

The Catholic Women's League of Canada

1990-2005

companions on the journey

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Introduction

When members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada gathered for the 85th annual national convention in August 2005, National President Agnes Bedard called for a celebration of the League's long history. She said that it was a time for looking back and planning the future, a time for renewing friendships and forging new ones, and an opportunity for members to revitalize both their spiritual life and commitment to the organization. She likened belonging to the League to a life journey and members were *companions on the journey*. Those assembled were to view themselves as part of a picture that needed every one of them to be complete. They were blessed with gifts and talents to develop and share within the organization as they lived out their baptismal promise in the Roman Catholic Church and the community. They were to familiarize themselves with the League's goals for the following year and carry suggestions for action back to their respective provinces, dioceses and parishes. They were called to Catholic Action, to a pursuit of Christian perfection.

Although proponents of social action have often tried to unite women into groups, few have seen the light of day, and rare indeed is the group that has lasted through the night. It is difficult in this day and age just to get women together let alone ask for their time and service. Yet, the League has remained the largest and one of the oldest organizations of Catholic women in the country, with a membership of almost 100,000 women. What are the strategies that have enabled it to maintain a sizable membership? The scope of this history is to determine how the League is able to find resources and means within its structure to replenish the ground

springs of its activity. It examines its day to day workings as ideas are taken from a grassroots level and funneled step by step to a national level to be fine tuned by its leadership, and returned to be implemented in parishes throughout the country. Because *The Catholic Women's League of Canada: companions on the journey* is an addition to previous histories, the immediate application is from 1990 to 2005, a microcosm of the years in which the League has maintained its strong identity while continuing to make an impact on society.

A Call to Catholic Action

Catholic Action was the reason for the formation of the League on June 17, 1920, in Montréal, Quebec. Four members of the Catholic Women's Club of Montréal – Bellelle Guerin, Margaret Jones, Margaret Fortier and Agnes Bury – extended an invitation to similar groups across the country to meet to consider the possibility of federating with a view to standardizing their aims and objectives.

Units of the Catholic Women's League had been established in Edmonton, Alberta in 1912, in Montréal in 1917, in Toronto, Ontario and Ottawa, Ontario in 1918 and in Halifax, Nova Scotia and Regina, Saskatchewan in 1919. All were organized from a local point of view, usually by women working in the field of immigration. According to Katherine Hughes, organizer of the Edmonton unit, it was active pressure from the Edmonton women that brought about a national conference. Her sister, Loretta Kneil, formerly the president of the Catholic Women's League of Edmonton, was employed with the Women's Division of the Ca-

nadian Immigration Department in Ottawa following World War I. She noted that Catholic women were not being represented alongside other denominations in the government consultation meetings concerning the settling of post-war immigrants because there was no appropriate national organization. It was suggested that she confer with Justice Minister C. J. Doherty, whose wife Catherine Doherty was a member of the Ottawa unit. In turn, he suggested that Loretta Kneil should contact Bellelle Guerin, president of the Catholic Women's Club in Montréal.

Bellelle Guerin and members of Montréal's Catholic Women's Club readily agreed with Loretta Kneil that given the splendid service of women during the war, the time had come for an organization of "Catholic women power" that would be of far reaching value to the cause of women at large and the church in particular. The sister and official hostess for Montréal Mayor James Guerin, Bellelle Guerin had earlier acknowledged a belief in Catholic feminism. She said, "The term should be used when facing important social problems and a woman should look at them with clear eyes, and with sound judgment decide what is best for our families and for ourselves. It is for her to direct thought, to guard morals, and to carry her influence into the scale of justice whenever righteousness demands" (*The Albany Diocesan*, 1919). She informed Apostolic Delegate Pietro di Maria of her plans "to unite all Catholic women in a bond of common fellowship for the promotion of religious and intellectual interests and social work; to foster among Catholics a right public opinion upon questions of the day; the betterment of Catholic action; racial harmony among Catholics" (The Catholic Women's League of Canada Archives [CWLCA]).

Although the ideas of Catholic Action can be traced back to the time of the New Testament, when early Christians were to seek that which was for the benefit of the community, Pope Pius X brought the term into popular use. He said that it "excludes absolutely nothing of what in any way pertains, directly or indirectly, to the divine mission of the Church" (*Il fermo proposito*, Catholic Action in Italy, 1905). In the 1920s, Pope Pius XI defined it as "the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church's hierarchy" (quoted in *The Northwest Review*, May 1936). He said that the laity must be related in a dynamic way to the mission of the church and that Catholic Action was also social action because it promoted the supreme good of society, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Catholic Action was not unmindful of the problems of society, because under the guidance of the hierarchy it faced these problems and proposed solutions according to the principles of justice and Christian charity.

From the beginning, plans to unite Catholic women in action found favour within the Canadian hierarchy. Apostolic Delegate Pietro di Maria assured the four Montréal women of his friendship. Archbishop Paul Bruchesi, of Montréal, offered earnest support to the proposal of a national organization. Archbishop Neil McNeil, of Toronto, honoured the first conference, held in Montréal June 16-18, 1920, with his patronage. The archbishops stood on either side of Bellelle Guerin as she welcomed an audience of almost 500 people on the first evening of the conference. With eloquence and using rhetoric of the day, she announced, "We may be said to be laying the corner stone of an edifice that will arise fair and beautiful, strong and proud before the eyes of the world...shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart, let us go forth from this Conference bound by a solidarity that nothing can break, gentle women, but brave

soldiers, holding aloft our banner of patriotism to our beloved country and of inviolable fidelity to our glorious faith" (CWLCA).

Following mass at St. Patrick's Church the next morning, the delegates met in Congress Hall adjoining the church to begin a series of meetings, chaired by Bellelle Guerin. During a day of lively debate, those attending decided upon a stance on immigration, immodesty in dress, divorce, and censorship of photography and films. There was general agreement about a proposed constitution, incorporation, finance, headquarters, a magazine and organization of subdivisions. Rounding out the agenda were social evenings and a series of lectures designed to spark an interest in Catholic Action. Gertrude Lawler, a member of the Senate of the University of Toronto, spoke of Some Educational Problems for Catholic Women. Katherine Hughes, Alberta's first provincial archivist, told of her work with immigrants in What the C.W.L. Can Do for the Northwest. Loretta Kneil spoke of The Betterment of Catholic Social Action. In concluding, Bellelle Guerin penned the League's first resolution, a letter to the federal government requesting stricter divorce laws in Canada.

The delegates elected officers for a national executive (Dominion Executive Board): President Bellelle Guerin, Montréal, Quebec; 1st Vice-President Mrs. C. J. (Catherine) Doherty, Ottawa, Ontario; 2nd Vice-President Gertrude Lawler, Toronto, Ontario; 3rd Vice-President Mrs. J. E. Owens, Saint John, New Brunswick; Secretary Mrs. W. Armstrong, Ottawa, Ontario; Treasurer Mrs. W. H. Lovering, Hamilton, Ontario.

Councillors: Mrs. H. Fortier, Montréal, Quebec; Mrs. W. A. Kavanagh, Toronto, Ontario; Mrs. A. M. Hagan,

Halifax, Nova Scotia; Mrs. W. H. Mulvena, Sherbrooke, Quebec; Margaret Jones, Montréal, Quebec; Josephine Lynch, Saint John, New Brunswick; Mrs. E. J. (Margaret) Duggan, Regina, Saskatchewan; Mrs. H. Thompson, Edmonton, Alberta; Mrs. H. Kentleton, Toronto, Ontario.

* * *

Once organized, the League flourished on a national basis, thanks to Organizing Secretary Loretta Kneil, who obtained a year's salary from the Knights of Columbus, an organization of Catholic laymen, in order to travel across the country to establish a subdivision in every diocese. Existing parish organizations were welcomed under the umbrella of any unit organized by Loretta Kneil, but the organization had to join the League once the unit was granted a charter by the national executive. No less than 100 subdivisions were established during the League's first year of operation. In addition, the organization was invited to become an affiliate of the International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues, later called World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO), established "to work for the preservation of the Faith through the defense of religious liberty, and the organization of Catholic Social Action in the spirit of constant and complete submission to the directions of the Sovereign Pontiff" (CWLCA).

In April 1921, the national executive began to publish *The Canadian League*, its official organ. It was designed as an appeal to Catholic women across the Dominion to join the League. A May 1921 editorial explained, "Why? Because this is the age of organization. Other bodies of women have long since become nationally organized. Shall we remain inactive, a negligible quantity in the promotion of religious and intellec-

tual interests, social and patriotic work? However strong the voice of the individual it cannot be heard above the insistent demands of a large group held together by the ties of faith, common interests and a bond of common service. Are there not public matters which affect our homes and our families in which we should have a voice? Education, Divorce, Immigration, are all questions fraught with special dangers for the future of the country." The first issue was widely distributed and financed by Archbishop Neil McNeil, of Toronto.

In 1923, the League was federally incorporated, thereby gaining official status within the laws of Canada, and during the following years was able to develop into a powerful yet prayerful national organization, as demonstrated by Executive Director Valerie Fall in "*Except The Lord Build The House...*". The women leading the organization were often professionals in their own right. They had worked their way from social action within the parish setting to full flowering Catholic Action that involved service in civic areas as well as in the church.

Following Belle Guerin, the national presidents until 1948: Frances Lovering, Hamilton, Ontario (1923-1925); Evelyn McCann, London, Ontario (1925-1927); Margaret Duggan, Edmonton, Alberta (1927-1929); Mary Lyons, Ottawa, Ontario (1929-1931); Mary MacIntyre, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island (1931-1933); Cecile Keenan, Toronto, Ontario (1933-1934); Fanny Coffey, Montréal, Quebec (1934-1936); Florence Boland, Toronto, Ontario (1936-1938); Agnes Hay, Regina, Saskatchewan (1938-1940); Almira McCabe, Ottawa, Ontario (1940-1942); Henrietta McGarry, Kitchener, Ontario (1942-1944); Ann Macmaster, Vancouver, British Columbia (1944-1946);

Cecilia Dundin, Montréal, Quebec (1946-1948).

The national president, national executive and councillors (or standing committee chairpersons) held regular meetings and met in convention annually with diocesan presidents and member delegates as a national council to assess the work accomplished and plan for the upcoming year. The diocesan councils had earlier gathered for annual conventions. Each diocesan president reported to the national executive on projects and resolutions assembled by her subdivision council, which could be parish or business and professional women or even junior units. All of the councils had a chaplain appointed by bishops. All of the councils had appropriate standing committees. National and diocesan councils were to be financed by per capita fees levied on subdivision councils.

The programs and resolutions adopted by the national council covered a wide spectrum of Catholic Action throughout the years – including immigration work alongside the Sisters of Service in 1923, a National Scholarship Fund in 1927, the Regina Fund for drought sufferers in 1931 and a \$25,000 gift to the federal government for the war effort in 1940. The apostolic action of members was flexible and abreast of specific needs and evolving social realities. With its motto, "For God and Canada," the national executive appealed to the membership's sense of nationalism as they were asked to view their work as a responsibility of both their Canadian citizenship and sincere Catholicism.

During the 1940s, the League's method of operation was called into question by several bishops who thought the *Constitution & Bylaws* should indicate that the League was under the direction and guidance of the hierarchy of Canada, "the true source of

Catholic Action” (Diocese of Calgary Archives [DCA]). Following considerable deliberation, and desiring a continuance of favour and support among the bishops, the national executive asked each diocesan council to submit resolutions aimed at a revision of the *Constitution & Bylaws*. In 1947, the League was reorganized in agreement with the ecclesiastical structure, with the suggested parochial units, autonomous diocesan and provincial units, and a national unit that federated the organization.

In the revised *Constitution & Bylaws*, the office of chaplain was abolished and replaced by that of a director. The director was responsible for the conduct of League affairs within the territory of his title. In a parish unit, the parish priest was the responsible director; in the diocesan unit, the bishop or his appointee was director, and so on through the provincial and national units. The League was to be an integral part of the bishops’ own organization. When Bishop Francis P. Carroll, of Calgary, welcomed members to the 28th annual national convention in 1948, he called the League “a vital medium of the lay apostolate at the disposal of the Canadian Bishops under whose direction the League had placed itself” (DCA).

Implementing Vatican II

Many of the League’s post-World War II resolutions dealt with reconstruction, including assistance to returning service personnel and their families, English language training for a new wave of immigrants to Canada and response to an appeal from Pope Pius XII for assistance to war victims in Europe. The national council added a health and welfare standing committee to the national executive because social issues such as medical care, youth delinquency and censorship were becoming the sub-

ject of resolutions. The bishops’ prediction of “a subdivision in every parish and every Catholic woman a member of the League” (DCA) seemed closer to reality. In 1957, over 115,000 Catholic women held a membership in the League.

In 1962, Pope John XXIII saw the need for Catholic renewal and convoked an Ecumenical Council, calling ecclesiastical authorities and bishops to Rome to examine the state of the church and new conditions that constituted the environment of modern society. As Terrence Fay pointed out in *A History of Canadian Catholics*, Canadian Catholicism had pursued a narrowly focused theological tradition and devotional practice, “The Second Vatican Council lifted these constraints, which had hobbled the spiritual and intellectual expansion of Catholics and encouraged personal growth and personal involvement.” It was to be a council for the whole church and all were to have a role to play in the council.

When a theology of lay spirituality emerged in the Council documents *Gaudium et Spes* (Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution of the Church) and *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity), Catholics learned that they were not there just to listen and obey, rather, they had a share in the creative action of the church. Catholic Action as a movement was laid to rest by the Council although it had been a successful bridge between those who rooted all ministry of the church in the hierarchy and those who thought that social action must go beyond any mapping out by the church. In the 1960s, the used and useful phrase became “Apostolate of the Laity.”

The League met the challenges of the Council with energy and resolve as it faced a fundamental shift in the social

structure of the country toward secularism. In 1966, the national council adopted a resolution that focused on renewal – a need and desire to reevaluate the function and purpose of the organization and bring it into complete harmony with the current teachings of the church. In 1968, with a revised *Constitution & Bylaws* in place, members forged ahead in lay apostolate work.

Some of the League's initiatives: The Vanier Institute of the Family, a foundation dedicated to the welfare of the family, had been the national council's centennial project and \$100,000 became the voluntary objective for the financial needs of the foundation. A national resolution adopted family life education programs to assist families experiencing problems within society. In 1967, in the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples), Pope Paul VI urged those blessed with abundance to hear the pleas of others who were less fortunate; the League responded without question. In 1969, it joined with the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP) in supporting social and economic development projects in the Americas, Africa and Asia.

In the 1970s, a resolution was adopted on the subject of abortion, an issue that would preoccupy members in the following years. Section 18 of the Omnibus Bill passed in 1969 amended Section 237 of the *Criminal Code*, legally allowing the taking of the life of the unborn if the life or health of the mother was in jeopardy. The resolution urged all members of parliament to resist efforts for more permissive legislation in the matter of abortion. The national executive also asked every member of the League to support the resolution by writing a letter to her member of parliament. Project 100,000 was a letter-writing campaign in opposition to the widening of abortion legislation that

made its voice heard on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

Resolutions addressed the topics of battered syndrome, handicapped children, sanctity of life and Aboriginal rights. In 1979, the League issued a Statement on Human Rights, in which it urged members of parliament to review the federal government's position on issues pertaining to family life.

In the early 1980s, the League launched a major campaign to assist the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina in search of their grandchildren who had disappeared. A resolution was adopted that urged the federal government to create law enforcement to combat child and hardcore pornography. In 1985, the League undertook a commitment to promote the social teachings of the church throughout Canada in order to implement a preferential option for the poor. Other resolutions and briefs dealt with a variety of social concerns – from protection of life before birth and a conscience clause for nurses to ethical issues on reproductive and related technology and equal access to language training allowance. The League requested a response from the federal government regarding resolutions concerning sanctions on South African products, ozone layer protection, irradiation of food, alcohol advertising in the broadcast media, waste management, reduction of postal service to rural Canada, rights of Aboriginal peoples and family violence.

In 1989, a resolution submitted to the annual national convention spoke of the League's commitment to the family and the underprivileged. Child care had emerged as an issue that concerned families, governments and society as a whole. At issue was the future direction of child care in Canada. The proposed resolution requested that national council strongly recommend that the federal

government: use federal and provincial child care funds to expand and improve services to low income families rather than provide benefits for higher income families; give families that qualified for subsidy the option of receiving the subsidy for the care of their own children allowing one parent to remain in the home; implement an education program to inform parents of the importance of bonding during the first three years of life for subsequent health of their children; give preference to family child care in a home environment over larger facilities when granting approval for child care spaces; and, increase significantly the funding to special needs children. The resolution was adopted as a National Strategy on Child Care at the convention.

National presidents from 1948 until 1990: Grace Durocher, Windsor, Ontario (1948-1950); Ishbel Hutton, Ottawa, Ontario (1950-1952); Ellen Drake, Regina, Saskatchewan (1952-1954); Mar-

jorie Freeman, Riverside, Ontario (1954-1956); Margaret Bussieres, Silvery, Quebec (1956-1958); Grace Caughlin, Woodstock, New Brunswick (1958-1960); Marguerite Burns, Halifax, Nova Scotia (1960-1962); Isabella Stevens, Calgary, Alberta (1962-1964); Catherine Toal, London, Ontario (1964-1966); Dorothy Donihee, Cornwall, Ontario (1966-1968); Florence Fabris, Winnipeg, Manitoba (1968-1970); Iphigenie Arsenaault, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island (1970-1972); Molly Boucher, Vancouver, British Columbia (1972-1974); Mary Matthews, Willowdale, Ontario (1974-1976); Eleanor (Betty) Aitken, Rosemère, Quebec (1976-1978); Ruth Cooney, Calgary, Alberta (1978-1980); Dorothy Brocklehurst, Sydney, Nova Scotia (1980-1982); Jean Mahoney, Regina, Saskatchewan (1982-1984); Ardis Beaudry, Edmonton, Alberta (1984-1986); Irene Lefort, Antigonish, Nova Scotia (1986-1988); Evelyn Wyrzykowski, Lorette, Manitoba (1988-1990).

1990: Woman: Sharing in the Life and Mission of the Church

The 70th anniversary of The Catholic Women's League of Canada as a national organization was marked in 1990. It was a year of celebration! National President Evelyn Wyrzykowski invited all members to the 70th annual national convention in Montréal, where the constitution had been framed on June 17, 1920, "share in the experience of being together to strengthen our bond of unity, to encourage one another in our ministry for God and Canada, and to celebrate the joy of being a member of our organization." (*The Canadian League*, 64, 4, 1989).

In recalling the courageous and energetic Catholic women who united in kinship that was being handed on from

generation to generation, Evelyn Wyrzykowski said the League still had the proper structure to harness its members' faith, gifts, commitment and dedication. She likened a League membership to "water composed of droplets (members) joining together to form trickles (Parish Councils) which flow into one another to form streams (Diocesan level) that swell to become part of a river (Provincial Council). As the volume of water increases so does its power. The river has within it a much stronger force of energy than any of the other smaller forms, especially single drops....When water, flowing in a river, is organized and harnessed by a dam (National level), its tremendous energy can be produced and stored, directed

and distributed for many useful purposes" (*The Canadian League*, 66, 1, 1990). The seams of the system had not burst in 70 years because the different levels had cooperated to ensure that the dam remained strong and the resulting energy was focused.



