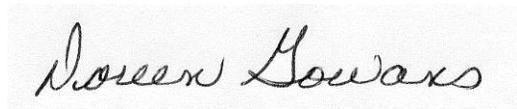
### **Velma's Dream**

The League's commitment to Velma's Dream will come up for review at the 96<sup>th</sup> annual national convention. Currently, the League has committed to donating funds to Shepherd's Field Hospital and The Infant Welfare Centre. Shepherd's Field Hospital is a cooperative run by Christians in Beit Sahour, Bethlehem, close to where Jesus was born. It is a maternity hospital with a small emergency clinic that tends to the needs of the patients, as well as maternity issues.

The Infant Welfare Centre is in the Old City of Jerusalem where at-risk teenagers receive the critical support they need to do well and to stay in school. As stated on the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) website, the money raised supports the education program that works to get the youth, regardless of religious affiliation, back into the classroom.

Keep the funds flowing to those most in need. Donate to Velma's Dream projects by sending your cheque payable to The Catholic Women's League of Canada c/o national office at C-702 Scotland Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3M 1X5.

God bless you as you work together "For God and Canada." May Our Lady of Good Counsel guide you always to answer the call of Jesus in the work you do. Together, we are a great and wonderful team of women doing what we can "For God and Canada" and beyond!



Doreen Gowans  
National Chairperson of Community Life