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The CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE of CANADA

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MEMO

To: Parish Council Past Presidents
CC: Parish Presidents, Diocesan President, Provincial Presidents and Life Members (on request)
From: Betty Anne Brown Davidson, National Past President and Chairperson of Laws
Date: April 26, 2015

Dear Sisters in the League:

To be a parish council past president is to adopt the role of “wise one,” “elder woman” or “grandmother” to other members. Our councils are not stagnant ponds, they are constantly moving, albeit slowly, toward the engagement and advancement of members. Gradually, new members gain confidence, learn League ways and acquire the ability to run the show, so to speak. This is good. By changing executives every two years, the council becomes a place for new blood, new ideas and fresh opportunities for bonding in the parishes. This keeps the parish alive and participatory.

As past president, you move into your consultative capacity, away from the “hot seat” of decision-making and ensuring projects are accomplished. You have “been there, done that” and you have learned from your own experience that, “We are God’s organization, He knows what He is doing,” as Honorary Life Member Irene Lefort once told me. We have learned to rest in faith if we pray and listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. To be a consultant is, first of all, to wait to be asked for one’s advice or opinion. Loving silence can be a sacred thing.

You know for yourself and others that widening the ripples on the pond (getting out beyond the concerns of your parish council by attending diocesan, provincial and/or national conventions) helps renew excitement for the League and introduces new possibilities for action and satisfaction. Remember the reasons members gave for belonging to the League—faith, fun and fulfilment. Larger gatherings (conventions) of like-minded, faith-filled women participating in well planned liturgies can set your faith life on fire! Expert speakers and admirably talented members are all one needs to whet one’s whistle with a rekindled fervour and direction to serve the people of God. Nudge other members to attend conventions, and allow them to whet their whistles with the depth and breadth of the League.

The annals of council history reveal the holy ground upon which we walk in our parish. Valiant women have gone before us, women who surmounted great obstacles in following their hearts to ensure justice for all. Unearth these vignettes and read them to your League companions like chapters in a developing story. Likewise, be sure to capture the essence of the wonderful things present day members are accomplishing “For God and Canada.”

Nationally, the League is only five years away from its 100th anniversary. What a milestone and accomplishment that will be! Begin to generate ideas of how best to mark this occasion. Pass along your council’s good ideas to national office and allow the 100th anniversary committee to consider them. Plan

things and events from now until 2020 to build up excitement and anticipation for that momentous Montreal gathering.

Pope Francis speaks to us, “I especially ask Christians in communities throughout the world to offer a radiant and attractive witness of fraternal communion. Let everyone admire how you care for one another, and how you encourage and accompany one another.... We are all in the same boat and headed to the same port! Let us ask for the grace to rejoice in the gifts of each, which belong to all” (*Evangelii Gaudium*).

Peace and joy to you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betty Anne B. Davidson". The script is cursive and elegant, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Betty Anne Brown Davidson
National Past President and Chairperson of Laws