Evelyn Wyrzykowski was similar to the national presidents before her in that she was notable in her unswerving dedication to the League. From Lorette, Manitoba, she was a teacher before marrying and raising a family and used that expertise in the field of lay ministry, her particular interest. She was involved in retreat work, the pro-life movement, Worldwide Marriage Encounter, Interfaith Marriage and Family Institute, Girl Guides of Canada and L'Arche communities. In her parish, she was leader of song for English speaking liturgies. In October 1989, she was invited to Sydney by the Catholic Women's League Australia Inc. as an international guest at the 34th national biennial conference. In 1990, she was honoured by the Archdiocese of St. Boniface with the Evangelium Award for service in the church community. Following the tradition of national presidents, she was president of parish, diocesan and pro-

vincial councils before accepting positions on the national executive.

Two projects that were introduced by the national executive occupied much of Evelyn Wyrzykowski's time and attention during the latter part of her presidency. The first was Women – Sign for Life, a collection of 195,000 signatures assembled by League members on behalf of the unborn and tabled in the House of Commons on November 21, 1989. The petition was controversial, with many members giving enthusiastic approval to its wording and others strongly objecting to the League's manner of addressing the issue. She had said, "We have to listen deeply to diverging insights; but not compromise in our continuing search for truth" (*Catholic New Times*, August 1988). She acknowledged the different views, mindful that her task was to have a willingness to relate authentically to Catholic women of very different shades of opinion, but clearly upheld the League's mandate to protect those who cannot protect themselves. In March 1990, Evelyn Wyrzykowski was represented by National President-elect Lucille Cullen, who together with National Legislation Convener Doreen Ferraton and National Secretary-Treasurer Sheila Howard made an oral presentation to the Legislative Committee on Bill C-43 *An Act respecting abortion*. Copies of the national executive's response to Bill C-43 were mailed to all councils, as a follow-up to the League's Women – Sign for Life petition.

The second project was the Field Worker Program, a long-range plan for League development. According to the Field Worker Mission Statement, the program was "To inspire, inform and affirm the Catholic Women's League members in our ministry – For God and Canada." Eleven members had been selected from across Canada to become

national field workers, whose work was to develop qualities of leadership in other members who, in turn, would carry on the work at diocesan and parish council levels. To promote the program, a giraffe called Gertrude was selected as a mascot.

Evelyn Wyrzykowski believed that the spiritual component in parish councils was the source from which action flowed. To this end, she suggested that during the anniversary year members should study Pope John Paul II's 1988 apostolic letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem* (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the Occasion of the Marian Year), and the 1988 apostolic exhortation, *Christifideles Laici* (On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World), which followed the Synod of the Laity in 1987. According to *Christifideles Laici*, "associations of the lay faithful must become fruitful outlets for participation and solidarity in bringing about conditions that are more just and loving within society" (30).

In late April, Evelyn Wyrzykowski, Lucille Cullen, National Vice-President Suzanne Barrette, and National Resolutions Convener Heather Leier met with representatives of the federal government in Ottawa to discuss responses to the resolutions brief submitted following the annual national convention in August 1989. The delegates represented 123,607 members. It was the 15th consecutive year that the League had been granted the opportunity. Eight resolutions and related issues were the topics of seven meetings: Resolution 1989.04 National Strategy on Child Care; Resolution 1989.05 Abortion Pill RU486; Resolution 1989.07 League Action to Protect the Pre-Born Child; Resolution 1989.10 Child Poverty in Canada; Resolution 1989.11 OAS/Spouse's Allowance; Resolution 1989.12 Pesticide Legislation; Resolution 1989.13 Ingre-

dient Disclosure; Resolution 1989.14 Family Violence – Governmental Programs.

Highlights of the meetings: Ministers and representatives were informed of League action concerning Resolution 1989.01 Family Violence – League Program. Diocesan and parish councils were encouraged to conduct study programs on family violence to raise the level of consciousness about causes, effects, nature and extent of domestic violence in parishes and communities. Regarding Resolution 1989.04 National Strategy on Child Care, the minister of health and welfare informed the delegates that within a few months he hoped to present a National Child Care Strategy Program directed primarily toward families in need of assistance. Regarding Resolution 1989.05 Abortion Pill RU 486, the minister of health and welfare assured the delegates that a New Drug Submission for RU 486 had not been filed with the government. Regarding Resolution 1989.07 League Action to Protect the Pre-Born Child, the representative of the federal government claimed that Bill C-43 *An Act respecting abortion* met the needs of Canadians, a response that drew sharp criticism from the delegates. Regarding Resolution 1989.10 Child Poverty in Canada, the representative pointed out that poverty in Canada had been slightly decreased because of government initiatives.

Regarding Resolution 1989.11 OAS/Spouse's Allowance, a discussion took place about a court challenge launched against the Widowed Spouses Allowance Program and the Spouses Allowance Program on the basis of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Regarding Resolution 1989.12 Pesticide Legislation, the delegates were informed of investigations taking place by the Federal Pesticide Registration Review Team. Regarding Resolu-

tion 1989.13 Ingredient Disclosure, the delegates expressed concern that voluntary ingredient disclosure by food-service outlets would not stress the seriousness of food allergies. Regarding Resolution 1989.14 Family Violence – Governmental Programs, the delegates voiced concern about government cut-backs that had reduced women's programs rather than increased them. Later, in an interview published in the *Prairie Messenger*, in May 1990, Heather Leier advocated raising awareness with respect to the causes, effects, nature and extent of family violence in parishes and communities. She recommended commitment and coordinated action in the development of provincial/ territorial/federal family violence strategies and recommended additional funding for programs, staff and operating costs for crisis shelters.

Items of interest: Members learned of the death of Honorary Life Member Molly Boucher (1972-1974) on January 15, 1990. The national executive proposed that a life member liaison be appointed by the president of each diocesan and provincial council to be a contact member for life members in each council. The national executive accepted a response, *Deletions to the Proposed Criminal Code Revision on Sexual Assault, Pornography and Prostitution*. The League's submission to the Legislative Committee on Bill C-43 *An Act respecting abortion* was presented. Because 1990 had been designated International Literacy Year by the United Nations, National Christian Family Life Convener Doreen MacDonnell urged members to focus on literacy needs within their communities, and to support the federal government's programs to increase literacy by volunteering as tutors.

Across Canada, councils celebrated the League's 70th anniversary. Holy Rosary Parish Council, London, Ontar-

io, for example, donated a stained glass window for Holy Rosary Church that depicted the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. St. Anthony Parish Council, Houston, British Columbia, combined fun and friendship as members entered a float in the May Day parade. St. Stephen Parish Council, Milltown Heights, New Brunswick, invited neighbouring councils for a potluck dinner and auction, with proceeds going to St. Croix Pro-Life Chapter and Fundy Transition House. Notre Dame Parish Council, Selkirk, Manitoba, offered assistance at Selkirk Youth Centre, a safe drug-free haven for teenagers that offered music, bible study and dinners. St. Francis de Sales Parish Council, Lower River Inhabitants, Nova Scotia, celebrated with an anniversary mass, followed by a dinner for members. St. Anne Parish Council, Thorhild, Alberta, organized a service on April 26, the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel, with special prayers for deceased members, followed by a dinner. St. John the Evangelist Parish Council, Saint John, New Brunswick, provided monetary assistance to Canadian and South American missions.

An anniversary project at the national level was "*Except the Lord Build the House ...*", a history of the League from 1920 to 1990, compiled by Executive Director Valerie Fall. A second project, Forward in Faith and Action, called for a banner from all provincial councils for display at the annual national convention. Parish councils were invited to participate in the competition; a winner was chosen at each diocesan convention and subsequently a winning banner was chosen at each provincial convention.

The annual national convention was held August 13-16, in Montréal's Chateau Champlain Hotel. The theme was *Woman: Sharing in the Life and Mission of the Church*. The convention

title was a tribute to Bellelle Guerin: First National President.

The convention was preceded by the WUCWO North American Regional Conference, held August 10-12, in preparation for the 1991 WUCWO General Assembly. WUCWO President-General Marie-Thérèse van Heteren-Hogenhuis, of The Netherlands, was a guest of the League and keynote speaker at the conference. She addressed the WUCWO conference theme, *Family*, a topic further developed by Delores Leckey, Executive Director for the Secretariat for Laity & Family Life of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States, and by Bishop J. Faber MacDonald, of Grand Falls, formerly a national spiritual director of the League. Almost 200 women arrived in Montréal early to attend the WUCWO conference, renew friendships and meet new members on tours of the older areas of Montréal and a day trip to the Laurentians.

The convention was formally opened at St. Patrick's Basilica with the blessing and unfurling of the new national CWL Flag by National Spiritual Director Bishop James H. MacDonald, of Charlottetown, Evelyn Wyrzykowski and Lucille Cullen. The designer of the flag, Life Member Doreen Lecky, was in the audience. Bishop Leonard Crowley, Auxiliary Bishop of Montréal, presided over the opening mass, which was followed by greetings from civic dignitaries and an address by Evelyn Wyrzykowski. She recalled the morning of June 17, 1920, when Bellelle Guerin gathered women from across Canada in Congress Hall to form The Catholic Women's League of Canada.

As was the tradition, a reception followed the opening ceremonies. The Knights of Columbus hosted the event, a custom throughout the years and an

indication of a strong working relationship between the two major Catholic organizations.

A Eucharistic celebration was held every morning, setting the tone for the day's events. The participants had a daily view of beautiful and spiritual works of art in the winning banners, submitted for the Forward in Faith and Action project, as they strolled about the ballroom of the hotel in which the sessions and workshops took place.

On Gathering Day, the first full day of the convention, the theme for the upcoming year, *Parish: A Family of the Local Church*, was developed by Bishop James H. MacDonald. He explained that the phrase "local church" in Vatican II documents refers to the diocese. Each diocese has a number of parishes and it is at the parish level that most Catholics experience Catholicism. He challenged members to deepen their understanding of the concept of "parish" through study, prayer and reflection in order to experience their religion more fully (*The New Freeman*, September 1990).

During business sessions, the criteria and guidelines for the National Bursary Fund were finalized. The fund was the result of two generous donations in 1988 with no stipulation as to their use. In response to Pope John Paul II's exhortation in *Christifideles Laici* and in light of the League's desire to foster service to church and community, the national executive agreed to establish a fund to promote participation of members in lay ministries by offering assistance for undergraduate studies in adult faith formation and/or youth ministry. The principal amount of the fund was to be invested with interest earned annually distributed as bursaries. Another item, after almost two years of deliberation, the national council voted in fa-

vour of introducing a Bank of Montreal Affinity MasterCard.

Eleven resolutions were adopted. Concern about the environment was addressed twice. Resolution 1990.07 Environmental Concerns requested that the federal government continue to develop guidelines and take the necessary action to protect the environment from further damage to oceans, rivers, forests and the ozone layer. Resolution 1990.06 Refuse – Reduce – Recycle – Reuse – Recover encouraged members to become environmentally knowledgeable, set environmental priorities and solicit family and friends to: refuse to buy products that were not environmentally friendly or were over-packaged; reduce water wastage and amount of garbage; recycle whenever possible; reuse bags, containers and other products; and, recover nutrients back to the soil by composting.

The national council urged the federal government to enact previously proposed legislation against pornography (Resolution 1990.10 Pornography Legislation), strengthen the gun control laws (Resolution 1990.11 Stricter Gun Control), reinstate the refugee transportation loan program (Resolution 1990.04 Refugee Transportation Loan Program), guarantee the rights of pre-born children (Resolution 1990.02 Rights of the Pre-born Child in the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*), denounce human rights abuses in El Salvador (Resolution 1990.03 Peace in El Salvador), and restore funding for Aboriginal media (Resolution 1990.08 Native Communications). Members were asked to become informed about the special needs and services required by single mothers (Resolution 1990.01 Support for Single Mothers), volunteer services and offer support for literacy programs (Resolution 1990.09 Literacy), and learn the correct method for breast self-

examination (Resolution 1990.05 Health Protection – BSE).

Recipients of a life membership agreed to place their experience and expertise at the service of the national council. Nine women were honoured with a life membership: Helen Arbuthnot, Chateauguay, Quebec; Joan Chessser, Russell, Ontario (MO); Mitzi Crowe, Edmonton, Alberta; Elaine Gallant, Summerside, Prince Edward Island; Claire Heron, Regina, Saskatchewan; Rita Milner, Sackville, New Brunswick; Joan Newington, Athabasca, Alberta; Marie O'Malley, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Helen Thibodeau, Bathurst, New Brunswick.

The business sessions concluded with the biennial election of national executive officers, traditionally conducted within the context of a prayer service that emphasized the call to service. Officers were installed during the closing mass, celebrated by Bishop James H. MacDonald at St. Patrick's Basilica. President Lucille Cullen, Sudbury, Ontario; President-elect Heather Leier, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Vice-President Claire Heron, Regina, Saskatchewan; Secretary-Treasurer Marie O'Malley, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Past President Evelyn Wyrzykowski, Lorette, Manitoba.

National Conveners: Spiritual Development Helen Turner, Kensington, Prince Edward Island; Organization Heather Leier; Christian Family Life Catherine Power, St. John's, Newfoundland; Community Life Sheila Howard, London, Ontario; Communications Claire Heron; Resolutions Joan Chessser; Legislation Gerry Oliver, Sparwood, British Columbia; International Relations Lucille Cullen; Laws Evelyn Wyrzykowski.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Anne Laskosky, Camrose;

B.C. & Yukon Ruth Hazlett, Comox; Manitoba Mary Bennett, Winnipeg; Military Ordinariate Rolande Oliver, Kingston, Ontario; New Brunswick Frances Leger, Saint John; Newfoundland and Labrador Gertrude Parsons, Cornerbrook; Nova Scotia Sheilah Pellerin, Middleton; Ontario Phyllis McIntomny, Ottawa; Prince Edward Island Lorna MacDonald, Vernon River; Quebec Helen Arbutnot, Chateauguay; Saskatchewan Vivian Bosch, Swift Current.

Rather than a formal closing banquet, the League threw a 70th anniversary party, complete with a cake and sparklers. The ballroom of Chateau Champlain Hotel was decorated with white, purple, pink and silver balloons and all 585 guests received a gift. Following dinner, a fashion show of apparel dating to the 1920s was enjoyed by everyone and a series of humorous anecdotes about League service was delivered by members and Bishop James Mahoney, of Saskatoon, formerly a national spiritual director.

Before stepping down as president, Evelyn Wyrzykowski asked members to be open to “the signs of the times,” as encouraged by Pope John Paul II. She said that her dream for members was that they would help one another deepen their faith through spiritual formation, strengthen their bond of unity through prayer and friendship, develop the practice of “shared” leadership, broaden their actions for timely issues and encourage others to find their “place among us” – all for the glory of God (*The Canadian League*, 66, 2, 1990).

* * *

When National President Lucille Cullen carried the newly blessed national flag in the recessional procession of the mass at St. Patrick's Basilica, it

was an historic moment for the League and an honour for the new national president, who joyfully joined those assembled in singing “Go Tell Everyone,” the closing hymn. Later, she invited all members to join in a challenge to make their organization strong and relevant to the 1990s and beyond. She pledged to make every effort to rekindle enthusiasm and give encouragement to all members in all parish councils across the country.



Lucille Cullen was from Sudbury, Ontario, had been raised in Toronto and Ottawa in a “League family” and brought with her an impressive list of credentials that included leadership and organizational skills. She was a charter member of St. Luke Parish Council in Thornhill, Ontario, in 1952 and charter president of St. Andrew the Apostle Parish Council in Sudbury in 1958. She was organist for St. Andrew the Apostle children's choir. Moving to Bramalea, Ontario, with her husband and family, she was president of St. John Fisher Parish Council (1967-1969) before returning to Sudbury and St. Andrew the Apostle Parish Council in 1969. Along with serving the League at diocesan, provincial and national levels, she was Northern Ontario Regional Manager for The Arthritis Society (1975-1994),

where she supervised a number of volunteer projects. She received the Ontario Bicentennial Medal in 1984. A prolific writer, she compiled *Ontario Provincial History Book 1947-1987*. She received, along with her husband, the Family of the Year Award from the Knights of Columbus in Sudbury in 1990.

Lucille Cullen encouraged members to continue to celebrate in the anniversary spirit – the festivities were as varied as the women involved and compiled into a Special Anniversary Projects booklet that was distributed to all diocesan councils. For example, members of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Parish Council (MO), Winnipeg, Manitoba, made environmentally friendly grocery bags; members of Our Lady of Victory Parish Council recited the Living Rosary; and, staff members at national office knit toques, mitts and scarves for children at Pinkham School.

Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish Council, Bathurst, New Brunswick, presented a rose to parents when their children were baptized. Members of Sacred Heart Parish Council, Watson, Saskatchewan, placed names of deceased members on a uniquely designed plaque. Members of St. Alphonsus Parish Council, Callander, Ontario, recalled the 1940s, '50s and '60s in laughter at their annual pot-luck dinner. Sacred Heart Parish Council, Swift Current, Saskatchewan, entered a float in the local parade. St. Hilary Parish Council, Red Rock, Ontario, hosted a successful yard sale.

Summer and fall months were eventful. The Mohawk crisis occupied most of Quebec members' time in July with telephone calls, letters and telegrams sent to the prime minister and the premier of Quebec, urging them to do everything possible to end the situation with a just and peaceful settlement.

Elsewhere, Honorary Life Member Jean Mahoney (1982-84) represented the League at the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies. Member Marion Reid was named Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island, a first for a woman in Atlantic Canada. The League's national office was moved in late September to 1-160 Murray Park Road in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

National executive fall projects: Lucille Cullen reported that the national conveners were developing short and long range plans. Communiqués were sent to provincial counterparts and ideas, information and suggestions reached the grassroots level through diocesan conveners. The Field Worker Program was finalized and Lucille Cullen asked every diocesan and provincial council to appoint a diocesan and provincial Field Worker team in an effort to reach every member.

In 1990, plans to amend the *Constitution & Bylaws* were underway, with work to be spread over three years. A review of all national voluntary funds was undertaken – with guidelines to determine that funds were going to organizations with goals and objectives compatible with League policies. For the Pro-Life National Voluntary Fund, groups that qualified as national pro-life groups were to be clearly identified.

A statement, *The Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day*, was prepared in anticipation of the 1990 International Synod of Bishops. The statement was submitted to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) to be considered during its preparation for the Synod. In keeping with development of Marian devotion and with assistance of the CCCB National Liturgical Office, National Spiritual Development Convener Helen Turner undertook the compiling

of the new League booklet, *CWL Prays*, with prayers submitted by members across Canada.

Following an invitation from the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, of Pembroke, Ontario, Lucille Cullen represented the League in Rome on December 9, 1990, at the canonization

of Marguerite d'Youville, the founder of Sisters of Charity of Montréal and the first native Canadian elevated to sainthood. Five thousand Canadians attended the ceremony. At a papal audience following the canonization, Lucille Cullen was one of 100 persons chosen to be introduced to Pope John Paul II, by name and organization.

1991: Parish: A Family of the Local Church: Part 1

As the League entered a new year, the theme, *Parish: A Family of the Local Church*, challenged members to strengthen and build up parish life. National Spiritual Director Archbishop James H. MacDonald, recently installed in the Archdiocese of St. John's, encouraged the study of three papal documents to further develop the theme – *Familiaris Consortio* (On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World), *Mulieris Dignitatem* (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the Occasion of the Marian Year) and *Christifideles Laici* (On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World). He pointed out that a “parish” is not a matter of structures or activities like Holy Mass, the sacraments or devotions. Rather, what constitutes a parish is the people who use the structures and the interest they have in Our Lord, an interest that when fully developed is called faith.

