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The CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE of CANADA

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MEMO

To: Parish Council Secretaries and Treasurers

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

From: Janet McLean, National Secretary-Treasurer

Date: October 31, 2016

It is a pleasure to be able to write to the stalwarts of a parish council—the secretary and the treasurer. Without you, we would have no record of the accomplishments, both big and small, that your parish council has achieved and no idea of the financial position of your council. Thank you to all of you who have agreed to take on these important positions.

As I was just elected national secretary-treasurer at the annual national convention this past August, I have much to learn about fulfilling this important role on the national executive. I do have a background in both of these fields as I was a legal secretary, general legal administrator and then did the accounting for a legal firm during the course of my working career. But, as most of you can attest, no two jobs are exactly the same, and the work involved in taking on a new task is both exciting and a little intimidating. Perhaps you felt the same when you first agreed to be the corresponding or recording secretary for your parish council (or handle both of these tasks) or when you said you would manage your parish council's finances. If you ever have any questions about your role or the tasks you are to do, please let me know. I am at your service.

The end of 2016 is fast approaching and, before we know it, we will be making Christmas goodies, buying presents and setting up our Christmas manger as the focal point of our celebrations. Often at this time of year, we reflect on what we have done in the year and make resolutions for the New Year. For parish councils, it is the time when they look back on what the council has done in the past year and share this information with their diocesan or provincial council, depending on the structure in each province. Beginning this year, the League is launching an online system for you to use to complete your annual report. There is a separate survey form for each executive position as well as for each standing committee chairperson. Your president has received all the information it needs with respect to these survey forms. As the forms are completed online it should make it much easier for you to record your activities. If you have never completed a form online, this is your opportunity to start. If you need computer help, you may find that your children or grandchildren are a great source of knowledge. Or perhaps there is a young person in your parish who can help you out. As well, your diocesan or provincial council should be able to help as you take, what may be for you, a leap into the unknown.

I contributed to the preparation of the forms for secretaries and treasurers and have tried to make them as simple as possible. Do not be intimidated if the form seems long or if you are afraid you will answer a question incorrectly. There is no right or wrong answer and it is not meant to be a test. You might find there are things mentioned that you have never heard about, or that you do not do—that is alright. One of the reasons for the standardized forms is that it might suggest things that you would like to know about or suggest things that you could use. There is also a space for your personal comments. Last year, two provinces had their parish councils try the online survey forms and they were generally very well received. I hope you will have the same reaction, but do let me know what you think of them.

Until I have the opportunity to write to you again, I wish you all the best in your work as secretaries and treasurers of your councils. You are fulfilling an important role. Keep up the good work.