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The CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE of CANADA

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MEMO

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

It is an honour for me to be writing this first memo to all parish legislation chairpersons in Canada. I want to thank each of you for taking on the challenge of the legislation portfolio.

Unfortunately, this standing committee may be the least understood in the League. Members need to understand the great things that can be accomplished through taking action on legislation. *The Executive Handbook* states that, "Legislation is social justice in action. It is the carrying out of League resolutions to influence government policy." But what does that really mean?

When a resolution is adopted at provincial or national levels, or action needs to be taken on that respective level, it is then that we begin our job. Our task is to research if there have been government bills introduced or legislation enacted regarding the topic. We need to know the bills that are before parliament and what stage they are at. (Federally, a bill goes through two readings in the House of Commons before it is sent to a committee for study. After study, the committee reports its findings back to the House, and then there is a third reading. Bills are debated throughout the process. Once both the Senate and the House have approved the bill it receives royal assent.)

We need to decide if the bill supports or opposes any League resolution and then we must encourage council members to contact government to voice support for or concern about the bill. It is our responsibility to make members aware of the legislation. It is the responsibility of every member (over 83,000!) to be heard by government. Contact with members of parliament may be made through personal meetings, e-mails, letters, telephone calls, postcards and petitions.

If there is no legislation existing or pending regarding a resolution, then we must create awareness to encourage members to urge the government to enact legislation. For as the *Executive Handbook* states, "Legislation affects everyone and everything we have and do."

I look forward to working with each of you as we continue in our work "For God and Canada".

Your Sister in Christ,

Nancy Simms
National Chairperson of Legislation