Archbishop James MacDonald said that there are different roles in a parish, and different responsibilities, and while the sacrament of holy orders is a necessary sacrament in a parish, it is secondary to the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Holy Eucharist. The parish, he said, is meant to be a service. He cautioned that parishioners should keep in mind that the parish is not the result of human effort, though effort is

necessary; the initiative that results in a parish belongs to God. He said that members have a right to be critical of a parish and acknowledged that there may well be things about a parish that should be critiqued, but members must remember that a parish is and will be as good or bad as its members. A parish must be an open family embracing each individual, no matter how one's ideas differ. “Priest and people are partners in a common task and all share responsibility for the common task.” (*The Canadian League*, 67, 1, 1991)

National President Lucille Cullen suggested that because the “parish” is a spiritual centre, each League member should endeavour to make her parish council an integral part of her parish. Further, she pointed out that a workshop entitled *What is a Parish?* was available through the diocesan and provincial spiritual development conveners to help the councils uncover a deeper understanding of “church” and move members to social action.

Lucille Cullen shared her joy about being present at the canonization of Marguerite d'Youville with members. The first native Canadian to be elevated to sainthood was born October 15, 1701, at Varennes, Quebec, to Christophe Dufrost de Lajemmerais and Marie-Renee Gaultier. She married Fran-

cois d'Youville in 1722, was widowed in 1730 and left with two children, four having died in infancy. Although in dire circumstances, she undertook charitable works with complete trust in God. On December 31, 1737, along with three young women who shared her love and concern for the poor and suffering, she consecrated herself to God, eventually founding the Sisters of Charity of Montréal, the Grey Nuns. She died on December 23, 1771, was beatified by Pope John XXIII on May 3, 1959, and pronounced St. Marguerite d'Youville by Pope John Paul II on December 9, 1990. Lucille Cullen related that when she met the pope, on the day of the canonization, he glanced at the League's flag that she was carrying and said, "God bless you and your organization." (*The Canadian League*, 67, 1, 1991)

In January, Lucille Cullen announced that the national executive approved a motion to donate the League's Canadian Catholic Development and Peace 1% Program Voluntary Fund for 1991 to Women Helping Women in the Americas, a project in Lima, Peru. In Lima's *pueblo jovenes* (squatter settlements), women had organized community kitchens, *comedores populares*, which fed thousands of Peruvian families. The women also ran a nationwide program called *Vaso de Leche* (Glass of Milk), feeding over 1,000,000 children every day. Any residue in the program was to go to *Rede Mulher de Educacio* (The Women's Network for Education), a three year program throughout Brazil that was responding to concerns about issues like housing, sanitation or education.

Of late, the focus of the CCODP had been on women's programs – community organizing, legal aid, and leadership training – all designed to raise women's awareness of themselves and of their strengths and rights. Members were committed to setting aside

one percent of the cost of personal items such as clothing, jewellery or cosmetics and sent donations through national office once a year. The funds were matched by the federal government. Most importantly, a message of solidarity was sent from women in Canada to women in South America as they struggled for the basics in human dignity.

Items of interest: Two telegrams were sent to the prime minister. The first urged the federal government to do everything in its power to bring an end to the conflict in the Middle East. The second urged the federal government to protect life at every stage. Lucille Cullen, National President-elect Heather Leier and National Christian Family Life Convener Catherine Power met with executive members of the CCCB to address national concerns of the church and the League. At the winter national executive meetings in Winnipeg, many hours were devoted to studying the implications for councils of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), introduced by the federal government in January 1991.

The first National Bursary Fund awards, to promote participation of members in lay ministries, were presented to five members. Heather Leier represented the League at a meeting of national women's organizations in Ottawa, convened by the National Health and Welfare Income Securities Programs Branch, to discuss Canada Pension Plan credit splitting. The Military Ordinariate Provincial Council sent letters to congratulate the chief of staff of the Canadian Forces for professionalism in performing peacekeeping duties, particularly in Oka, Quebec, during the past summer. Included were assurances of prayers for the safe return of soldiers from the Persian Gulf. Letters of concern were sent to Newfoundland's premier regarding an abortion clinic that

had been established in St. John's. Prince Edward Island Provincial Council reported that it had presented a brief concerning reproductive technology to the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies and that it was well received. Manitoba Provincial Council, the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada Winnipeg Archeparchy and the *Ligue féminine catholique du Manitoba* received Caritas Awards from The Catholic Foundation of Manitoba in recognition of commitment to church and community.

In March, Lucille Cullen, Heather Leier, National Secretary-Treasurer Marie O'Malley and National Resolutions Convener Joan Chesser met with representatives of the federal government to discuss resolutions and briefs that were submitted in October 1990. The delegates represented 118,972 members. With regard to Resolution 1990.02 Rights of the Pre-Born Child in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the minister of justice indicated that it would not be appropriate to amend Clause 28 of the charter to ensure that rights and freedoms were guaranteed from conception until natural death. Regarding Resolution 1990.03 Peace in El Salvador, the delegates learned that the Department of External Affairs had urged both the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front and the government of El Salvador toward a negotiated peace settlement, as had been recommended by the resolution. The delegates were told by the minister of employment and immigration that a strengthened Refugee Transportation Loan Program (Resolution 1990.04 Refugee Transportation Loan Program) was in place, once again. Regarding Resolution 1990.07 Environmental Concerns, the delegates were told that the government released a "green plan" in December 1990, indicating long term plans to restore the

quality of the country's natural surroundings.

The minister of justice acknowledged that consideration was being given to legislative proposals with regard to Resolution 1990.10 Pornography Legislation and Resolution 1990.11 Stricter Gun Control. She thanked the delegates for the League's expression of support for Bill C-80, introduced June 26, 1990, in the House of Commons to strengthen gun control law in Canada. It was her view that legislation should build upon existing firearms control provisions contained in the *Criminal Code* in such a way as to enhance protection of the public while not restricting legitimate firearms activities. She shared the League's concerns about pornography involving children and violence. Federal government representatives expressed appreciation regarding the League's support for the government's commitment to address the problem of illiteracy in Canada (Resolution 1990.09 Literacy). The federal government sought to promote reading through funding programs for publishers, administered by the department of communications and the Canada Council for the Arts. The delegates voiced concern about the impact of the GST on books.

In light of the federal government's commitment in February 1991 to contribute \$136,000,000 to eliminate family violence, the League commended the government for its initiatives. The program included increasing public awareness, strengthening the federal legal framework, providing prevention, protection and treatment services to Aborigines on reserves, strengthening family violence intervention and treatment services and increasing housing with the emphasis on long term residence.

In her message to members, Lucille Cullen said that the final review of

submissions for revisions to the League's Mission Statement (1982) was nearing completion and the Mission Statement (1991) would be presented to delegates at the upcoming national convention. As well, proposals were being drafted for amending the *Constitution & Bylaws* (1988), with an amendments workshop on the agenda for the convention. Lucille Cullen extended a warm welcome to all members to join the national executive in Halifax, Nova Scotia, "to celebrate – to be renewed and affirmed in our commitment to 'God and Canada.'" (*The Canadian League*, 67, 2, 1991)

The 71st annual national convention was hosted by Halifax Archdiocesan Council in the World Trade and Convention Centre in Halifax, August 19-22. The convention title was Miss Marguerite M. Burns (1960-1962), honouring a past national president. All 575 participants received a traditional greeting: *Ciad Mile Failte – One Hundred Thousand Welcomes to You All!*

While meetings occupied the national executive during the days leading up to the convention, participants were treated to the Grafton Street Dinner Theatre, a bus tour to Peggy's Cove and a Halifax Harbour cruise.

Archbishop James MacDonald was unable to attend the convention due to an illness. Bishop J. Faber MacDonald, of Charlottetown, formerly a national spiritual director, presided at the opening mass at St. Agnes Church.

Bishop Faber MacDonald addressed the theme, *Parish: A Family of the Local Church*. He said that society should be working towards sharing in the Kingdom of God and the "parish" could help to achieve this aspiration. He drew a parallel between the constitutional crisis in Canada and the theme, noting that both the country and the

League were working to maintain their identity for future generations.

The national executive was intent on adapting its constitution to reflect changes and needs. The first draft of proposed amendments to the *Constitution & Bylaws* (1988) was circulated at a workshop. All members attending were invited to participate in the discussions.

The theme was further developed on Gathering Day by guest speaker Joanne Chafe, of the CCCB National Advisory Committee on Adult Religious Education, and editor of *Adult Faith, Adult Church*. She cautioned that the meaning of "parish" had changed. The parish must now be more involved in the community and to this end must address the community's concerns, such as, "Who is unemployed? Who is having family problems? Who is caring for whom?" The parish is a place for worship, but also a base of support and friendship.

Another guest speaker was Minister Responsible for the Status of Women The Hon. Mary Collins who spoke of the notion of a non-violent society, advising that a Canadian panel, Violence against Women, had been established to: examine violence in all of its dimensions; identify the issue from the perspective of women's experience; heighten public awareness about violence; seek solutions, relating them to the root causes and emphasizing prevention; and, devise a plan of action with deadlines. She urged members to become involved in the work of the panel when discussions and deliberations were undertaken.

A resolution adopted was Resolution 1991.07 Community Violence in which the national council encouraged members to become informed about the root causes of violence and pursue pre-

vention strategies directed toward a truly non-violent society that respects the dignity of all persons. Further, the League commended the permanent council of the CCCB for its statement, *To Live without Fear*, in which the bishops urged implementation of programs that would prevent violence. Members were encouraged to promote and study the statement and also to study a document published by the social affairs committee of the Assembly of Quebec Bishops, *A Heritage of Violence: A Pastoral Reflection on Conjugal Violence*.

Resolution 1991.01 Ministry to Persons with a Mental Disability requested that all councils assist members and church communities to grow in comprehension of the many aspects of pastoral care for developmentally disabled persons. Members were urged to assist others in becoming knowledgeable about the special needs of developmentally disabled persons so that they could reach their full potential and share their gifts of love and joy within their faith community.

Resolution 1991.02 Over-Medication of the Elderly addressed an overlooked problem of seniors, many of whom suffered due to age related susceptibility, non-compliance, use of non-prescription drugs and/or inappropriate prescriptions. Members were urged to become informed and recognize drug misuse and after careful study, take action where necessary by addressing their concerns to appropriate government and medical agencies.

Resolution 1991.03 Euthanasia called on the federal government to value, respect and protect human life from conception to the time of natural death. Two private members' bills to legalize euthanasia, Bill C-203 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (terminally ill persons)* and Bill C-261 *An Act to*

legalize the administration of euthanasia under certain conditions to persons who request it and who are suffering from an irremediable condition and respecting the withholding and cessation of treatment and to amend the Criminal Code, had been introduced to the House of Commons. The national council urged the federal government to respect all stages of life and proposed that members study the two bills as well as the documents of the church on euthanasia. Further, it urged members to zealously oppose the proposed legislation by writing to the prime minister, the minister of justice and their members of parliament.

Resolution 1991.04 Saving the Family Farm considered that farm foreclosures were at an unprecedented level. The farm population had been declining and while farmers preferred not to use subsidies, the world situation made economic assistance from governments necessary. The national council requested the federal government to impose a temporary moratorium on farm foreclosures until a solution to the problem was found. It also asked the federal government to establish a cost of production formula on a specific amount of production to ensure an adequate income for farm families.

Resolution 1991.05 Loss of Container Traffic to Port of Halifax addressed the viability of the Port of Halifax which was being threatened by the initiatives of American ports and railways. The national council petitioned the federal government to examine the diversion of Canada's overseas trade. It urged the government to bring the fiscal, tax and regulatory policies affecting Canadian railways into line with those in the United States, and also to implement a program to help CN Rail update its service to current standards (double stacking containers) so that it could be

competitive with railways in the United States.

Resolution 1991.06 Support for Aboriginal Peoples urged all members to promote an awareness and understanding of Aboriginal history, spirituality, culture, language, traditions, rights and concerns, and to become more informed about the violation of Aboriginal human rights by governments, society and individuals. Diocesan councils were asked to work with Catholic Native ministries, Aboriginal agencies in their dioceses and regional offices of the CCOOP to provide material for study and discussion and dialogue with Aboriginal peoples. Members were asked to provide opportunities, where possible, leading to ongoing reconciliation and healing of wounds.

Lucille Cullen awarded scholarships for study at the Coady International Institute, a training centre at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, devoted to developing strategies to alleviate poverty in developing countries. The League was a long-time friend and supporter (since 1961) of Coady, established in 1959 along the lines of the 1920s program of social development headed by Dr. M. M. Coady and Father J. J. Tompkins for the empowerment of ordinary people through collective action. The 1991 recipients were Sister Mary Mathew, founder of a movement in central India which involved every aspect of community living and adult education, Catherine Odueze, involved in community development, especially as it related to women, and Nozipo Ruth Plaatjie, program coordinator with the Grahamstown Ecumenical Centre who was involved with a variety of community developments, mainly working with women. In addition, national voluntary funds provided financial support for Birthright International, Alliance for

Life, WOOMB Canada, CCOOP and the Holy Father's Relief Fund.

Bishop Faber MacDonald spoke to participants about representing the CCCB in Rome during discussions on an American bishops' pastoral statement on women and women's issues. According to guest journalist Ann Marie McKinnon, he had spoken proudly of the League's collaboration with the Canadian bishops and of its importance in the life and mission of the Canadian church. He challenged every member to bring one new member into the organization each year, "If this were to happen, what a power house of spirituality we would have" (*The Canadian League*, 67, 3, 1991).

Twelve women were honoured with a life membership: Vivian Bosch, Swift Current, Saskatchewan; Katherine Cecile, Sudbury, Ontario; Lorraine Collee, Welland, Ontario; Josephine Covelli, Don Mills, Ontario; Joan Durand, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario; Hattie Eherer, Athabasca, Alberta; Margaret Emery, Moncton, New Brunswick; Mary Huffman, Yarker, Ontario; Bernice Leahy, Lakefield, Ontario; Mary McLeod, Summerland, British Columbia; Gertrude Nowlan, Oromocto, New Brunswick; Madeline Pearson, Kinmount, Ontario.

Officers were reaffirmed during the closing mass at St. Mary's Basilica, presided over by Monsignor John R. Campbell, of Halifax. President Lucille Cullen, Sudbury, Ontario; President-elect Heather Leier, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Vice-President Claire Heron, Regina, Saskatchewan; Secretary-Treasurer Marie O'Malley, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Past President Evelyn Wyrzykowski, Lorette, Manitoba.

National Conveners: Spiritual Development Helen Turner, Kensington, Prince Edward Island; Organization

Heather Leier; Christian Family Life Catherine Power, St. John's, Newfoundland; Community Life Sheila Howard, London, Ontario; Communications Claire Heron; Resolutions Joan Chesser, Russell, Ontario; Legislation Gerry Oliver, Sparwood, British Columbia; International Relations Lucille Cullen; Laws Evelyn Wyrzykowski.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Agnes Bedard, Calgary; B.C. & Yukon Ruth Hazlett, Comox; Manitoba Helen Bembenek, Anola; Military Ordinariate Rolande Oliver, Kingston, Ontario; New Brunswick Frances Leger, Saint John; Newfoundland and Labrador Catherine Fagan, Mount Pearl; Nova Scotia Sheilah Pellerin, Middleton; Ontario Joan Hastie, Rexdale; Prince Edward Island Lorna MacDonald, Vernon River; Quebec Beatrice Le Blanc, Deux Montagnes; Saskatchewan Mildred Young, Regina.

Spiritual reflections on the fruits of the Holy Spirit were appreciated by the participants. The closing banquet was held at the convention centre, where guest speaker Virginia Turner, SC, Program Supervisor of the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, explored the issue of violence in the community, inviting parishes to become more flexible in their programs to accommodate society's changing needs. She noted the potential for violence in everyone and challenged members to eliminate all forms of abuse.

A new Mission Statement was adopted by delegates, "The Catholic Women's League of Canada is a national organization rooted in gospel values calling its members to holiness through service to the people of God."

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Following the national convention, Lucille Cullen reported that the Field

Worker Program plans to provide leadership and training to councils were progressing in all dioceses. Members in all levels of councils demonstrated a renewal in their commitment to service.

In September, Lucille Cullen and National Past President Evelyn Wyrzykowski were delegates to the WUCWO General Assembly held in Guadalajara, Mexico. Another member attending was WUCWO Board Member for Canada and Honorary Life Member Ardis Beaudry (1984-1986). The theme was *Women and Life: Vision, Reality and Action*. Lucille Cullen attended the WUCWO North American Regional Conference planning meeting, a conference to be held in Chicago in 1993. Later, she attended the annual meeting of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Lay Associations (CCCLA) in Ste. Anne de Beaupre, Quebec.

In October, members were represented by National Christian Family Life Convener Catherine Power at the Symposium on the Rights of the Child sponsored by the Child Welfare League of America/Canada, the Canadian Child Welfare Association and the Canadian Council for Children and Youth. In August, she had reported that Family Service Canada planned a four phase strategy, Building Better Family Environments, covering the upcoming four years. The project was to stress home, community and national environments, the latter with a focus on government programs that were serving families, all building to the United Nations International Year of the Family in 1994. Nova Scotia Provincial President Sheilah Pellerin reported that councils worked vigorously on the White Ribbon Against Pornography (WRAP) campaign, hanging ribbons on doors to remind society that pornography should not be tolerated. B.C. & Yukon Provincial Council initiated the Molly Boucher Bursary, honouring the late national

president (1972-1974). New Brunswick Provincial Council donated funds to a national research centre for the study of family violence.

In the provinces: New Brunswick Provincial President Frances Leger was the recipient of a Canada Volunteer Award. Former Ottawa Archdiocesan Council President Mildred Palombo received the Ontario Award for dedication and years of service to Girl Guides of Canada. Aboriginal women organized the Blessed Kateri Parish Council in the Diocese of Thunder Bay and began operating a drop-in centre for those needing friendship and assistance. Helen Martens, a member of St. Joseph Parish Council, Mission, British Columbia, was appointed regional consultant for Birthright Southern British Columbia. Life members Therese Le-

Claire, Swift Current, Saskatchewan, and Mitzi Crowe, Edmonton, Alberta, joined the ranks of those who received the *Bene Merenti* papal medal, conferred on men and women who have exhibited exceptional service to the church, their families and community. Mildred Milliea, a member of St. Aloysius Parish Council, Richibucto, New Brunswick, and a teacher who developed a curriculum for Micmac language courses, was awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree by St. Thomas University. Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Council, Chateaugay, Quebec, introduced the Holy Childhood Association program at St. Willibrod School. Sacred Heart Parish Council, Merritt, British Columbia, held its 20th annual bazaar with members of the Anglican Church and the United Church.

1992: Parish: A Family of the Local Church: Part II

In January 1992, the first draft of the amendments package was circulated to all councils, a further step in the League's review of the *Constitution & Bylaws* (1988). National President Lucille Cullen suggested that council presidents should encourage all members to participate in an amendments workshop to contribute to shaping the League as it moved through the 1990s. Each proposal and the reason for it being proposed was to be considered by the national executive as it prepared a second draft that would be presented at the amendments workshop during the annual national convention in August.

Noteworthy: Lucille Cullen informed members that following a meeting of the national executive early in the year, a telegram was sent to the federal minister of justice. It stated, "In view of the recent Supreme Court ruling upholding the constitutionality of the Fed-

eral Obscenity Law, The Catholic Women's League of Canada, representing 121,000 members, wishes to affirm and encourage your initiative to introduce a Child Pornography Bill by the fall of 1992 or as soon as possible." All members were asked to support the national executive's initiative by sending letters of support to the federal government.

