



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

MEMO

DATE: October 5, 2017
FROM: Betty Colaneri, national chairperson of community life
TO: Parish council chairs of community life
CC: Parish presidents, diocesan presidents, provincial presidents, life members (on request)

“The poor are not a problem: they are a resource from which to draw as we strive to accept and practice in our lives the essence of the Gospel.” (Pope Francis)

Greetings to my dear sisters in the League!

As I write this, my town is finally experiencing some summer weather! The fruit did not have its usual sweetness and the grapes were late to ripen. Just as the plants, crops and fruit need the sun to form and ripen, God's people need the Son to thrive and survive.

Dignity and Rights of Persons

On October 17th, Dignity for All: The Campaign for a Poverty Free Canada is marking the United Nation's International Day for the Eradication of Poverty with the 5th anniversary of *Chew on This!* The campaign, coordinated with the Catholic-Calvinist organization Citizens for Public Justice, is calling for a federal anti-poverty plan to eradicate poverty and hunger for the 860,000 monthly food bank recipients in Canada, in addition to the millions of other people struggling to get by. Poverty activists will be on street corners handing out lunch bags containing an apple and a fact-sheet on poverty. Last year, 60 teams from coast to coast handed out 330,000 lunch bags.

In the September 13, 2017 issue of the *Prairie Messenger*, Mary Boyd, director of the MacKillop Centre for Social Justice in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island stated she is “hoping to increase pressure on the Liberal government to fulfil its 2015 campaign promise to set targets and measure progress on poverty nationwide”. She states, “It is a violation of human rights and a violation of all these United Nations treaties Canada has signed that we allow poverty to continue in Canada and continue to such an extent.”

Poverty, emotional deprivation and starvation, either on their own or together can have devastating events on the developing brain of young children, causing overwhelming long term effects for entire communities and societies. Tests have shown that the brain begins to learn in utero. Without proper nutrition, the brain may sometimes fail to develop properly with harmful and permanent consequences. It doesn't take long before the social environment, language and culture a child is living in begins to shape how the brain develops. Conflicts such as those waged in Syria or Venezuela can be tragic for current and future generations. Members must take action and double efforts to do anything possible to support international peace efforts. Children are the future.

In his apostolic letter, *Misericordia et misera* (On Mercy and Peace), Pope Francis stated that he would like the church to celebrate a World Day of the Poor on the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time. The 2017 celebration falls on November 19. The Holy Father invites the church and people of other faiths around the world to love and cater to the poor not only with words but with deeds. Make real gestures of mercy, invite the marginalized to be guests at our table. Pope Francis insists that acts of generosity and kindness must not be limited to occasional volunteer work but must also strive to find the true origins of injustice that will lead to an opportunity of evangelization and a true encounter with the poor. The Holy Father will preside over a mass in St. Peter's Basilica during the celebration. Following the liturgy, 500 of the poor will be invited to join him for lunch at the Paul VI Audience Hall in the Vatican.



Official logo for World Day of the Poor. (Credit: Vatican Press Office)

The prepared logo represents the World Day of the Poor. It depicts an open red door where two figures with outstretched hands reach for each other in trust. The opportunity to evangelize is depicted by a star on the upper half of the logo.

At the 97th annual national convention held in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Resolution 2017.01 Full Implementation of the Supreme Court Decision in *R. v. Gladue* for Indigenous Offenders was adopted. The resolution and action plan are posted on cwl.ca. I look forward to hearing what steps your councils have taken to initiate the action plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betty Colenari". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Betty Colenari
National Chairperson of Community Life