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The CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE of CANADA

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MEMO

To: Parish Council President-Elect and Chairpersons of Organization

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

From: Margaret Ann Jacobs, National President-Elect and Chairperson of Organization

Date: April 22, 2016

“Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong.” (1 Corinthians 16:13)

Women join the League for various reasons, from desire to obligation. Members like to celebrate friendships, keep up-to-date and learn new things. Some are thrilled and challenged by new developments and programs and cannot understand why they are not able to convert other members to their way of thinking. Some are content to pay their dues (or not!!!), send their contributions as required and remain inactive. Others are so excited about upcoming meetings and events they cannot wait to get involved and share their enthusiasm. WOW!

As I contemplate my last message to chairpersons of organization, I reflect on some of the most interesting and rewarding parish meetings I have attended. Most women love to talk and share past experiences. So why not try to build into your meeting some time for members to interact in a non-threatening atmosphere either in partners (dyads) or as a group (plenary) session? Prayer, laughter and tears are all part of a genuine sharing. You might want to consider some of the following ideas and frame them simply in prayer. Perhaps open with, “Dear Lord, open our hearts and minds that we may hear Your voice through our sisters today” and close with, “Thank You, dear Lord, for allowing us to have this time to celebrate with our sisters today.”

The following are ideas for your consideration.

Membership:

- Share your story of how you became involved. Why do you continue to belong?
- What have you done through the years to invite new members and foster membership?
- What is the greatest wisdom you wish to pass on to future members concerning recruitment and retention of members?

Leadership:

- What leadership programs have you participated in that you feel would be most beneficial to others?
- Who has been the most influential leader in your experience? Why? What did they contribute?
- What would you like to see developed to attract/develop better leaders?

Resource materials:

- Which League resource materials have you found most beneficial and would recommend?
- What League resource does the League not have that you feel would benefit members?
- Distribute new resource material. Tell about others that are available.

Annual reports:

- Explain why you think the League needs annual reports.
- Tell about a good idea or program you learned about through the annual report.
- What innovation would you like to see implemented in the annual report?

Life members:

- Tell about a life member who you feel has contributed a great deal to the League.
- What opportunities need to be available to encourage more members to advance in League work?
- Tell about a member who has inspired/encouraged/mentored you.
- How would you mentor a new member?

There continues to be a need in parish councils to reach out in love and compassion to members, especially during this Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. As chairpersons of organization, let us do everything in our power to sustain and affirm members. Encourage a time at meetings for members to share their stories. In this year focusing on palliative and hospice care, this may be the time for members to share these special life-changing moments in their lives. If so, generate ideas similar to those listed above with specific reference to palliative/hospice care. Listen and support members as they face the daily trials and challenges facing them.

“Let all that you do be done in love.” (1 Corinthians 16:14)

God bless,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret Ann Jacobs".

Margaret Ann Jacobs
National Chairperson of Organization