In early May, Lucille Cullen, National President-elect Heather Leier and National Resolutions Convener Joan Chesser met with appropriate representatives of the federal government in Ottawa to discuss the 1991 Resolutions Brief. The associate minister of national defence and minister responsible for the Status of Women spoke of additional concerns with the delegates – world environmental issues, national unity, ingredient disclosure, children's initia-

tives and the Earth Summit, slated for June 1992 in Brazil.

With regard to Resolution 1991.02 Over-medication of the Elderly, the representative from the department of health and welfare learned of the League's history of concern for seniors from the delegates, who reviewed resolutions submitted in 1986, 1987 and 1988. The representative replied that the Health Protection Branch was represented on the Canadian Coalition on Medication Use and the Elderly, an organization that had already formed four interdisciplinary task force groups to address concerns. Regarding Resolution 1991.03 Euthanasia, the delegates learned that Bill C-203 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (terminally ill persons)* was effectively abolished by adoption of a motion to adjourn the committee *sine die*. Bill C-261 *An Act to legalize the administration of euthanasia under certain conditions* was considered non-votable and removed from the order table. A position paper opposing legislation that would allow euthanasia or assisted suicide had been drafted by the League.

Regarding Resolution 1991.04 Saving the Family Farm, the delegates were assured of the government's commitment to assisting farm families to become well positioned for the future. They were informed that the Farm Women's Bureau of Agriculture Canada had developed a consultation policy to ensure the Farm Women's Bureau's inclusion in departmental consultations within the agriculture sector. Regarding Resolution 1991.05 Loss of Container Traffic to Port of Halifax, a written response from the minister of transport assured the delegates that Transport Canada and the Canada Ports Corporation would be making every effort to support and implement measures essential to Canada's transportation system.

The national program coordinator of the New Horizons Partners in Aging Program and Seniors Independence Program gave the delegates an information package which was available from Health and Welfare Canada. The Seniors Independence Program was designed to help seniors improve their health, well-being and independence.

Health and Welfare Canada issued an information package on Brighter Futures, an action plan for children. It built on the ratification of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the National Child Benefit. Other topics brought forth by delegates included the upcoming 1994 International Year of the Family, safety of silicone gel breast implants and research on breast cancer.

The delegates learned that Employment and Immigration Canada, through its Innovation Strategy, was funding an initiative known as the Self-Sufficiency Project. It was research based and focused on helping people leave social assistance, obtain employment and achieve self-sufficiency. It was developed in cooperation with the provinces and advisory groups including representatives from the fields of business, labour and education. The project was to be piloted in New Brunswick and British Columbia.

National bursary awards to promote participation in lay ministries were received by 12 members. Lucille Cullen related that Honorary Life Member Ardis Beaudry (1984-1986) was co-opted to the WUCWO board for four years, ensuring the League's presence on the WUCWO executive. In June, Joan Chesser represented the League at the initial information exchange in Ottawa for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, China, in September 1995, following an

invitation from the minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Projects of interest: Saskatoon Diocesan Council took part in bringing Gertrude Shope, of the Women's League of the African National Congress, to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, for a speaking engagement. St. Martin Parish Council, Cumberland, Prince Edward Island, adopted a prayer for vocations for its Eucharistic celebrations. St. Paul Parish Council in Alliston, Ontario, co-sponsored a painting of the Holy Family for Holy Family School to celebrate the opening of a second Catholic school. Christ the King Parish Council, Winnipeg, Manitoba, donated funds, fabric and time toward quilts for orphans in Romania. Other councils and the Women's Inter-Church Council of Winnipeg raised funds for Alpha House project to provide secure residential housing for abused women and their children. Members of St. Julia Parish Council, St. Catharines, Ontario, made a cathedral window quilt for a raffle with proceeds going to a developing country. Members of Christ the King Parish Council, Courtenay, British Columbia, sent "We want you in Canada" messages to sister members in Quebec.

Lucille Cullen invited all members to Sudbury, Ontario, her home town, for the 72nd annual national convention. She joined Bishop Jean-Louis Plouffe, of Sault Ste. Marie, in expressing a heartfelt hope that it would be a deeply spiritual experience.

The convention was held August 17-20 and attracted 612 participants. Registration began before the weekend, with members eager to enjoy the northern hospitality of Sudbury – an international night, a buffet dinner at Laurentian University and a bus trip to famous Science North with a cruise of Lake Ramsay on the Cortina.

Bishop Jean-Louis Plouffe presided at the Eucharistic celebration that marked the opening. All convention masses were celebrated at Christ the King Church, near the site of the convention. Morning and evening prayers added a further dimension to the days of study and meetings involving women from all walks of life.

On Gathering Day, participants concentrated on the theme, *Parish: a Family of the Local Church*. Guest journalist Bonnie Brennan related that National Spiritual Director Archbishop James H. MacDonald, of St. John's, spoke of the usual experience of "parish" and of what the parish could and should aspire to become. He said, "just as the universal Church is a family of Dioceses, so too the local Church, the Diocese, is a family of Parishes" (*The Canadian League*, 68, 3, 1992). Each parish should be "an open family, embracing each member, no matter how different circumstances or ideas might be" (Ibid.). Further, he said that the basis for parish life is, "not conformity or a safe haven in an alienating culture, but the Divine Call shared by parishioners that challenges them to look forward to what is to come and to seek the mind of Jesus...not a false sense of like-mindedness that can block community" (Ibid.).

The second day of the convention was somewhat a break with tradition as well as an opportunity for participants to make an impact on the League's policies and programs. The national executive held an open workshop for the proposed amendments to the *Constitution & Bylaws* (1988), literally a dialogue with over 400 members in small groups from different provinces with varying experiences within all League levels. According to National Past President Evelyn Wyrzykowski, chairperson of the national amendments committee, the League's *Constitution & Bylaws* is the

“road map” by which the League must travel and is a most important document, thus is deserving of thoughtful and prayerful deliberation (Ibid.).

Of special interest, Marie-Therese Larrivee, SC, spoke and presented slides about St. Marguerite d'Youville. She took members back through the years to when the Canadian born saint and her sister members of the Grey Nuns persevered in caring for those in need despite many obstacles.

Letters had been drafted during the pre-convention national executive meeting and sent to those participating in the constitutional conference in Ottawa that was taking place at the same time as the convention. On behalf of 116,012 members throughout Canada, the national executive urged the prime minister, minister responsible for constitutional affairs, provincial premiers, territorial first ministers and First Nations leaders to achieve a reasonable and fair agreement that would ensure a united country.

Resolution 1992.04 Canadian Unity was adopted and the subject of dialogue in an open session prior to the convention. Members officially affirmed their commitment to a united Canada, asking the federal government to promote a model of confederation acceptable to Canadians. They resolved to write letters to participants in the constitutional conference. They urged one another to examine the options proposed by all levels of government and evaluate how those options affect the dignity, happiness and values of Canadians. As a tribute to Canada's 125th year of confederation, Quebec Provincial President Beatrice LeBlanc asked that all members pray that Quebec would continue as a province.

Other resolutions adopted were a reflection of concern about rights, and

lack of rights, of citizens. Resolution 1992.05 Support Services for Pregnant Women, was wide in scope, urging the federal and provincial/territorial governments to provide services for pregnant women. Resolution 1992.01 Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) specifically targeted provincial and territorial departments of education, urging them to include information on FAS in the school curriculum and asking that warning notices about FAS be posted in all alcohol outlets.

In Resolution 1992.02 Protection of the Pre-born Child, the League once again requested the federal government to enact legislation to enshrine the rights of the developing pre-born child in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. It urged the government to recognize that each human life begins at conception and must be protected by law before as well as after birth.

Resolution 1992.03 Racism expressed concern about the prevalence of racism although the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, the *Employment Equity Act* and the federal and provincial human rights acts all provided for equal rights. The League opposed any form of racial or ethnic harassment. It urged members to become informed about the impact of racism on society, to work constructively toward the elimination of racism and bias, and to encourage membership in the League among Catholic women from all ethnic cultures so that the League would reflect the multicultural nature of Canadian society. A letter was sent to the minister of multiculturalism and citizenship urging the federal government to defend those suffering from racial and ethnic discrimination.

Resolution 1992.06 Child Pornography Legislation recalled that the League had consistently objected to all

forms of pornography. At the annual national convention in 1991, delegates had adopted a definition of pornography as "any representation of degrading or violent sexual behavior, whether it be real or simulated, for the purpose of pleasure or profit, which exploits and dehumanizes sex so that human beings are treated as things and as sex objects" (*The Canadian League*, 68, 3, 1992). With the federal government indicating that legislation on child pornography would be introduced into the House of Commons in 1992, the League requested that the minister of justice ensure that the wording of the League's definition of pornography would become part of the proposed legislation, as it related to children.

Two of the national voluntary funds received new titles. The Holy Father's Relief Fund became the Collection for Pope's Pastoral Works. The National Scholarship Fund was to be called the Coady International Institute Fund, to prevent confusion between the National Bursary Fund and the National Scholarship Fund. The Pro-life Fund was divided between Alliance for Life, WOOMB Canada and Birthright International.

The League presented CCODP Executive Director Gabrielle Lachance with a substantial gift. In turn, she presented the League with a plaque "in recognition of exceptional and sustained commitment to international solidarity and contribution to a more just and humane world" (Ibid.).

Fifteen women were honoured with a life membership: Maureen Barry, Saint John, New Brunswick; Agnes Bedard, Calgary, Alberta; Angela DeBruyn, Blenheim, Ontario; Joleene Kemp, Thunder Bay, Ontario; Carmel Kerr, Perth, Ontario; Angela Kinden, Moncton, New Brunswick; Madeline Kurjata, Dawson Creek, British Colum-

bia; Anne Laskosky, Camrose, Alberta; Virginia Lynch, Hastings, Ontario; Lillian Mousseau, Belle River, Ontario; Rita-May Munro, Waterville, Nova Scotia; Marilyn Olsen, Orleans, Ontario (MO); Sheilah Pellerin, Middleton, Nova Scotia; Catherine Power, St. John's, Newfoundland; Helen Turner, Kensington, Prince Edward Island.

The business sessions concluded with the biennial election of national executive officers, conducted within the context of a prayer service. Officers were installed during the closing mass, celebrated by Archbishop James MacDonald at Christ the King Church. President Heather Leier, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; President-elect Claire Heron, Regina, Saskatchewan; Vice-President Joan Chesser, Russell, Ontario; Secretary-Treasurer Marie O'Malley, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Past President Lucille Cullen, Sudbury, Ontario.

National Conveners: Spiritual Development Vivian Bosch, Swift Current, Saskatchewan; Organization Claire Heron; Christian Family Life Helen Turner, Kensington, Prince Edward Island; Community Life Sheilah Pellerin, Middleton, Nova Scotia; Communications Joan Chesser; Resolutions Catherine Power, St. John's, Newfoundland; Legislation Mary Bennett, Winnipeg, Manitoba; International Relations Heather Leier; Laws Lucille Cullen.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Agnes Bedard, Calgary; B.C. & Yukon Barbara Jarvis, Houston; Manitoba Helen Bembek, Anola; Military Ordinariate Marion Buote, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; New Brunswick Mary Butts, Moncton; Newfoundland and Labrador Catherine Fagan, Mount Pearl; Nova Scotia Marguerite Peters, Halifax; Ontario Joan Hastie, Rexdale; Prince Edward Island

Myrna Murray, Port Borden; Quebec
Beatrice LeBlanc, Deux Montagnes;
Saskatchewan Mildred Young, Regina.

Spiritual reflections on the fruits of the Holy Spirit were again well received by attending members. The themes for the following years were announced by Archbishop James MacDonald. Based on the Mission Statement, they were *The Catholic Women's League of Canada: rooted in gospel values*, *The Catholic Women's League of Canada: calling its members to holiness*, and *The Catholic Women's League of Canada: through service to the people of God*.

* * *

In her report to the national executive, National Christian Family Life Convener Helen Turner stressed that members should be made aware of their commitment as Catholics to the various levels of the church. She referred to the theme, *Parish: A Family of the Local Church*, which focused on the need to broaden one's vision of "church" because it encompasses not only families and their communities, but parishes, dioceses and the universal church. She expressed concern about members' knowledge of the truths of the faith and suggested that they should study the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and use it in teaching programs. She promoted prayer in families and suggested an examination of the resource, *Christian Prayer*, which used the most important of prayers, the Our Father, as a model.

National President Heather Leier was of the same mind when she introduced herself to members through *The Canadian League*. She asked every woman to use the League Prayer every day and reserve a few moments to reflect on a gospel value that would make the new theme, *The Catholic Women's*

League of Canada: rooted in gospel values, more meaningful.



From a third generation League family, Heather Leier grew up in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and entered the field of nursing before marrying and raising a family. Her interest in church and community was expressed in her parish where she was a Eucharistic minister and in the Diocese of Saskatoon as a board member for St. Ann Senior Citizens Village, Catholic Family Services and the League clothing depot. Along with accepting League responsibilities at diocesan, provincial and national levels, she served on the board of the Shoe String Gallery, the editorial board of *Our Family* magazine and was active in lay ministry to widowed, separated and divorced persons. In 1982, she received the City of Saskatoon medal of appreciation in recognition of her many contributions to the life of the city in community service.

Heather Leier encouraged members and conveners at every level to prayerfully study and act on issues and resolutions adopted at the convention. She said that it was gratifying to be studying reports of projects and ideas coming from the grassroots level across the country – some of which would surely

be tabled by parish or diocesan levels as resolutions in the future. Indeed, one project was taking place near to home – St. Anne Parish Council in Saskatoon served lunch during a building bee initiated by Habitat for Humanity, an organization dedicated to assisting low income families to purchase homes.

Other examples: St. Martin of Tours Parish Council, Mississauga, Ontario, raised funds for Vita Manor, a proposed home for single pregnant women. St. Patrick Parish Council, Victoria, British Columbia, held a Marian pilgrimage for peace. St. Mary Parish Council, East Bay, Nova Scotia, presented the annual Father MacCormack Memorial Award to Kerry Boyd, an outstanding student. Members of St. Francis Xavier Parish Council, Stoney Creek, Ontario, recycled wool and fabric into quilts which were donated to Martha House, a safe haven for abused women and children in Hamilton, Ontario.

The fall season brought Heather Leier and members of the *Constitution & Bylaws Amendments Committee* to Toronto, Ontario, in order to compile the final draft of the proposed amendments to the *Constitution & Bylaws* (1988) and the draft voting chart for each level. At the same time, Heather Leier met with the new revisions committee for the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*. Later, when the national executive met for meetings in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Honorary Life Member Evelyn Wyrzykowski (1988-1990) and National Convener of Laws Lucille Cullen conducted a workshop on the final document of the proposed amendments to the constitution, followed by ratification of the document.

Among the new and revised resources made available to councils: *Relate and Communicate, Guide to*

Hosting a Diocesan/Provincial Convention, Guide to Hosting a National Convention and *CWL Prays*. In appreciation of their service, current and past national field workers were presented with a “Gertrude” pin. The provincial and diocesan presidents received field worker pins to distribute to all 500 diocesan and provincial field workers across Canada.

Members learned of the death, on November 25th, of Honorary Life Member Catherine Toal (1964-1966). In December, the first meeting of the convenership review committee took place in Edmonton, chaired by National President-elect Claire Heron. Areas addressed included overlapping and overloading of convenerships, effectiveness of communication between levels, reporting formats and changes needed resulting from *Constitution & Bylaws* amendments.

Items of interest: A welcome was extended to St. Rene Goupil Parish Council, Toronto, Ontario, newly organized for deaf and hard of hearing women. St. John Vianney Parish Council, Penticton, British Columbia, sponsored a refugee and her children from Ghana, West Africa. Our Lady of Assumption Council, Lethbridge, Alberta, hosted an Aboriginal/Catholic celebration of the Eucharist, sponsored by the Martha Native Ministry and followed by a meal of traditional stew and bannock. Members of St. Anthony Parish Council, Edmonton, Alberta, hosted a reception for a Nigerian family who celebrated the blessing of the parents’ marriage and baptism of three of the children following a regular mass. Honorary Life Member Lucille Cullen (1990-1992) was awarded the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of Confederation in recognition of her contribution to her fellow citizens, her community and Canada.

1993: *The Catholic Women's League of Canada – rooted in gospel values: Part I*

As the League entered another year, National President Heather Leier asked for continuous reflection on the theme *The Catholic Women's League of Canada – rooted in gospel values*. She encouraged councils to take heart from the apostles, who learned that they could not carry out their evangelizing roles without the strength and grace of Jesus Christ, as she invited members to improve programs and meetings and to work toward their goals by calling on the help of Christ.

National Spiritual Director Archbishop James H. MacDonald, of St. John's, said of the theme, "The Lord challenges us to have values or attitudes different from the people around us who do not know Him, the attitudes and values of the Kingdom. Jesus invites us to live by His norms, the Beatitudes, which are His attitudes for life, His way of looking at others" (*The Canadian League*, 68, 4, 1993).

Heather Leier advised the membership that National Spiritual Development Convener Vivian Bosch had prepared an eight-part study program, *The Beatitudes*. Each lesson had as its source a passage from scripture that directed attention to the values taught by Christ, and was followed by a story of a saint who lived those gospel values.

Vivian Bosch considered the whole tone of the beatitudes to be encouraging, making no demands, but promising those who try to live a life rooted in Christ's values a share in the blessedness of God. The League theme was an invitation to share more intimately in Christ's own understanding of His mission. She said, "It challenges each one of us to take time to better understand how we are called to live our mission in life" (Ibid.).

The national executive announced that after three years of proposed amendment submissions, discussions, workshops and draft proposal packages, the League's final proposed amendments to the *Constitution & Bylaws* (1988) had been sent to council presidents. Heather Leier instructed that members were to vote for or against the proposed amendments at designated meetings, to be held in February and March.

Further, Heather Leier announced that the national Field Worker Program, the plan for League development that was implemented in 1989 and had expanded to train over 600 diocesan and provincial field workers to give basic presentations across Canada, had been reduced due to budget restraints. In February, the national field workers met in Regina, Saskatchewan, with Heather Leier and National Organization Convener Claire Heron to assess immediate and long range needs. Plans were devised to develop a new Field Worker Program with a focus on spiritual development and self-esteem. Five national field workers were selected; all had experience in adult education.

In March, Heather Leier, Claire Heron, National Vice-President Joan Chesser and National Resolutions Convener Catherine Power met with representatives of the federal government in Ottawa, Ontario, to discuss the League's 1992 Resolutions Brief and related concerns. The delegates represented 115,857 members. During the meetings, they stressed that the League would continue to ask for legislation that would recognize, value and protect human life from conception to natural death as requested in Resolution 1992.02 Protection of the Pre-born Child.

With regard to Resolution 1992.01 Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), the delegates were told of a pilot project undertaken in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick to test the effectiveness of warning labels on alcohol containers. A community action program was initiated to promote signage and public awareness activities pertaining to prevention of FAS. Also discussed was recognition of the effects of FAS and the possibility of members being involved in distributing information about FAS.

Regarding Resolution 1992.05 Support Services for Pregnant Women, the delegates learned that under another initiative, Brighter Futures, a financial and programming component devoted to healthy babies would address prenatal, maternal and infant health. Strategies included education, research and close collaboration with community agencies at the delivery level. The publication, *The Canadian Mother and Child*, was updated and given a new title, *You and Your Baby*. It contained practical advice and health information for mothers and fathers.

