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## The CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE of CANADA

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# MEMO

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**To: Parish Education and Health Chairpersons**  
**CC: Parish, Diocesan and Provincial Presidents and Life Members (on request)**  
**From: Fran Lucas, National First Vice President and Chairperson of Education and Health**  
**Date: October 31, 2016**

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This education and health mailing is the combined effort of three committee members and myself.

### **Bursaries**

Bursaries are now being offered biannually. Applications are to be submitted to national office by November 30, 2016 and May 31, 2017. I was pleased to recently attend the convocation of a member in my archdiocese on the receipt of her masters of theological studies. Catherine benefited from the National Bursary Fund. This bursary is a great recruitment tool for the League!

### **Catholic schools and catechesis**

Catechesis is Greek and means "instruction" or "instruction by word of mouth". It is the basic Christian religious education of children and adults that initially began as education of converts to Christianity. Defined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and quoted by St. John Paul II in the apostolic exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, it says, "Catechesis is *an education in the faith* of children, young people and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life."

In the Catholic church, a catechist is anyone who is engaged in religious education and formation, from the bishop and all clergy to ecclesial lay ministers to volunteers at the local level. However, the primary catechists for children are their parents and communities. Couples getting married in the Catholic church promise to raise their children as Catholics, taking on the primary responsibility to introduce them to and guide them in the faith into adulthood. The community aids this process by offering programs such as children's liturgy during weekend masses. When the children reach school age, Catholic schools are available to them. In most provinces Catholic schools are private institutions. Only Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan maintain a Catholic school system, operated by separate school boards. They operate within a mandate protected by the Canadian *Constitution Act, 1867*.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has an Office for Evangelization and Catechesis. Priority is given to the identification and development of resources in the areas of catechesis for adults, children and youth within parishes and families.

### **Flu season is upon us**

Influenza is **not** the stomach flu! It is a respiratory virus that can knock you down for a few days to a few weeks, with a few people experiencing more severe complications, including death. Even if you are a healthy person, consider getting the flu shot to protect those around you who might not be able to fight the virus as well as you!

The people at high risk of influenza-related complications or hospitalization include:

- residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
- people 65 years of age and older
- Indigenous peoples
- adults and children with a number of chronic health conditions
- pregnant women
- children younger than 60 months of age

Four provinces provide the vaccine free of charge to those in identified risk groups and their caregivers and household contacts—British Columbia, Quebec, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island (with a \$7.00 administrative fee). Everywhere else in Canada, the vaccines are free to everyone.

For more information, refer to the National Advisory Committee on Immunization's *Canadian Immunization Guide Chapter on Influenza and Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2016-2017* at [phac-aspc.gc.ca/naci-ccni/flu-2016-grippe-eng.php](http://phac-aspc.gc.ca/naci-ccni/flu-2016-grippe-eng.php).

### **Palliative care**

Given recent legislation regarding medical aid in dying, the need for every Canadian to have access to high-quality palliative care that is covered under the *Canada Health Act* and delivered according to uniform standards is greater now than ever before. The action plan of this year's National Resolution 2016.04 Amend the *Canada Health Act* to Identify Palliative Care as an Insured Health Service asks councils and members to write to politicians urging them to provide these essential elements to quality end-of-life care.

The brief to this resolution gives more detailed information for those who wish to learn more (or to develop their arguments to government in a more detailed manner), and the works cited also offer further opportunities for in-depth learning. Ask members to write letters to help politicians understand that access to palliative and hospice care resources is a right that should be available to all Canadians.

The 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care day (May 4, 2016) and accompanying petitions in support of palliative care were both very successful. Thank you to the many members who participated. Mark May 4, 2017, on your calendars as another day of prayer for palliative care—more information to come!

### **A new work of mercy—care for our common home**

Pope Francis, in his message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation adds as a complement to the present works of mercy a new one, "care for our common home". Pope Francis further proposes that the new work of mercy be both a spiritual and corporal work of mercy. As a spiritual work of mercy it calls for "a grateful contemplation of God's world". As a corporal work of mercy, care for our common home requires "simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness".

The challenge for members in councils, parishes and communities is how to implement this new work of mercy in prayer and action. Pope Francis says open dialogue and reaching outside our immediate community is a good beginning. Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* (On Care for Our Common Home) is a valuable resource. Another resource is a *Study Guide for Laudato Si'*, published by the Interfranciscan Commission for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation at [francis35.org/pdf/laudatesi/Laudato%20Si%20Study%20Guide.EN.pdf](http://francis35.org/pdf/laudatesi/Laudato%20Si%20Study%20Guide.EN.pdf).



Fran Lucas