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The CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE of CANADA

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MEMO

To: Parish Council Chairpersons of Christian Family Life
CC: Parish, Diocesan and Provincial Presidents and Life Members (on request)
From: Doreen Gowans, National Chairperson of Christian Family Life
Date: October 31, 2016

Dear parish Christian family life chairpersons,

Welcome! I look forward to working with you over the next two years. My dream is to provide you with information you may use to help educate members or raise their awareness of current issues affecting the church community. I pray your journey will be friendly, educational and spiritually enriching as together we form the best sisterhood in the world!

Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF): I invite you to purchase COLF's complete package of brochures for a donation of \$10.00 plus shipping. The package contains brochures on marriage, family life, bullying, theology of the body, media, living and dying, euthanasia and assisted suicide, and many more. Some brochures may be downloaded free of charge, however the complete package will help you educate members on many issues Catholic women face daily. To order, visit www.colf.ca.

Executive Handbook: Do you have a copy of your roles and responsibilities as stated in the *Executive Handbook*? This handbook may be downloaded from the national website at www.cwl.ca. It is an educational tool that will help with monthly reports to members and is an asset to all chairpersons. If there are many new members on your parish council executive, your president may wish to purchase the entire handbook and split it up among her executive.

Marriage and Family: Catholic News Service reports, "The only way to defend marriage against the onslaught," [Pope Francis] said, is to help couples "make peace as soon as possible, before the day ends, and don't forget the three words: "May I?" "Thank you" and "Forgive me." Marriage is the most beautiful thing that God has created," Pope Francis said. In marriage, man and woman become one flesh, "the image of God."

In today's busy world families are finding it difficult to sit together to share dinner, let alone keep in touch in an intimate way. Retrouvaille (www.retrouvaille.org/dates.php?country=CAN) helps troubled marriages and Marriage Encounter (www.wvme.org/), helps couples to communicate. However, not all couples are able to access these programs. Do you have a program in your parish to support or strengthen happily married couples? Personally I believe even happily married couples need support and spiritual enrichment to help them provide faith development for their family members. I would be interested in hearing about your parish programs or activities.

A booklet from COLF titled *Marriage in the Catholic Church: Frequently Asked Questions* states, "The commitment of marriage requires a decision to keep building a relationship on a deep respect for one another, on friendship as well as passion, on shared values, hopes and interests, on a desire to make a life and a family together, and on a strong sense that through living out this vocation the spouses are responding to God's call to holiness." How do we support couples?

Sanctity of Life: Resolution 2004.01 Protection of Human Life urges the federal government to recognize that human life begins with the process of fertilization and to enact legislation prohibiting the termination of human life at any stage of development. Encourage members to write letters to the prime minister, federal ministers of health and justice, and their member of parliament (MP) and member of the legislative assembly (MLA). With euthanasia and medical aid in dying, the timing of this is extremely important. Members need to take action and inform politicians of our Catholic values. Let me know if and how many letters your council has written.

Youth: Does your council support youth in your parish? Your council can support them by asking for their assistance to help set up tables and chairs for events or to help wash dishes after a funeral lunch or to serve at a CWL tea. In return for their help give them a donation to support their activities such as World Youth Day or a pizza and movie night.

Does your council recognize their activities? Ask a youth to share his or her story at a meeting when they have taken on a special project or have been given an award for something they have accomplished. Remember these young people are the future church. Encourage them to help the poor etc. while deepening their spirituality.

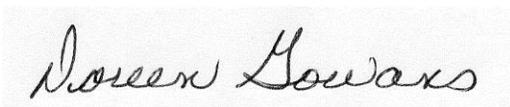
Seniors: Resolution 1999.01 Elder Abuse/Assault Awareness asks members to become aware of media campaigns, programs available from the federal and provincial/territorial governments, and community response mechanisms in place for elder protection in the community, and to urge provincial councils to encourage their provincial/territorial governments to implement effective campaigns and programs. This resolution would make an excellent project for your council. Perhaps you would like to research this issue in your area and then conduct a letter writing campaign on elder abuse. Euthanasia and medical aid in dying may affect loved ones. Take action by spreading information and writing letters to all MLAs, MPs and the prime minister to make your voice heard.

Disabled, Widowed, Separated, Divorced: In December 2012, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops welcomed an apostolic letter from Pope Benedict XVI "On The Service of Charity". The Acts of the Apostles record how the community of faith was involved in making sure that the distribution of food and the care for widows and others in need were exercised correctly with attentive fairness for the needs of all.

As stated in the letter, the ministry of charity is one of three inseparable responsibilities for the church, together with proclaiming the word of God and celebrating the sacraments. Does your council share its time and talent with disabled, widowed, separated and divorced members? Are they invited to attend meetings? Do they feel welcome? Do they receive offers of rides to meetings, spiritual programs and other events? As St. Teresa of Calcutta said, "Let's put our hands, our eyes, and our hearts to Christ's disposal so that [God] can work through us."

Vocations: Life Member Glenda Klein (Ontario) has accepted my invitation to head the vocations sub-committee. Watch for future articles and information from Glenda.

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roseen Gowans". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.