Regarding Resolution 1992.06 Child Pornography Legislation, the delegates learned that Bill C-128 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Customs Tariff (child pornography and corrupting morals)* was to be introduced into the House of Commons on May 13, 1993. Discussions centred on amendments to the *Young Offenders Act* which was passed in June 1992 (Bill C-12) and the League's concern about prevention education, particularly at the community level as well as researching root causes in order to develop prevention strategies. Further issues raised were the forthcoming stalking legislation, serial killer cards, the serial killer board game and implications of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in amending

the *Criminal Code* to deal with the material.

In discussions about breast cancer, the delegates learned that the federal government would contribute \$20,000,000 from National Health and Welfare and the Medical Research Council of Canada over five years toward the establishment of a Breast Cancer Research Challenge Fund. The federal government would also finance the development of five Breast Cancer Information Exchange Pilot Projects within existing centres across Canada and support a national workshop to develop consensus on research, prevention and care in the area of breast cancer.

Concerns about the practice of female genital mutilation were voiced by delegates. Finally, as a follow-up to Resolution 1991.02 Over-Medication of the Elderly, the delegates were given a kit on medication and the elderly.

While in Ottawa, the delegates met with the executive committee of the CCCB. The topics of discussion included the proclamation of 1993 as International Year of the World's Indigenous People by the United Nations, the concerns within the Canadian church about residential schools, the validity of the CCCLA, the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the advantages of networking with other faith groups. They were assured that the CCCB recognized the value of the League structure, as it existed, and its potential for relaying information back and forth in the Canadian church.

At the same time, a weekend planning session of the national field workers was held at Maison Notre Dame de la Providence Retreat House in Orleans, Ontario. Under the leadership of Claire Heron, further expansion of a new Field Worker Program took place.

Noteworthy: National bursaries were awarded to 11 members. The national executive agreed to enter into contract with Villagers Media Productions to produce a series of video segments about the League, to be shown on Vision TV in the fall of 1993 and the spring of 1994. National Past President Lucille Cullen began the task of updating and cataloguing archival material at the national office, assisted by staff member Mildred Melnick. At the invitation of the minister responsible for the Status of Women, Joan Chesser and Claire Heron attended planning meetings, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Ottawa, Ontario, of Canadian non-governmental organizations for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing, China, in 1995.

Across Canada: St. Patrick Parish Council, Victoria, British Columbia, organized a Pentecost Sunday Marian procession. Members of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Council, St. Catharines, Ontario, turned out in record numbers for their annual retreat, held at Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre, Niagara Falls, Ontario. Holy Name of Mary Parish Council, St. Marys, Ontario, sponsored the crowning of Our Lady ceremony on Mother's Day. St. Anthony Parish Council, West Vancouver, British Columbia, formed a multicultural panel to compare and contrast religious practices of the Catholic church in their homelands and Canada. Mary Queen of Peace Parish Council, St. John's, Newfoundland, hosted a friendship night for immigrant families in the parish while neighbouring St. Pius X Parish Council hosted a brunch for Elizabeth House, a haven for unwed mothers. Several members of Holy Rosary Parish Council, Regina, Saskatchewan, were honoured by Wascana Rehabilitation Centre for years of volunteering at the facility.

Regina was the site of the 73rd annual national convention held August 15-18 at the Ramada Renaissance and the Saskatchewan Trade and Convention Centre. Originally a tent settlement known as Pile O' Bones, and renamed to honour Queen Victoria, both the city and the convention planners gave participants a royal welcome. Early arrivals toured Bluenose Country Vacation Farm and enjoyed a traditional fowl supper followed by an eye-catching prairie sunset on their return to Regina.

Over 1,100 members attended the convention which formally opened with a Eucharistic celebration at Holy Rosary Cathedral, presided over by Archbishop Charles Halpin, of Regina. The convention theme was *The Catholic Women's League of Canada – rooted in gospel values*. The convention title was Life Members and Honorary Life Members.

On Gathering Day, following morning prayer, keynote speaker Carol Ann Gotch, a counsellor, conducted a workshop on living one's life according to the beatitudes. Guest journalist Bonnie Brennan related that she suggested the beatitudes are addressed to each person who is, in turn, blessed because he or she is addressed by the beatitudes. "Living the Beatitudes is the work of life. They help us to touch our roots, which are rooted in Gospel values" (*The Canadian League*, 69, 3, 1993). She referred to Vivian Bosch's resource, *The Beatitudes*, to assist members in "making a choice to walk with the Lord in our communities where He is calling for help" (Ibid.).

During the business sessions, members were addressed by National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) President Carroll Quinn and WUCWO North American Region Vice President Winkie Lefils. As well, Bishop Remi De Roo, of Victoria, spoke about the

World Youth Day he had recently attended in Denver, Colorado.

Proposed amendments to the *Constitution & Bylaws* (1988) were voted on. A motion to increase the annual national per capita fees from five dollars to eight dollars was carried. On behalf of members, funds were forwarded to the Collection for Pope's Pastoral Works, Birthright International, People in Equal Participation Inc., Coady International Institute and the CCOBP 1% Program. In addition, a motion was carried to establish a national voluntary fund, the Breast Cancer Research Challenge Fund, for a period of five years. Another note, Newfoundland and Labrador councils decided to set up regional councils in order to have more direct contact with their members.

The theme was reflected in the resolutions that were adopted. Resolution 1993.01 The Personhood and the Rights of the Unborn Child addressed Section 206(1) of the *Criminal Code* which stated that a child becomes a human being when it has completely proceeded, in a living state, from the body of the mother. The national council urged the federal government for legislation that recognized unborn children as human beings in need of protection. Members were encouraged to write letters to the federal government about the issue and plan suitable programs to recognize the lives lost since the 1969 amendment to Section 251 of the *Criminal Code*. All councils were encouraged to sponsor, plan or hold events to recognize the violence against innocent human beings during 24 years of accessible abortion in Canada.

Resolution 1993.02 Violence on Television outlined the League's concern about the escalation of violence in television programming. The national council commended the federal government's Five Point Plan to combat the

trend toward television violence and urged the implementation of its recommendations. It resolved to participate in an exchange of information with the NCCW on this issue of common concern. Members were encouraged to write letters to the federal government and participate in community programs to reduce violence on television.

Resolution 1993.03 Child Pornography Legislation commended initiatives by the federal government to enact legislation related to child pornography and asked members to write letters of appreciation for the initiatives. Bill C-128 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Customs Tariff (child pornography and corrupting morals)* was given Royal Assent in June 1993.

Resolution 1993.04 Breast Cancer promoted funding for breast cancer research. The federal government made a commitment on December 15, 1992, to provide monies for breast cancer research, the development of Breast Cancer Information Exchange Pilot Projects and a National Forum on Breast Cancer. Whereas Resolution 1990.05 Health Protection – BSE encouraged members to learn the proper method of breast self-examination, practice it monthly and encourage others to do the same, the national council resolved to commend the federal government for its commitment to address the disease through a series of federal initiatives – allocation of \$20,000,000 over five years to establishment of a Breast Cancer Research Challenge Fund; allocation of \$2,700,000 over five years to the development of Breast Cancer Information Exchange Pilot Projects; and, sponsoring a National Forum on Breast Cancer in November 1993, to recommend priorities and direction in breast cancer research, prevention and screening as well as care, treatment and support issues. Members were encouraged to become familiar with the federal ini-

tatives and become aware of the prevention, research and treatment issues in order to become more knowledgeable and responsible for their own health care.

Resolution 1993.05 Canadian Immigration Policy to Protect Women at Risk of Gender-Related Persecution questioned immigration policies that did not adequately protect women who were at risk. There were no criteria under the humanitarian and compassionate considerations process to allow women fleeing gender-related persecution or abusive situations to remain in Canada. While the national council commended the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board for development of guidelines to be used when women made gender-related claims to be convention refugees, it urged the ministry of public security to develop a comprehensive policy on refugee status in gender issues. The national council stated that the policy should include a broader interpretation by Canada of the refugee definition to include women in the "social group" category for credible claim and to recognize the validity of claims of class persecution on the basis of gender. It should include criteria for visa officers abroad to assess women refugees on the basis of cultural and ethnic practices that discriminate against women. It should include a category for persons with a well-founded fear of gender persecution that should be added to the post determination refugee claimants in Canada class. It should include a policy of non-return for women who have been victims of abuse in their country of origin or in the country where they are destined to be returned. It should include a policy of non-removal to an intermediate country that is unable or unwilling to guarantee that the women will not be returned to the country of abuse. The League requested to be included as a participant in the national consultation process announced

as an initiative by the minister of employment and immigration.

Resolution 1993.06 Rape Law addressed an act of violence. The federal government had enacted Bill C-49 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (sexual assault)*, in which consent was clearly defined and there was a guarantee that a victim's past sexual conduct was irrelevant unless deemed otherwise by a judge or justice. A report, *Gender Equality in the Canadian Justice System*, had been released by the federal department of justice. The national council requested the federal solicitor general and provincial/territorial attorneys general to continue to develop and promote educational programs for all judicial and legal officers to sensitize them to the plight of the rape victim. Members were encouraged to study *Gender Equality in the Canadian Justice System*, and Bill C-49.

And the convention had a lighter side! One evening was called Taste Saskatchewan, with barbecue beef on the menu, and another included Aboriginal music and a singsong led by Archbishop Charles Halpin. Finally, a pride of Regina, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police choir entertained participants and guests at the closing banquet.

Ten women were honoured with a life membership: Joan Bell, Caledonia, Ontario; Elizabeth Anne Brown, Toronto, Ontario; Diane Curley, Nepean, Ontario; Lorraine Faherty, Fort Nelson, British Columbia; Beatrice LeBlanc, Deux Montagnes, Quebec; Rita McCanny, Chateauguay, Quebec; Helen Robertson, Longueuil, Quebec; Mary Lou Schippling, Waterloo, Ontario; Beverly Watson, Cranbrook, British Columbia; Mildred Young, Regina, Saskatchewan.

During the closing mass at Holy Rosary Cathedral, Archbishop James H.

MacDonald installed Most Rev. Peter Novecosky, OSB, Abbot Ordinary of St. Peter Abbey, Muenster, Saskatchewan, as national spiritual advisor. Officers reaffirmed: President Heather Leier, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; President-elect Claire Heron, Regina, Saskatchewan; Vice-President Joan Chesser, Russell, Ontario; Secretary-Treasurer Marie O'Malley, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Past President Lucille Cullen, Sudbury, Ontario.

National Conveners: Spiritual Development Vivian Bosch, Swift Current, Saskatchewan; Organization Claire Heron; Christian Family Life Helen Turner, Kensington, Prince Edward Island; Community Life Sheilah Pellerin, Middleton, Nova Scotia; Communications Joan Chesser; Resolutions Catherine Power, St. John's, Newfoundland; Legislation Mary Bennett, Winnipeg, Manitoba; International Relations Heather Leier; Laws Lucille Cullen.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Marie Cameron, Calgary; B.C. & Yukon Barbara Jarvis, Houston; Manitoba Linda Parker, Selkirk; Military Ordinariate Marion Buote, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; New Brunswick Mary Butts, Moncton; Newfoundland and Labrador Philomena Carroll, Labrador City; Nova Scotia Marguerite Peters, Halifax; Ontario Janice Deslauriers, Welland; Prince Edward Island Myrna Murray, Port Borden; Quebec Lorette Noble, Candiac; Saskatchewan Marlyne Reindl, Saskatoon.

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Members and delegates returned to their respective councils with enthusiasm, responding with gospel values to the needs of the church and community. For example, in Berwick, Nova Scotia, members of St. Anthony Parish Council

knitted sweaters for northern missions. Rolande Chernichan of Lorette, Manitoba, received the 1993 Evangelium Award from the Archdiocese of St. Boniface. Freda Muttart was named Borden, Prince Edward Island's citizen of the year. Members of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Parish Council, Russell, Ontario, went on a pilgrimage to St. Joseph's Oratory, in Montreal, Quebec. Members of Christ the King Parish Council, Courtenay, British Columbia, participated in a fundraising event for the cancer society. Sacred Heart Parish Council, Sarnia, Ontario, held its annual harvest festival with profits going to Bethany House, a shelter for teenaged girls.

In September, Heather Leier, National President-elect Claire Heron and National Past President Lucille Cullen joined WUCWO Board Member for Canada and Honorary Life Member Ardis Beaudry (1984-1986) as representatives of the League at the WUCWO North American Regional Conference in Chicago, Illinois. In October, Heather Leier announced the retirement of Executive Director Valerie Fall, following 25 years with the League.

At the fall meeting, the national executive reviewed the GST and Revenue Canada's rulings regarding involvement with the GST. Application was made to revoke the League election for the GST. By exercising an "election" option, the national executive moved to remove councils and members from any direct involvement with the GST. The obligation to pay the GST would henceforth apply only at the national level.

The national executive approved *Humble Prayer*, another resource compiled by National Spiritual Development Convener Vivian Bosch. And, warm wishes were extended to Heather Leier, who was married on November 27th, becoming Heather Kolla!

1994: The Catholic Women's League of Canada – rooted in gospel values: Part II

The League's revised *Constitution & Bylaws* (1993) was effective January 1, 1994, and designed to support and educate Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service in a modern world. With the document in place, the national executive urged members to carry forward purposefully and progressively the important work of moving the League through the first decade of the 21st century.

National President Heather Kolla urged members to continue to reflect on the theme, *The Catholic Women's League of Canada – rooted in gospel values*, and combine the "family" aspect of gospel values with the United Nations proclamation of 1994 the International Year of the Family. She advised that it was a unique opportunity to foster family life as well as family rights and a time to recommend legislation that would strengthen and protect families.

In his address, National Spiritual Advisor Abbot Peter Novecosky, of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Saskatchewan, noted that the International Year of the Family coincided with the translation of the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* into English in 1994. He suggested that members should examine the references to family life in the catechism and referred to its challenging program of articles about placing gospel values into practice in daily living.

During Heather Kolla's final year as president, the issue of euthanasia and assisted suicide was an overriding concern for both the national executive and members. She combined knowledge of the medical profession with organizing skills to give a national voice to a grass-

roots concern following media coverage of the struggle of Sue Rodriguez with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and her quest through the courts for the right to an assisted suicide. She urged members to ask their own physicians to reject and speak out against any policy issued by the Canadian Medical Association that undermined respect for the dignity of the person.

A copy of the League's revised position paper on euthanasia was included in the spring issue of the magazine to be sent along with letters to members of parliament, senators and physicians. It stated, "We support laws which offer protection for human life, from conception to the time of natural death and all stages in between. Therefore, we call upon the Government of Canada to join with The Catholic Women's League of Canada to demonstrate that compassion compels the human community not to abandon the sick and dying and to respect the dignity of all human life" (*The Canadian League*, 70, 1, 1994). Heather Kolla pointed to palliative care as a solution for those suffering from terminal illnesses because it addressed the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the dying person and also the needs of associates and family.

In late March, Heather Kolla, National President-elect Claire Heron, Vice-President Joan Chesser and National Resolutions Convener Catherine Power met with a minister and representatives of the federal government in Ottawa, Ontario, to discuss resolutions and other matters of concern. They represented over 114,044 members in 1,453 parish councils. Before each meeting, Heather Kolla presented information kits containing copies of the position paper on euthanasia, the 1993

Resolutions Brief and *The Canadian League*. She drew attention to issues such as social security reform, job creation programs, the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies reports and the implications of the GST.

With regard to Resolution 1993.02 Violence on Television, the delegates were told that Family Violence Prevention Division of Health Canada had published two background papers, *The Effects of Media Violence on Children* and *Gender and Violence in the Mass Media*, and a fact sheet for parents on this issue. Regarding Resolution 1993.03 Child Pornography Legislation, a representative of the minister of justice expressed confidence that upcoming amendments in legislation would greatly assist in protecting children from the harmful effects of sexual abuse and exploitation. The department of justice was continuing to monitor implementation of the amendments to the rape law (Resolution 1993.06 Rape Law), and would be conducting research to determine the impact of amendments.

Regarding Resolution 1993.05 Canadian Immigration Policy to Protect Women at Risk of Gender-related Persecution, the delegates learned that gender guidelines were adopted in 1993, basing the selection process on risk, safe haven and economic integration. Regarding Resolution 1993.04 Breast Cancer, they learned that the objective of the Breast Cancer Research Challenge Fund was to fund a broad spectrum of research that would contribute to preventing, curing and ultimately eradicating the disease. In concluding, the delegates reiterated the League's position with regard to Resolution 1993.01 The Personhood and the Rights of the Unborn Child along with a request for legislation to protect human life from conception to natural death.

Items of interest: National bursaries were awarded to 18 members. The national executive extended a welcome to Carrie Ehman, the League's new executive director. Villagers Media Productions was preparing the second segment of a video about the League for viewing on Vision TV in the fall of 1994 and spring of 1995. Joan Chesser prepared a discussion guide for distribution with the video as a teaching aid. The revisions committee for the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* completed the final revisions to be available for order at the upcoming annual national convention in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The 74th annual national convention was held August 14-17 at The Westin Bayshore, in Vancouver, British Columbia, on the waterfront overlooking Stanley Park and Coal Harbour. A cruise of the harbour and an evening of entertainment provided by Showstoppers were planned for the more than 500 participants.

The opening Eucharistic celebration was held at Christ the Redeemer Church in West Vancouver, with Archbishop Adam Exner, OMI, of Vancouver, telling participants, "You have had a significant influence in our country and our church" (*The Catholic Register*, September 10, 1994). Referring to International Year of the Family, he outlined the difficulty of maintaining family life in the face of public opinion and the media, adding, "We are inspired by the Lenten message of Pope John Paul II, in which he directs the family to be 'rooted in Gospel values and at the service of all humanity in love, understanding, help and good example'" (Ibid.).

On Gathering Day, following a Eucharistic celebration, members listened to keynote speakers develop the theme, *The Catholic Women's League of Can-*

ada – rooted in gospel values. Pearl Gervais, a member and educator from Victoria, British Columbia, invited members to view themselves as women following in a long and holy tradition of the women of the bible. She demonstrated that, as with Sarah and Abraham, God continues to be faithful to women and men in the modern world struggle to promote gospel values in their life journeys.

Later in the day, Abbot Peter Novocosky discussed the theme for the following two years, *The Catholic Women's League of Canada – calling its members to holiness*, one that would call members to holiness of life. He said that holiness is being attentive to the work of the Holy Spirit in life; it is about recognizing God's presence in life; it is a lifelong process.

Noteworthy: During another of the Eucharistic celebrations, a collection of \$1,270 was received for relief in Rwanda. A letter was sent to the president of the Canadian Medical Association commending a decision to reject the issue of physician-assisted suicide. The national executive released its approved position paper, *Youth Violence and the Young Offenders Act*, to be submitted to the Standing Committee on Justice in September 1994. It called on the federal government to make treatment and rehabilitation of young offenders a priority and asked for implementation of crime prevention programs that included family involvement, education, mental health services, youth justice committees and community policing to combat youth violence. The League's CCODP 1% Program voluntary fund for 1994 was disbursed to the Women Supporting Women in the Americas projects suggested by CCODP. Proceeds were to be used for programs in Bogota, Columbia and Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Six resolutions were adopted; three required action by individual members. Resolution 1994.01 International Year of the Family commended the federal government for promoting International Year of the Family and the permanent council of the CCCB for its pastoral message, *All the Families of the Earth shall be blessed*, which stated the importance of the family as the basic unit of society in the "most important environment for experiencing unconditional love, happiness, peace, personal growth and human values as well as for learning to communicate, to pardon and to appreciate and be appreciated" (*The Canadian League*, 70, 3, 1994). Members were encouraged to commend the federal government for its promotion of International Year of the Family and to take initiatives to foster a family atmosphere in their parishes and homes.

