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The CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE of CANADA

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MEMO

To: Parish Council Chairpersons of Community Life
CC: Parish, Diocesan and Provincial Presidents and Life Members (on request)
From: Betty Colaneri, National Chairperson of Community Life
Date: October 31, 2016

A warm fall greeting and embrace to my sisters in the League!

It's harvest time! What an awesome sight to see as God uses the earth as His canvas with an array of colours that dance with the sunlight along the vines. The grapes with their vibrant colours hang ripe for the picking. Fall is one of my favourite times of the year.

It is an honour and privilege to be sending this to you as your national chairperson of community life. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

All of us in Canada have so much to be grateful for. It is with that gratitude that we are to be mindful and pray for the people in Haiti and all those affected by Hurricane Matthew. To see how you or your council may help, refer to the following websites, devp.org/en/pressroom/2016/comm2016-10-07 and cccb.ca/site/eng.

Dignity and Rights of Persons

Local fall meetings and workshops are well under way for the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP). Recently, I attended a workshop in my diocese. It is the perfect way to obtain the information needed to assist you in your standing committee work and to educate members.

To celebrate its jubilee, CCODP is offering free membership to CWL members, an opportunity to join a dynamic cross-Canada movement for global peace and justice. Between September 1, 2016 and October 20, 2017, visit the the CCODP website to register your name at devp.org/membership. This is the perfect opportunity to support your local fall campaign and CCODP.

A concern was brought to my attention regarding CCODP. The following is the response I received from the CCODP head office that you may want to use should the issue be brought to your attention.

"We, at Development and Peace, also realize that questions have arisen due to certain misleading stories that have circulated regarding Development and Peace's work and practices. In the past, the organization received multiple attacks on our integrity and credibility by people who know very little about us or our work. We have been very saddened by the impact of these unfounded claims against Development and Peace and our work in the Global South.

I would like to reassure you that Development and Peace:

- Has never provided support or access to birth control or abortion, anywhere in the world;
- Put together a Partnership policy, which clearly states our values, our principles, and our approach to partnership, as well as the conditions under which we live this partnership;
- Set up, with the support of the Bishops' Conference, a standing liaison committee and process where concerns can be raised, and discerned on well ahead of time;
- Has learned a great deal through this process, and has all the necessary mechanisms to ensure that we continue to carry out our mission in line with Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Our partnership with CWL dates back to 1969, and focuses specifically on the rights of women. Through these programs, you can see exactly what types of activities we support: education, equal labour rights, participation in democratic elections, access to land and seeds and titles, protection from violence and aggression. These women, supported by the CWL program are unsung heroes, often forgotten by the media. They are farmers, teachers, doctors, mothers, and peacemakers. They are saving lives and protecting the dignity of those around them. CWL's support is precious to our work, and essential in these women's lives.

We feel very fortunate to be able to count on our partnership with Catholic Women's League and your continued support to Development and Peace."

The CCODP 1% Program will support two new programs this year in Sierra Leone and Afghanistan while continuing the program supporting Haiti. This decision was inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*. A new brochure is included in this mailing. More are available from national office at no charge. Be sure to order this wonderful tool for members to learn about the 1% Program. A PowerPoint presentation found on the League's website is an informative resource that explains the 1% Program for members. It may be found on at cwl.ca/resources/programs-and-workshops/ under the heading of community life.

With November 11th just around the corner, it reminds us how important it is to remember those that defend Canada and those abroad. WEAR RED ON FRIDAYS as a way to show our support for Canadian troops and their families.

Mark your calendar for the following important dates:

- November 13-19: Bullying Awareness Week (bullyingawarenessweek.org), a joint declaration of Bullying.org and Family Channel
- November 25: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 2016, (un.org/en/events/endviolenceday), designated by the United Nations General Assembly
- December 10: International Human Rights Day (un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/), also designated by the United Nations General Assembly

"On Human Rights Day, let us recommit to guaranteeing the fundamental freedoms and protecting the human rights of all." (United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon) "This year's Human Rights Day slogan, 'Stand up for someone's rights today!', is based on the Declaration's fundamental proposition that each one of us -- everywhere and at all times -- is entitled to the full range of human rights, and that it's everyone's responsibility to uphold them. Take a stand. Defend someone's rights. Human rights belong equally to each of us. They bind us together as a global community. Each one of us can make a difference."

Refugees and Immigration

At the annual national convention, Resolution 2016.01 Equal Access to Permanent Resident Status an Amendment to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* was adopted. The resolution was brought forward so that foreign workers may apply for permanent resident status regardless of occupational classification. The resolution and action plan is posted on the website. I look forward to hearing what steps your councils have taken to initiate the action plan.

"Filled with the hope born of faith and the love inspired by the Spirit, let us mirror God's good news everywhere! Whether it's serving meals at a soup kitchen, being a catechist, teaching newcomers a new language, giving rides to those who no longer drive, visiting the homebound, serving in a liturgical ministry or being involved in any one of the myriad ways there are to offer our gifts to God, everything is important and necessary to demonstrate God's goodness in our fragile and fragmented world. Pope Francis is convinced that our actions do make a difference. When done in joy, it becomes a privilege and an honour to serve the Lord in one another." *What Pope Francis Says About Service: 30 days of reflection and prayer.*

I am a firm believer of the power of one. One hand that reaches out to another. One heart that embraces with compassion. One voice to speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves. One person with the desire to make a difference. One person encouraging another to do the same. At all starts with ONE!