Resolution 1994.03 Canadian Unity reaffirmed the League's commitment to a united Canada. Members were urged to write letters of encouragement in English or French to the people of Quebec. Resolution 1994.04 Prescription and Non-Prescription Drug Awareness: Knowledge, the Best Medicine urged members to compile a personal record of medication being taken and become knowledgeable about the effects of prescription and non-prescription drugs by questioning doctors and pharmacists.

Resolution 1994.02 Plain Language encouraged the federal government to continue promoting plain language as demonstrated by its publication, *Plain Language Clear and Simple*, and asked councils to encourage their provincial, territorial and municipal governments to use plain language in their publications. Resolution 1994.05 Certification of Operators of Pleasure Vessels urged the minister of transport, in conjunction with appropriate provincial and territorial ministers, to enact legislation to establish mandatory testing and certifi-

cation of operators of pleasure vessels required to be licensed or registered. Provincial councils were to request provincial and territorial ministers to continue to support programs of public awareness to inform the public about safe boating practices and the dangers of careless operation of power driven vessels.

Resolution 1994.06 Objectivity in our Justice System commended the Canadian Judicial Council on the Special Committee on Equality in the Courts and suggested that the council be vigilant in monitoring attitudes, statements and decisions of judges to ensure fair and impartial standards. The national council urged the federal minister of justice and the provincial and territorial attorneys general to take measures to implement compulsory sensitivity courses for judges on gender and racial bias.

Fifteen women were honoured with a life membership: Helen Bembenek, Anola, Manitoba; Mary Butts, Moncton, New Brunswick; Ann Cowan, Wooler, Ontario; Kay Dubreuil, Cornwall, Ontario; Marion Haramis, Cornwall, Ontario; Mary Hass, Renfrew, Ontario; Rita Hemmings, Pembroke, Ontario; Kathleen MacNaughton, Ingleside, Ontario; Gretta Maloney, St. Andrews West, Ontario; Eva Mitchell, London, Ontario; Rolande Oliver, Kingston, Ontario (MO); Mildred Palombo, Ottawa, Ontario; Marguerite Peters, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Theresa Quinn, St. Andrews West, Ontario; Eleanor Taggart, Wolfe Island, Ontario.

Officers were installed during the closing mass at Holy Rosary Cathedral, presided over by Abbot Peter Novocosky. President Claire Heron, Victoria, British Columbia; President-elect Joan Chesser, Russell, Ontario; 1st Vice-President Marie O'Malley, Halifax, Nova Scotia; 2nd Vice-President Vivian

Bosch, Swift Current, Saskatchewan; Secretary-Treasurer Catherine Power, St. John's, Newfoundland; Past President Heather Kolla, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

National Conveners: Spiritual Development Beatrice LeBlanc, Deux Montagnes, Quebec; Organization Joan Chesser; Christian Family Life Vivian Bosch; Community Life Agnes Bedard, Calgary, Alberta; Education Myrna Murray, Borden, Prince Edward Island; Communications Marie O'Malley; Resolutions Barbara Jarvis, Houston, British Columbia; Legislation Sheilah Pellerin, Middleton, Nova Scotia; International Relations Claire Heron; Laws Heather Kolla.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Marie Cameron, Calgary; B.C. & Yukon Rose Kamm, Burnaby; Manitoba Linda Parker, Selkirk; Military Ordinariate Hazel Hawrith, Borden, Ontario; New Brunswick Gertrude Nowlan, Oromocto; Newfoundland and Labrador Philomena Carroll, Labrador City; Nova Scotia Sharon Harland, Halifax; Ontario Janice Deslaurais, Welland; Prince Edward Island Mary Sullivan, Kensington; Quebec Lorette Noble, Candiac; Saskatchewan Marlyne Reindl, Saskatoon.

The guest speaker at the banquet was Bishop James Mahoney, of Saskatoon, formerly a national spiritual director. He challenged members to hearten and support one another – in their family, parish and community – thereby bringing to others a message of hope, a universal need.

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When National President Claire Heron was handed the gavel at the convention, the League gained another national president with impressive leadership skills. Fortright and articulate, she was a teacher, married and raised a family, and operated Kids' & Moms' Connection in Regina, Saskatchewan, before embarking full time with the League. She was from a League family in Eston, Saskatchewan, lived in Regina for many years, and had recently relocated to Victoria, British Columbia. Her interests always reflected a love of both church and community – she was on a task force for Vision of the Church in the Archdiocese of Regina. Along with serving the League at diocesan, provincial and national levels, she held board positions in the Regina Catholic School Board, Champion College, Saskatchewan Pension Plan and Merici Centre, a family support agency.

In September, Claire Heron, National Past President Heather Kolla and Dolores Fehr, a member of the Canadian Nurses Association Ethics Committee, went to Winnipeg, Manitoba, to reinforce the League's position on euthanasia. An *ad hoc* committee was set up to address the issue of social security reform. At the fall meetings in Winnipeg, Manitoba, members of Ste. Mar-

guerite Bourgeoys Military Ordinariate Parish Council invited the national executive to view a stained glass window commissioned for their chapel in Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Winnipeg.

International Year of the Family was celebrated in various ways by councils. Members of St. Felix Parish Council, Tignish, Prince Edward Island, for example, compiled a Book of Life to depict the lives of deceased members. Members of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Council, Westbank, British Columbia, held a "rosary for life" for victims of euthanasia and abortion. Genevieve Rouble, of Our Lady of Fatima Parish Council, Renfrew, Ontario, knitted sweaters and collected clothing for children in Davis Inlet, Labrador. Members of St. Pius X Parish Council, St. John's, Newfoundland, organized their third annual brunch in aid of Elizabeth House, a shelter for young, single pregnant women.

Several members of Holy Spirit Parish Council, Kelowna, British Columbia, formed the Groovy Grannies, entertaining seniors in hospitals and care facilities. Members of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Council, Halifax, Nova Scotia, held a baby shower for a refugee mother from El Salvador. Several councils in the Diocese of Antigonish made Shelter-Paks, coats that provided warmth, shelter and storage capacity for homeless citizens. Councils in the Diocese of Bathurst donated bibles to Passage House Inc., a home for abused women and their children.

Examples of the many honours bestowed on members: Rita Mooney, of Sacred Heart Parish Council, Whitehorse, Yukon, received the Canadian Volunteer Award for improving the health and social well-being of others in her community. Florence Fournier, of Sacred Heart Parish Council, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, received the Ca-

nadian Catholic School Trustees Association Award for her lengthy involvement in Catholic education. Mary MacIsaac, of Holy Spirit Parish Council, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia's oldest living alumna having reached 100 years, received an honorary doctor of laws degree from her *alma mater*.

In the parishes: Members from Inuvik, Fort Smith, Yellowknife and Hay River attended a workshop in Edmonton, Alberta, sponsored by Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council with assistance from the National Development Fund. Members of St. Joseph Parish Council, Beaverton, Ontario, adopted three Bosnian children. Members of St. Mary Parish Council, Beausejour, Manitoba, entered a float in Brokenhead Agricultural Society Fair. Members of St. Agnes Parish Council, Thunder Bay, Ontario, participated in the local "big bike ride" to raise funds for stroke research. Members of Holy Cross Parish Council, Regina, Saskatchewan, held a linen shower for the expansion of Sofia House, a housing complex for abused women and their children. To commemorate International Literacy Day, St. Peter Parish Council, North Bay, Ontario, hosted a program devised by North Bay Literacy Council on adult illiteracy. St. Thomas More Parish Council, Calgary, Alberta, made quilts for layettes given to young mothers involved with Kara, a support and counselling program in Catholic high schools. St. Joseph Parish Council, Powassan, Ontario, donated clothing for infants and children in Erandique, Hon-

duras. Members in Paris, Ontario, reported that all seven parishes in the Brant County deanery had been presented with a Book of Life during a mass for deceased members. Marilyn Olsen, a member from Ottawa, Ontario, along with her husband represented the English speaking laity of Canada at the Congress on the Family for International Year of the Family, held October 6-9 in Rome. Notre Dame Parish Council, Selkirk, Manitoba, sponsored an entry in the local Christmas tree festival.

Claire Heron announced that *Spirituality: A Day of Discovery*, phase II of the Field Worker Program, was ready for presentation throughout the country. Phase I, *Basic Orientation*, had concentrated on developing qualities of leadership by enlightening members about the League's history and structure. *Spirituality: A Day of Discovery* was designed as a personal experience rather than a teaching session. It allowed members to delve into their own spirituality and reflect about how their spiritual preferences influenced their behaviour toward God, their neighbours and themselves. It was also a time to learn to appreciate other members' experiences of spirituality.

Claire Heron had been a facilitator in the formation of the Field Worker Program and helped to develop and launch *Basic Orientation* in 1991. As national organization convener, she oversaw the development of *Spirituality: A Day of Discovery*, always working tirelessly in League development while encouraging the spiritual and personal growth of sister members.

1995: The Catholic Women's League of Canada – calling its members to holiness

During the year of celebrations to commemorate the 75th anniversary of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, National President Claire Heron called on members to remember the spirituality of women of previous times. She said, "We are linked physically and spiritually to our mothers, our grandmothers and all the women who have gone before us. Mother figures in our lives provide some of our most compelling models of what it means to be a woman. They have rooted us in holiness, touching us with their deep faith, trust and self-giving. Let us reclaim our spiritual heritage, healing the painful aspects of this legacy, integrating the strong and loving insights received from our nurturers" (*The Canadian League*, 70, 4, 1995).

Claire Heron suggested that taking part in an initiative of the national executive, Prayer Partners, was a way in which women would learn from and about other women, and have stories to tell. Prayer cards with the address label of a prayer partner were inserted in an issue of *The Canadian League*. Members were asked to correspond with their prayer partner, exchanging photos, birth dates, family news and information about their respective parish councils. They were asked to say the League prayer daily, include the name of their prayer partner in the prayer and commit themselves to prayers of intercession for one another.

Members had learned of a prayer partner exchange through a heart warming story in *The Canadian League*, in which women from Thompson and Nelson House in Manitoba had been praying for one another for years. In December 1993, the women from Nelson House travelled to Thompson to attend a parish council meeting followed by a Eucharistic celebration, pot-luck dinner

and auction that provided funds for a Salvation Army food hamper.

In addition, Claire Heron encouraged implementation of a suggestion from National Convener of Organization Joan Chesser that each member recruit a member as an anniversary project. She said that members should make this project "mission possible" and suggested they should share time and ideas with other women in their parishes, thus becoming fully involved participants in the parish and the League.

The national executive recommended two programs for study by members and prospective newcomers. The first, *Let Justice Flow Like a Mighty River*, was from a brief presented by the CCCB to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1993. The second, *Fire in the Rose: Churches Exploring Abuse and Healing*, was an educational resource designed by the Church Council on Justice and Corrections to enable churches to break the cycle of violence and abuse occurring in families and communities.

Claire Heron related that since the beginning of January, the national executive had been responding to a series of issues with statements of concern – about gun control, intoxication legislation, same-sex legislation and the *Criminal Code*. The League was invited to take part in the consultation process for the preparation of the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, held in Cairo, Egypt, April 29 to May 8, 1995. The League became a member of The Care-In-Dying Coalition/Canadian Coalition Against Euthanasia which was committed to preserving existing legal prohibitions against euthanasia and assisted suicide, and advocated

compassionate, just and respectful care for people who are dying.

In late March, Claire Heron, National President-elect Joan Chesser, National Secretary-Treasurer Catherine Power and National Legislation Convener Sheilah Pellerin represented 110,501 members at meetings with representatives of the federal government about the 1994 Resolutions Brief and issues of concern. At each encounter, the League's tradition of upholding respect for human life was clearly stated. With regard to Resolution 1994.01 International Year of the Family, the delegates received a written response from the minister of health highlighting the government's affirmation of the importance of families in Canadian society. Regarding Resolution 1994.02 Plain Language, the delegates learned that a plain language consulting group was in operation to develop new policies and procedures to support plain language in publications as part of the work of the Canadian justice system. Regarding Resolution 1994.03 Canadian Unity, the minister of intergovernmental affairs pointed out that through the efforts of all Canadians and dedicated organizations, Canada would surely remain united.

Regarding Resolution 1994.05 Certification of Operators of Pleasure Vessels, the minister of transport assured delegates that there had been proposals to form a joint federal/provincial working group to examine, in consultation with client groups, the regulations needed for certification of operators of small vessels. Regarding Resolution 1994.06 Objectivity in our Judicial System, the minister of justice said the Department of Justice Canada, in collaboration with the provinces, supported a variety of programs for sensitization of officials. About proposed changes to the *Young Offenders Act*, the delegates restated the League's position regarding

the importance of rehabilitation of young offenders. About the proposed *Firearms Act*, a discussion took place about possession permits and a cost saving system to register all guns. Letters of support for the proposed act were encouraged by representatives of the federal government. In addition, the delegates were assured of the federal government's intent to uphold the tradition of strong family values in Canadian society.

While in Ottawa, the delegates met with the executive committee of the CCCB. Following a discussion about matters of interest to both parties, appreciation was extended to the CCCB for its contribution toward the travel expenses of Claire Heron and Joan Chesser who were representing the League at the upcoming NGO Forum on Women preceding the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. In turn, the bishops thanked the women for the League's pro-life activities and encouraged the study and promotion of the 1995 encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), which offered theological insights and practical guidelines on the value of human life.

News of interest: Members learned of the death of Honorary Life Member Florence Fabris (1968-1970) on January 26, 1995. National bursaries were awarded to 23 members. Honorary Life Member Lucille Cullen compiled a 1990-1995 supplement for "*Except The Lord Build The House...*". The national executive endorsed Toronto Archdiocesan Past President Patricia Beattie as representative of the League on the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women committee. Once again the League was part of the Catholic television group on Vision TV with two modules, *A Day in the Life of a Parish Council and Resolutions*.

In May, Honorary Life Member Ardis Beaudry (1984-1986) attended the annual board meeting of WUCWO in Bramley, Surrey, England. Board members reported on the work of commissions, regions and member organizations since the last general assembly, held in 1991 in Guadalajara, Mexico, in preparation for the general assembly to be held in 1996 in Canberra, Australia. Of note, members campaigned diligently for the retention of the Catholic schools in Newfoundland and Labrador. In June, the League received the inaugural Monsignor Joseph A. McDonagh Award from The Catholic Church Extension Society of Canada (CCESC) for long standing support of Canadian missions.

Edmonton, Alberta, was the site for 75th annual national convention, a fitting choice for the anniversary year because the formation of the first Canadian unit of the Catholic Women's League took place in Edmonton in 1912. Bishop Emile Legal, OMI, of St. Albert, sought to enlist lay women in immigration work because distance and isolation were causing Catholic settlers to drift from the teaching and sacraments of the church. He met with Katherine Hughes, a native of Prince Edward Island who had come west via the *Montreal Star* to be associated with the *Edmonton Bulletin* as its representative in the press gallery of the Alberta legislature. Always interested in things "Catholic and apostolic," she organized a meeting for November 13, 1912. As she placed plans before the assembled women, she urged that the organization be established along the lines of the Local Council of Women so that it could participate in a national federation at a later date ("Early Memories," in *The Western Catholic*, July 10, 1924).

The theme of the convention, which took place at the Convention Inn August 13-16, was *The Catholic Wom-*

en's League of Canada – calling its members to holiness. While the national executive held meetings and saw to last minute details, those participants who arrived early were treated to hospitality that was both old and new. They visited the old Strathcona area and the modern West Edmonton Mall; they toured Fort Edmonton Park and the Muttart Conservatory; they were entertained at Fantasyland with renditions of old and favoured songs by Klondike Kate and the Gold Dust Dancers.

Over 1,000 members looked forward to the days of prayer, friendship and study. A celebration of the Eucharist marked the opening at St. Joseph's Basilica. Archbishop Joseph N. MacNeil, of Edmonton, reminded those attending that the basis of holiness was allowing God to direct their lives so that they would live according to the will of God.

The following morning, after the morning liturgy and words of welcome, participants turned their attention to the Gathering Day theme, *Spirituality: A Day of Discovery*. The session was an exploration of spirituality within the Catholic tradition. They were divided into five groups according to prayer preferences which were indicated by name and colour. They observed how differently others lived out their spirituality and developed a deeper understanding and appreciation of the differences.

National Spiritual Advisor Abbot Peter Novocosky, of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Saskatchewan, spoke of the monastic tradition of prayer, explaining *lectio divina*, a prayerful, meditative and reflective reading of the bible and other spiritual writings. An evening liturgy followed the session. Later, actress Mary Glenfield narrated and dramatically presented *In the Beginning*, a history of the League and its members.

Four resolutions were adopted; all called members to action. Resolution 1995.01 Prevention of Spousal Abuse – Marriage Preparation was significant due to an alarming increase in spousal abuse in Canadian society. The national council urged members to look into the content of marriage preparation courses in parishes and promote the inclusion of a session on the prevention of spousal abuse. National council further urged the CCCB to recommend long term strategies, including a session on prevention of spousal abuse in marriage preparation courses to raise an awareness of the problem in order to combat it.

Resolution 1995.02 Abortion Funding recommended that provincial councils request their provincial and territorial governments to cease funding abortions. The national council suggested that members should write to federal, provincial and territorial governments to protest any use of public funds to finance abortions.

Resolution 1995.03 Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness recommended that all councils should initiate organ and tissue education and awareness programs. Members were asked to sign organ and tissue donor consent cards and inform their families and family physicians of their intent. Members were also encouraged to promote the signing of donor cards by family members, friends and parishioners.

Resolution 1995.04 The Right of Landing Fee dealt with immigration, always an area of interest for the League. The federal government was urged to rescind the fee and members were asked to write letters to the federal minister of citizenship and immigration to protest imposition of the fee on immigrants.

National voluntary funds were awarded to the CCOOP 1% Program, Collection for Pope's Pastoral Works, Breast Cancer Research Challenge Fund, Coady International Institute and the National Pro-Life Fund. The national council approved the disbursement of the National Pro-Life Fund to WOOMB Canada and Alliance for Life.

Fourteen women were honoured with a life membership: Winnie Bucciarelli, Chapleau, Ontario; Denise DePape, Wolf Lake, Quebec; Ann Doucet, Rothesay, New Brunswick; Gladys Gillissie, Kapuskasing, Ontario; Lillian Howe, St. Catharines, Ontario; Margaret Jones, Kapuskasing, Ontario; Jackie Lenarduzzi, Trail, British Columbia; Alexandra Levesque, Cochrane, Ontario; Lorna MacDonald, Vernon, Prince Edward Island; Lorette Noble, Candiac, Quebec; Joyce Pecak, Kitchener, Ontario; Marlyne Reindl, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Moira Ste. Marie, Oshawa, Ontario; Joan White, Bathurst, New Brunswick.

Officers were reaffirmed during the closing mass, celebrated by Abbot Peter Novecosky at St. Theresa Church. President Claire Heron, Victoria, British Columbia; President-elect Joan Chessier, Russell, Ontario; 1st Vice-President Marie O'Malley, Halifax, Nova Scotia; 2nd Vice-President Vivian Bosch, Swift Current, Saskatchewan; Secretary-Treasurer Catherine Power, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador; Past President Heather Kolla, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

National Conveners: Spiritual Development Beatrice LeBlanc, Deux Montagnes, Quebec; Organization Joan Chessier; Christian Family Life Vivian Bosch; Community Life Agnes Bedard, Calgary, Alberta; Education Myrna Murray, Borden, Prince Edward Island; Communications Marie O'Malley; Resolutions Barbara Jarvis, Houston, Brit-

ish Columbia; Legislation Sheilah Pellerin, Middleton, Nova Scotia; International Relations Claire Heron; Laws Heather Kolla.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Joan Baudais, Calgary; B.C. & Yukon Rose Kamm, Burnaby; Manitoba Beatrice Gross, Brandon; Military Ordinariate Hazel Hawrish, Barrie, Ontario; New Brunswick Gertrude Nowlan, Oromocto; Newfoundland and Labrador Agnes Ebbs, Topsail; Nova Scotia Sharon Harland, Halifax; Ontario Peggy Nastasiuk, Barrie; Prince Edward Island Mary Sullivan, Kensington; Quebec Anida Simurda, Gatineau; Saskatchewan Phyllis Kennedy, Regina.

Guest journalist former Calgary Diocesan President Ella Ell related that in his homily at the closing mass, Abbot Peter Novecosky spoke of service through hands, and how Jesus Christ stretched forth His hands in service only to be crucified. A liturgical dance marked the completion of the ceremony. At the closing banquet, the 75th anniversary cake was cut by National President Claire Heron and the honorary life members. For entertainment, Nova Scotia Provincial Spiritual Advisor Father Albini D'Entremont, accompanied by pianist Veronica Weber, took members from 1920 to 1995 in song. A memorable event!

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Among members who received special awards during the anniversary year: Margaret Reed, of St. Ann Parish Council, Penticton, British Columbia, received an outstanding award for excellence from the BC-Yukon chapter of the Canadian Council of the Blind. Elsie Yanik, of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish Council, Fort Chipewyan, Alberta, received CCEC's St. Joseph award for exceptional missionary service. Trudy Ruest, of St.

John the Evangelist Parish Council, Whitby, Ontario, received the Town of Whitby's 1995 senior volunteer of the year award.

Parish councils celebrated the League's 75th anniversary in a variety of ways. St. Luke Parish Council, Dollard des Ormeaux, Quebec, for example, organized a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Good Counsel shrine in Genazzano, Italy. Members of St. Thomas More Parish Council, Niagara Falls, Ontario, sponsored a Bosnian family and extended a further welcome to the lady of the family by arranging a Valentine shower. Mary, Mother of the Church Parish Council, Winnipeg, Manitoba, raised funds for Alpha House, a shelter for battered women and their children. Members of Sacred Heart Parish Council, Grand Forks, British Columbia, invited parishioners to participate in a project to help Aboriginals with HIV/AIDS by donating items for personal care bags – hand towels filled with soap, shampoo and other articles – for distribution by coordinators in Vancouver, British Columbia. Military Ordinariate parish councils took part in the national Prayer Partners project. In honour of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Peter the Apostle Parish Council in North Bay, Ontario, organized a service that included a blessing of animals on Thanksgiving weekend. Parish councils in New Brunswick made Spiritual Adoption of the Unborn a special project in which members prayed daily for unborn children and for women who were considering an abortion. Members of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Council, Sydney, Nova Scotia, walked 3,700 miles, the distance from Sydney to Beijing, China, for the success of the upcoming United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.

National President Claire Heron and National President-elect Joan

Chesser represented the League at the NGO Forum on Women preceding the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held August 30-September 8. Over 30,000 women gathered in Huairou, China, to advise the course of all peoples through action for equality, development and peace.

In the fall issue of *The Canadian League*, Clare Heron emphasized the importance of action by members and councils with regard to resolutions adopted at the annual national convention. She also noted some of the national executive's concerns: interventions had been made to the federal minister of health by the national executive concerning reproductive technology announcements; an *ad hoc* committee was established to study the serious issue of sex offenders; a letter was sent to a

prominent religious congregation in light of its statements concerning women; and, letters were sent to the prime minister and premier of Newfoundland regarding education and charter rights and to the president of France in response to nuclear testing by France.

It was a year celebrated with nostalgia but also a year in which members joined together in prayer and action for a united Canada. Indeed, it was a time to pause and reflect on what it meant to be a citizen of Canada. Claire Heron reminded members that the result of the Quebec referendum was a sign that the country faced many challenges. She encouraged them to take advantage of every opportunity to assure the citizens of Quebec of their importance in Canada.

1996: The Catholic Women's League of Canada – through service to the people of God: Part I

As the League entered a new year, National President Claire Heron asked members to consider ways to participate in a follow up to the NGO Forum on Women that she attended with National President-elect Joan Chesser in Beijing, China, in September 1995. They represented the League in workshops dealing with human rights, sustainable development and the environment at a gathering of a greater number of women than ever before in the 20th century.

Claire Heron said that enthusiastic, committed and hopeful women, many attending the conference in Beijing because of religious convictions, were seeking practical solutions to problems that women face everywhere. She acknowledged that there were statements in a document issued by the United Nations, *Platform for Action*,

which were not in line with views held by the League. That aside, she urged members to try to find a way to work together with others at home and abroad on issues upon which they did agree. She claimed that, "To do nothing or to continue to just point out our differences is not fruitful" (*The Canadian League*, 71, 4, 1995). Further, she quoted a response from the Vatican regarding the issue, "In associating itself with such a mixed document, the Holy See has been guided by the characteristic approach of John Paul II to other flawed enterprises – seeking to lift up and develop what is true and helpful while naming and vigorously denouncing what is false and harmful to human flourishing" (Ibid.).

Claire Heron pointed to the Quebec referendum of October 1995 as an ex-

ample of differences of opinion as she asked members to network with other groups and to seek common ground whenever and wherever possible, to "take advantage of every opportunity to build bridges" (Ibid.). She noted that the federal government responded to the conference in Beijing with a document, *Setting the Stage for the Next Century: A Federal Plan for Gender Equality*, which outlined its initiatives to advance equality for women in Canada over five years.

In February, the WUCWO General Assembly was held in Canberra, Australia. Catholic women from around the world gathered in faith and resolution about a wide range of concerns that included freedom of worship, literacy, euthanasia, selective abortion, education and health care for women. Claire Heron, Honorary Life Member Heather Kolla (1992-1994) and WUCWO Board Member and Honorary Life Member Ardis Beaudry (1976-1978) represented the League.

In late March, Claire Heron, Joan Chesser, National Legislation Convener Sheilah Pellerin and National Resolutions Convener Barbara Jarvis represented 108,681 members when they met with representatives of the federal government to discuss the 1995 Resolutions Brief and other areas of concern. At each meeting, Claire Heron outlined the League's history, structure and stand on the dignity of all people.

With regard to Resolution 1995.02 Abortion Funding, the delegates received a written response along with a comment from representatives of the federal government that abortion services had been determined to be medically necessary and therefore were insured under varying circumstances in every province and territory in the country. Regarding Resolution 1995.04 The Right of Landing Fee, they learned

in another written response that the federal government was of the opinion that a permanent residence in Canada is a privilege for which the charge was modest in relation to the benefits gained. In discussions about sex orientation, they were assured that the government intended to "uphold the tradition of strong family values in Canadian society" (*The Canadian League*, 72, 2, 1996).

Representatives of the ministry of health assured the delegates that the federal government was working on women's health issues. Regarding Resolution 1986.04 Total Ban on Tobacco Advertising, a statement was forthcoming called *Tobacco Control: A Blueprint to Protect the Health of Canadians*.

Representatives of the department of justice said that cross country hearings about the youth justice system were in the planning stage and Bill C-27 *An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (child prostitution, child sex tourism, criminal harassment and female genital mutilation)* had been introduced.

While in Ottawa, the delegates met with personnel of the CCCB and the Catholic Health Association of Canada (CHAC). Information was exchanged with CCCB representatives on current issues concerning Aboriginal peoples and delegates were updated about the minority rights challenge to the constitution as it applied to the system of education in Newfoundland.

At the meeting with CHAC, a copy of the League's resource *Humble Prayer* was exchanged for a draft copy of *Spirituality and Health*, a resource prepared by CHAC. In May, a conference sponsored by CHAC was held in Banff, Alberta, and attended by Alberta MacKenzie Provincial President Joan Baudais.

Items of interest: National bursaries were awarded to 24 members. Provincial councils were encouraged to coordinate members for participation in a research project, *Exploring Canadian Values*, prepared by the Canadian Policy Research Networks. The newly revised *Handbook for Spiritual Advisors* was available for presidents and spiritual advisors of all councils. A *Personal Letter Writing Guide* was inserted as a pull out in *The Canadian League* to assist members. Claire Heron attended the Canada-U.S.A. Women's Health Forum in Ottawa prior to the League's annual national convention. Both countries resolved to work together in sharing research information for the betterment of women's health and to expand their outreach to the women of Mexico.

It was appropriate planning, or at least a happy coincidence, that the 76th annual national convention took place in Toronto, Ontario, where the 1st annual national convention had taken place in 1921. Toronto Archdiocesan President Dorothy McGuigan said "it seems right and fitting that we end our 75th year by meeting once again on this shore of Lake Ontario!" (*The Canadian League*, 72, 1, 1996)

The convention took place August 18-21 at The Westin Harbour Castle hotel. Guests who arrived early took in plays in the theatre district and attended events at the SkyDome and the Canadian National Exhibition. Some preferred the art galleries or the harbour front, while others went shopping in Eaton Centre. A city bus tour and an evening dinner cruise were further attractions.

The national executive met for a series of meetings with members before the convention, culminating with a Sunday afternoon dialogue with members.

A Eucharistic celebration marked the opening, celebrated at St. Paul's Church by Archbishop Aloysius Ambrozic, of Toronto. Guest journalist Bonnie Brennan related that he spoke of the meaning of "service," reminding those assembled that like the Canaanite woman of the gospel they were not self-sufficient and must ask God to help them to serve those in need. He said that talent and the ability to serve are gifts from God and "we serve because we owe God and others" (*The Canadian League*, 72, 3, 1996).

As with every convention, the liturgies were well planned and deeply moving, with morning prayer calling members to a communal setting each day. Having completed the study of the theme, *The Catholic Women's League of Canada — calling its members to holiness*, the League embarked on the theme, *The Catholic Women's League of Canada — through service to the people of God*.

Claire Heron called the new theme a call "to journey into ministry," and invited members "to wade into the throngs of hurting people, more concerned about saving the people than saving the system" (Ibid.). She asked those assembled not only to comfort but to challenge, attend to, advocate and change.

The theme was highlighted with a poster session featuring exhibitions illustrating a variety of responses to projects that were supportive of the League's mission. Prince Edward Island Provincial Council, for example, displayed pictures and information about its community kitchen. Holy Spirit Parish Council, Scarborough, Ontario, exhibited its school reading program.

On Gathering Day, the theme was illustrated with a one woman play about unknown heroines in the church, *All*

That I Am, by Irene Mahoney, OSU. Actor/story teller Roberta Nobleman introduced the audience to five masked women who had a great influence on famous men but were all but unnoticed in recorded history. Each had been stereotyped by her circumstances and lived according to the role given to her. One by one, the masks were removed and the audience met the women and listened to their stories. In small group discussions, the women in the audience tried to understand the suffering of women who served the church but had not been acknowledged – women who were unsung and unnamed – by telling their own stories of pain and suffering.

Noteworthy: WUCWO President-General Maria Eugenia Diaz de Pfenich addressed participants. Members learned of the death of Honorary Life Member Iphigenie Arsenault (1970-1972) on July 13, 1996. Councils expressed an interest in compiling a Book of Life, to honour deceased members. Nova Scotia Provincial President Thérèse Pottie announced that a distance education program, Diploma in Ministry, had been introduced by St. Francis Xavier University, in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. The traditional provincial dinners featured a cultural mosaic evening that included a Caribbean steel drum band and Filipino folk dance troupe, followed by a singsong.

National voluntary funds were awarded to the CCODP 1% Program, Collection for Pope's Pastoral Works, Breast Cancer Research Challenge Fund and Coady International Institute. The national council also approved the disbursement of the National Pro-Life Fund to Birthright International, Alliance for Life and COLF.

Thirteen resolutions were adopted. Resolution 1996.01 Jubilee 2000 promoted the study of Pope John Paul II's 1994 apostolic letter, *Tertio Millennio*

Adveniente (As the Third Millennium Draws Near). The pope provided guidelines and goals to follow as Catholics prepared for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000.

Resolution 1996.02 encouraged members to become familiar with developments in methods of natural family planning and support or sponsor initiatives that promoted natural family planning. Resolution 1996.03 Advance Directives for Health Care recommended that councils at all levels promote awareness regarding advance directives for health care and durable powers of attorney through workshops or seminars. Resolution 1996.04 Tax Credit for Stay-at-Home Parent urged the federal government to provide tax credits for families incurring child care expenses and those with a stay-at-home parent. Resolution 1996.05 Same-Sex Marriages urged members to promote and uphold the church's definition of marriage. Resolution 1996.06 Women's Heart Disease and Stroke urged parish councils to assist members to be responsible for their own health by adopting healthy lifestyles. Resolution 1996.07 Research Funding for Women's Heart Disease and Stroke urged that all levels of government allocate more funds for research into the symptoms, diagnoses and treatment of women's heart disease and stroke. Resolution 1996.08 Partnership in Health Care promoted dialogue between health care providers and consumers as the foundation of a partnership in health care.

Resolution 1996.09 Recombinant Bovine Somatotropin (rbST) urged the federal government to ban the use of rbST, a genetically engineered synthetic hormone used to increase dairy milk production. Resolution 1996.10 Smoke-Free/Scent-Free Church Environment called for members to promote smoke and scent free environments in churches and an awareness of the harmful effects

of scented products. Resolution 1996.11 Gambling Addiction requested provincial/territorial governments to allocate funds for services for those addicted to gambling and gambling addiction education, particularly for youth.

Resolution 1996.12 Human Reproductive Technologies urged the enactment of Bill C-47 *An Act respecting human reproductive technologies and commercial transactions relating to human reproduction*. Resolution 1996.13 Antipersonnel Landmines commended the federal government for placing a moratorium on the production, export and operational use of antipersonnel landmines. It urged the government to legislate a complete ban on the production, export, trade or transfer of antipersonnel landmines. Further, it urged the government to eliminate stockpiles of antipersonnel landmines.

Fourteen women were honoured with a life membership: Reajeanne Beaulieu, Perth-Andover, New Brunswick; Lillian Belliveau, Terrace Bay, Ontario; Mary Blaid Brennan, Bath, New Brunswick; Marion Buote, Rusticoville, Prince Edward Island (MO); Marie Cameron, Calgary, Alberta; Rochelle Chartier, Chelmsford, Ontario; Sharon Harland, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Yvonne Hurtubise, Merrickville, Ontario; Florence Jackson, Longueuil, Quebec; June Merrick, Penticton, British Columbia; Sophie Mulholland, Lumby, British Columbia; Myrna Murray, Borden, Prince Edward Island; Audrey Olney, Lachine, Quebec; Anne Teschke, Thunder Bay, Ontario; Connie Zimbalatte, North Bay, Ontario.

Officers were installed during the closing mass at St. Michael's Cathedral, presided over by National Spiritual Advisor Abbot Peter Novecosky, of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Saskatchewan. President Joan Chesser, Russell, Ontario; President-elect Sheilah

Pellerin, Middleton, Nova Scotia; 1st Vice-President Vivian Bosch, Swift Current, Saskatchewan; 2nd Vice-President Myrna Murray, Port Borden, Prince Edward Island; Secretary-Treasurer Catherine Power, St. John's, Newfoundland; Past President Claire Heron, Victoria, British Columbia.

National Conveners: Spiritual Development Barbara Jarvis, Houston, British Columbia; Organization Sheilah Pellerin; Christian Family Life Myrna Murray; Community Life Lorette Noble, Candiac, Quebec; Education Agnes Bedard, Calgary, Alberta; Communications Vivian Bosch; Resolutions Sharon Harland, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Legislation Marie Cameron, Calgary, Alberta; International Relations Joan Chesser; Laws Claire Heron.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Joan Baudais, Calgary; B.C. & Yukon Lorraine Faherty, Fort Nelson; Manitoba Beatrice Gross, Brandon; Military Ordinariate Marguerita Johnson, Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia; New Brunswick Constance Firlotte, Bathurst; Newfoundland and Labrador Agnes Ebbs, Topsail; Nova Scotia Therese Pottie, River Bourgeois; Ontario Peggy Nastasiuk, Barrie; Prince Edward Island Margaret Fitzpatrick, Charlottetown; Quebec Anida Simurda, Gatineau; Saskatchewan: Phyllis Kennedy, Regina.

At the closing banquet, the selfless service of the Sisters of Service was honoured, with Honorary Life Member Heather Kolla [1992-94] presenting Superior General Anna McNally with a presentation award for 75 years of serving side by side with League members. Finally, with renditions of Celtic songs by internationally recognized tenor John McDermott, son of Toronto member Hope McDermott, the convention ended on a high note.

* * *

One of the pressing concerns facing National President Joan Chesser was the League's slow but steady decline in membership, from over 123,000 in 1990 to 108,681 in 1996. Its well-being and ability to be a strong voice for Catholic women throughout the Canadian landscape depended on attracting new members. Addressing the issue at the national convention, the national executive had launched Project GROW (Generate enthusiasm, Revitalize, Option and opportunities and Walk with faith partners), an initiative designed to promote the League.



Joan Chesser strongly believed that the League had something to offer every woman. She said, "It is for us to respond to the needs and interests of prospective members and adapt to the times in which we live" (*The Canadian League*, 70, 4, 1995). She related that in earlier years she had joined a small parish council out of a sense of obligation but continued her membership because she enjoyed being with women of faith who were working for others in the community. She was from Sudbury, Ontario, taught school, married and raised children, and lived the peripatetic life of a military family – including a three-year assignment in Baden-

Soellingen, West Germany. While living in North Bay, Ontario, she completed studies in the Catholic ministries program for the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie. Within her parish, she honed leadership skills as a member of the pastoral council and the liturgy committee. She was president of the Military Vicariate Council when the Military Ordinariate of Canada was promulgated in 1987.

From her own experience, Joan Chesser was aware of the demands and alternatives available to fill any extra time of prospective members. Recruiting was from an ever changing society that expected time spent with the League to be productive and rewarding in order to be justified. She thought that properly prepared and effective meetings, with informative and innovative programs adapted to specific memberships, were essential for League growth. She suggested that councils should take time for the social aspect of a gathering so as to contribute to a sense of family and team spirit. Further, she suggested that councils should welcome those who could not attend meetings but seemed willing to share their abilities as time permitted.

Indeed, members "shared their abilities" during the fall months. Jean Forest, an Edmonton member for over 40 years and former chancellor of the University of Alberta, was appointed to the Canadian Senate. Members of St. Mary Parish Council, Barrie, Ontario, raised \$10,420 to assist in providing a chapel for the city's Royal Victoria Hospital. Members of Holy Trinity Parish Council, Torbay, Newfoundland, celebrated the feast of the Annunciation with a spiritual reflection on the Beatitudes, to which they invited their congregation and members of Mary Queen of Peace Parish Council in St. John's, Newfoundland. Members of Mary, Mother of the Church Parish Council, Winnipeg,

Manitoba, contributed to Alpha House, an affordable housing facility for abused women and their children.

St. Patrick Parish Council, Victoria, British Columbia, assisted Mount St. Mary Hospital in supplying electric beds for resident patients. Other councils in the Diocese of Victoria were prompted by the disappearance of two youngsters in the area to support Child Find Canada Inc. and the Missing Children Society of Canada. Blessed Sacrament Parish Council, Cornwall, Ontario, implemented the Pornography Hurts bus campaign, purchasing and installing large posters on local transit buses. Four members of Holy Family Parish Council, Deux Montagnes, Quebec, were recipients of the coat of arms medal, struck for the occasion of the city's 75th birthday and presented to deserving citizens.

In October, members were represented by Joan Chesser and National President-elect Sheila Pellerin at the NCCW biennial general assembly in Portland, Maine. The national executive sent a copy of Resolution 1996.13 Antipersonnel Landmines to the minister of foreign affairs prior to Canada's hosting of Towards a Global Ban on Antipersonnel Mines, a conference on international strategy. The League urged Canada to send a strong message to the global community by legislating a ban on production, export, trade or transfer of antipersonnel landmines, and to eliminate stockpiles.

National executive projects: An ad hoc committee prepared a position paper on reproductive and genetic technologies, responding to the federal government's document, *New Reproductive Technologies: Setting Boundaries, Enhancing Health*. A letter that included a copy of Resolution 1989.05 Abortion Pill RU486 was sent to the federal minister of health objecting to any introduction of the abortion pill in clinical tests in Canada. In December, the League joined with CCCB, CHAC and the Knights of Columbus to form The Catholic Group for Health, Justice and Life. The organization applied to seek leave to intervene in the Supreme Court of Canada appeal by Winnipeg Child and Family Services concerning a pregnant woman whose addiction to solvents endangered her unborn child.

In an address to members, Abbot Peter Novecosky developed the theme, *The Catholic Women's League of Canada — through service to the people of God*. Reflecting on passages in the Acts of the Apostles, he recalled, "It is interesting that the first Christians called to help the apostles are known as the 'deacons', those called to serve" (*The Canadian League*, 72, 3, 1996). He said that Jesus Christ transformed the meaning of service and for Jesus and the church, service became a sign of love freely given, thus it is important to examine why one serves and always aim for pure motives. He reminded members that Jesus identified himself as the servant of God. Service is the mark of a Christian.

1997: The Catholic Women's League of Canada — through service to the people of God: Part II

Every knee shall bend at the name of Jesus (Philippians 2:10).

1997 was the first year of preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year

2000. The year was dedicated to Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Saviour. Pope John Paul II invited Catholics throughout the world to reflect on Christ, the Word of God. According to the pope, it was a time for rest and reconciliation. It was a time for freeing all those captive from their bonds. It was a time for healing and preparing for a celebration.

The pope outlined three years of preparation for the event in 1994 with his apostolic letter, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (On Preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000). The second year, 1998, was to be devoted to the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit, the sacrament of confirmation and the virtue of hope. The third year, 1999, would focus on God the Father, an occasion for celebration of the sacrament of penance and the virtue of charity.

In an address, National Spiritual Advisor Abbot Peter Novocosky, of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Saskatchewan instructed that 1997 was a year of faith in which members were asked to renew their relationship with Christ, the Son of God, and their appreciation of the sacrament of baptism. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was to be held up as a model in each of the years leading up to the jubilee year. He quoted the pope's challenge, "...if we recall that Jesus came 'to preach the good news to the poor' (Mt 11:5; Lk 7:22), how can we fail to lay greater emphasis on the *Church's preferential option for the poor and the outcast?* Indeed, it has to be said that a commitment to justice and peace in a world like ours, marked by so many conflicts and intolerable social and economic inequalities, is a necessary condition for the preparation and celebration of the Jubilee" (*The Canadian League*, 73, 1, 1997).

1997 was also a year of reflecting on the conclusion of the League's mission statement, *The Catholic Women's*

League of Canada — through service to the people of God. Writing to the membership, National President Joan Chesser said, "Let us pray for one another as we seek to live out our mission statement always inviting and acknowledging the action of the Spirit and the guidance of Our Lady of Good Counsel in all our works" (*The Canadian League* 73, 2, 1997).

In January, Joan Chesser and National President-elect Sheilah Pellerin represented the League in Ottawa, Ontario, at the CCCB Annual Forum with National Associations, an exchange of experience and observations coordinated by the CCCB Episcopal Commission for Relations with Associations of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Laity. In February, Joan Chesser and Sheilah Pellerin returned to Ottawa to attend consultations between non-governmental organizations and the department of foreign affairs and international trade on preparation for the 53rd Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Issues at the forefront included civil and political rights, effective functioning of treaty bodies, minority rights, violence against women, integration of women's rights as human rights, rights of persons with disabilities and refugee and migration concerns.

Items of interest: In March, a national ad hoc committee submitted a response to the Nuclear Fuel Waste Management and Disposal Concept Environmental Assessment Panel in Ottawa, Ontario, further to an earlier statement to the panel in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The national executive sent a letter to the federal government in which the League pressed for continuous funding of the Breast Cancer Research Challenge Fund. Members were asked to lobby in a similar manner. A letter was sent to the minister of health urging passage of Bill C-47 *An Act respecting human reproductive technolo-*

gies and commercial transactions relating to human reproduction which prohibited 13 reproductive and genetic technology practices.

In late March, Joan Chesser, Sheila Pellerin, National Resolutions Convener Sharon Harland and National Legislation Convener Marie Cameron represented over 108,102 members in meetings with representatives of the federal government concerning the 1996 Resolutions Brief. With regard to Resolution 1996.13 Antipersonnel Landmines, the delegates learned from the minister of foreign affairs and international trade that the issue of landmines was a major concern to the government. The minister had hosted a meeting in October 1996, which was attended by representatives from more than 50 countries who pledged their support for a global ban on antipersonnel landmines and were to sign a treaty to that effect in December 1997.

Resolution 1996.06 Women's Heart Disease and Stroke, Resolution 1996.07 Research Funding for Women's Heart Disease and Stroke, and Resolution 1996.08 Partnership in Health Care were discussed with the minister of finance, Health Canada representatives and the deputy minister of Status of Women Canada. All agreed that funding was needed for research in the field of stroke and heart disease. Health Canada representatives advised that the issues were to be addressed through the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health being established across Canada.

With regard to Resolution 1996.09 Recombinant Bovine Somatotropin (rbST), representatives reported that the federal government was continuing to research and monitor the drug. The delegates were assured that there would be no notice of compliance issued without ample evidence that the drug was safe.

Regarding Resolution 1996.12 Human Reproductive Technologies, the delegates were told that Bill C-47 *An Act respecting human reproductive technologies and commercial transactions relating to human reproduction* was still in committee and groups wishing to make presentations to the federal government concerning the bill were being contacted. The delegates stated that the League was in agreement with the position of the CCCB, one of the groups allowed to present a brief. With regard to Resolution 1996.04 Tax Credit for Stay-at-Home Parent, the finance minister said that the federal government continued to consider the issue.

The League's deep concern about research on breast cancer was discussed, with the delegates urging the federal government to continue its funding for another five years. The nuclear waste disposal issue was discussed at each meeting, with the League's Response to the Nuclear Fuel Waste Management and Disposal Concept Federal Environmental Assessment Review Panel presented to the various representatives of governmental departments. The League's position on euthanasia was reiterated. Finally, in response to Resolution 1996.05 Same-Sex Marriages, a letter from the minister of justice advised the delegates that the government remained committed to supporting the traditional definition of marriage, being one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. There were no plans to change the concept of marriage in Canada through legislation.

Noteworthy: National bursaries were awarded to 27 members. In May, Project GROW, devised to revitalize membership, was piloted successfully in Winnipeg where members and facilitators were hosted by the Military Ordinarate Council at St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Chapel, CFB Winnipeg. Diocesan councils were further instructed to

select animators and set dates for training sessions in all dioceses following the upcoming national convention. In mid-July, Joan Chesser had attended the 35th anniversary conference of United Church Women as an ecumenical partner.

The 77th annual national convention took place in St. John's, Newfoundland, August 17-20 at the Hotel Newfoundland. Rich in history and named after St. John the Baptist, the city retained an old world charm while offering the visitors up to date conveniences and an opportunity to enjoy some of the best music and scenery offered in Canada. 740 guests and delegates attended. Those arriving a few days early were invited to visit the Newfoundland Freshwater Resource Centre, tour through the Narrows to view the city from the sea, or take a drive to Cape Spear, the most easterly point in North America, to watch for whales. A Saturday evening Taste of Newfoundland and Labrador allowed for renewing of friendships and meeting newcomers while watching the "screeching in" of members as honorary Newfoundlanders.

The convention was opened with a Eucharistic celebration at Mary Queen of Peace Parish. The next day, following morning prayer, participants listened to a Gathering Day address by Dr. Margaret Somerville, professor of medicine and law at McGill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law.

Margaret Sommerville spoke on euthanasia and presented the subject clearly in the presentation, *Is Being 'A Good Catholic Girl' Good Enough Reason to Oppose Euthanasia?* Guest journalist Bonnie Brennan related that she urged members to understand implications of the recent public debate and learn how to effectively oppose euthanasia in the context of religious bigotry in Canada's pluralistic society. She

suggested that they should find ways to translate religious beliefs into terms that others, who do not hold the same beliefs, could understand and work toward areas of agreement.

Later in the day, three guest speakers joined in a discussion about the complexity of end of life issues. Elizabeth Davis, RSM, president and chief executive officer of the Health Care Corporation of St. John's, spoke about some of the difficulties that administrators of health care face, caught between the increasing scarcity of resources and a public that does not have reasonable expectations about length of life. Margaret Scott, retired associate professor of medicine at Memorial University, in St. John's, and a consultant for palliative care, cautioned that, along with care of pain and symptoms, the palliative caregiver must be aware of the patient's value and deep worth. Lisa Cook, a lawyer, explained advanced health care directives which permit a person to express wishes regarding health care and death or to appoint someone to make these decisions. The panel urged members to become actively involved in the public debate because, as a grassroots organization, the League had the power to urge politicians to promote discussion on all aspects of the issue.

The theme, *The Catholic Women's League of Canada — through service to the people of God*, was illustrated through poster displays depicting projects of the parish councils. Some examples: Military Ordinariate members helped families with problems stemming from being uprooted every two years. The service of provincial presidents was honoured by New Brunswick's parish councils. Nova Scotia members raised funds for breast cancer research. Ontario members gave study courses on the leadership style of Jesus Christ. Members from Prince Edward

Island donated funds toward the purchase of a mammogram machine. Quebec councils promoted awareness of child abuse. Saskatchewan members requested that the government place warnings about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) on labels. Alberta MacKenzie members walked in solidarity with their Aboriginal sisters. B.C. & Yukon councils offered financial support to local pastors in need. In Newfoundland and Labrador, members campaigned for Catholic schooling.

Ten resolutions were adopted with plans for action included. The scope was wide – Resolution 1997.01 Age for Consensual Sexual Relations urged the federal government amend the *Criminal Code* to increase the legal age for consent to sexual relations between adults and young persons to 16 years of age. Resolution 1997.02 Legislation for Prostitution-Related Offences urged the federal government to amend the *Criminal Code* to make it easier to enforce existing provisions for prostitution related offences. Resolution 1997.03 Capital Punishment urged the federal government to continue its ban on capital punishment.

Resolution 1997.04 Awareness of another Risk Factor for Breast Cancer urged federal, provincial and territorial governments as well as provincial colleges of physicians and surgeons to ensure that women considering an abortion were informed of the possible risk of breast cancer. Resolution 1997.06 Genetically Engineered Foods urged the federal government to monitor genetically engineered products and ensure accuracy in labelling. Resolution 1997.05 Pesticides and Herbicides: Hazards and Alternatives urged members and councils to become informed about the hazards of pesticides and herbicides. Members were also asked to make inquiries in communities as to pesticide or herbicide usage and rec-

ommend use of non-toxic alternatives to reduce health risks.

Resolution 1997.07 United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* urged the federal government to ensure that the report of the Committee on the Rights of the Child be included on the agenda at future United Nations general assemblies. It encouraged members to promote an awareness of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, a treaty that was ratified in September 1996 by 189 countries including Canada. Further, Resolution 1997.10 Amendment to the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Interpretations Act* to Recognize the Child as a Human Being from Conception urged the federal government to amend the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Interpretations Act* by defining a child as a human being from conception, with subsequent rights to life, liberty and security of person.

Resolution 1997.09 Restorative Justice Programs for Young Offenders urged the federal government to support restorative justice programs for young offenders and educate the public on restorative justice programs. Members were encouraged to educate themselves about restorative justice programs and support such programs in their communities.

The League resolved to become involved in the MaterCare International Project (Resolution 1997.08 MaterCare International Project), which addressed maternal health problems in Africa by training physicians and nurses in health care and surgery, and in management of health care and surgery. The project began in 1995 with a group of Catholic obstetricians, gynaecologists and midwives who were inspired by Pope John Paul II's 1995 encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), to design a program to improve the lives and health of mothers around the world. Initially,

they established a maternal health and obstetric fistula project for West Africa, in Ghana. MaterCare International met the criteria for matching grants from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The national council adopted MaterCare International as a national League project for a period of one year, with a clause for renewal following a positive review.

MaterCare International joined the CCOOP 1% Program, Collection for Pope's Pastoral Works, Breast Cancer Research Challenge Fund and Coady International Institute as recipients of the League's national voluntary funds. The National Pro-Life Fund was disbursed to Birthright International, Alliance for Life, COLF, and Care-in-Dying Coalition/Canadian Coalition Against Euthanasia.

Twenty three women were honoured with a life membership: Shirley Armillotta, Port Coquitlam, British Columbia; Joan Baudais, Calgary, Alberta; Patricia Beattie, Toronto, Ontario; Sheila Bielawski, Douglas, Ontario; Philomena Carroll, Labrador City, Newfoundland; Colette Ceci, Thorold, Ontario; Catherine Fagan, Mount Pearl, Newfoundland; Pamela Hill, Athabasca, Alberta; Phyllis Kennedy, Regina, Saskatchewan; Margarita LeFort, Hornepayne, Ontario; Claire MacDonnell, New Glasgow, Nova Scotia; Edith McPhail, St. Andrew's West, Ontario; Marjorie Miller, Chilliwack, British Columbia; Marie Lucie Neveu, Granby, Quebec; Linda Parker, Selkirk, Manitoba; Gertrude Parsons, Corner Brook, Newfoundland; Lucille Partington, Sexsmith, Alberta; Betty Ruksys, Terrace, British Columbia; Colleen Shirley, Nepean, Ontario; Anida Simurda, Gatineau, Quebec; Yolande Smart, Deux Montagnes, Quebec; Evelyn Sorbara, Guelph, Ontario; Willis Wren, Cobden, Ontario.

After three days of business meetings, memorable Eucharistic celebrations, reflection and meditation in the prayer room, and, yes, fun too – including the Cabot Cabaret dinner theatre and traditional provincial dinners – participants met for the closing mass at the historic St. John the Baptist Basilica. Abbot Peter Novecosky preached about the importance of the various structural components of a church. He reminded members that the exit doors are important because it is after leaving the church that one begins the work of Jesus Christ, the true servant in the world.

Officers reaffirmed: President Joan Chesser, Russell, Ontario; President-elect Sheila Pellerin, Middleton, Nova Scotia; 1st Vice-President Vivian Bosch, Swift Current, Saskatchewan; 2nd Vice-President Myrna Murray, Port Borden, Prince Edward Island; Secretary-Treasurer Catherine Power, St. John's Newfoundland; Past President Claire Heron, Victoria, British Columbia.

National Conveners: Spiritual Development Barbara Jarvis, Houston, British Columbia; Organization Sheila Pellerin; Christian Family Life Myrna Murray; Community Life Lorette Noble, Candiac, Quebec; Education Agnes Bedard, Calgary, Alberta; Communications Vivian Bosch; Resolutions Sharon Harland, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Legislation Marie Cameron, Calgary, Alberta; International Relations Joan Chesser; Laws Claire Heron.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Janet Cook, Grande Prairie; B.C. & Yukon Lorraine Faherty, Fort Nelson; Manitoba Betty David, Winnipeg; Military Ordinariate Marguerita Johnson, Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia; New Brunswick Constance Firlotte, Bathurst; Newfoundland and Labrador Shirley Hibbs, Mount Pearl; Nova Scotia Therese Pottie, Riv-

er Bourgeois; Ontario Joan Durand, Sault Ste. Marie; Prince Edward Island Margaret Fitzpatrick, Charlottetown; Quebec Yolande Smart, Deux Montagnes; Saskatchewan Lottie Wihak, Melville.

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In accordance with papal direction on ecumenism, the League made available two leaflets produced by COLF to be shared with the broader Christian community. The first, *The Family*, had been released on May 15, International Day of the Family. The second, *Choose Life*, was a summary of the 1995 encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life). Also, a marriage preparation resource compiled by National Communications Convener Vivian Bosch, *Called to Cana*, was promoted for small group sharing and individual couple sharing at all stages of married life.

National President Joan Chesser reported that the Supreme Court of Canada brought down its ruling on the appeal by the Winnipeg Child and Family Services in the case concerning the pregnant woman whose addiction to solvents endangered her unborn child. The appeal was denied, a disappointment for the Catholic Group for Health, Justice and Life, and for the League.

In October: Joan Chesser attended CCCB Plenary Assembly at Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Quebec as an official observer. National Resolutions Convener Sharon Harland and her husband were among the delegates to the Second World Meeting of the Holy Father with Families in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Joan Chesser, National President-elect Sheila Pellerin, National Community Life Convener Lorette Noble, and Life Member Joan Hastie represented the League at a conference, *Conversations:*

Church Women Leaders Together, sponsored by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada (WICC). Sheila Pellerin reported that women of different denominations learned the importance of understanding that a change in an organization is an opportunity rather than something to be feared. The theme *Daring Hope* was picked for a national gathering marking the close of the Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women, slated for August 26-30, 1998, in Guelph, Ontario.

In the provinces: Manitoba survived a "flood of the century" and the League joined the Knights of Columbus in a program of flood relief for victims. The Military Ordinariate Council sent 70 members and/or dependents to the World Youth Day in Paris, France. The CCCB named Honorary Life Member Claire Heron (1994-1996) as its representative to the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. Claire Heron also became the WUCWO Vice-President for North American. Quebec councils wrote letters to members of parliament and Quebec's national assembly expressing concern about the transition from religious to language school boards in the province's education system. Sacred Heart Parish Council, Lanark, Ontario, focused on National Family Week, inviting parishioners to join in the activities. Members of Mary Queen of All Hearts Parish Council, Lestock, Saskatchewan, collected food hampers for an Aboriginal youth camp on the Moskewekwan reserve. Members of St. Viator Parish Council, Dauphin, Manitoba, assembled baskets of personal items for three seminarians in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg. National President Joan Chesser was a recipient of the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* cross, presented to her by the Military Ordinariate Provincial Council. She said that she accepted it on behalf of the League in Canada.

1998: People of God – A Time for Healing

*Make every effort to preserve the unity
which has the Spirit as its origin and
peace as its binding force*
(Ephesians 4:3-4).

1998 was the second year of preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. The year was devoted to the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit, to the sacrament of confirmation and to the virtue of hope. The Liturgical Commission of the Central Committee of the Great Jubilee announced that the invocation "Come, Holy Spirit" should resound with intensity and awareness in the hearts of the faithful.

Mary, the mother of God, was again held up as a model. National Spiritual Advisor Abbot Peter Novocosky, of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, Saskatchewan, suggested that members use five mysteries of the lives of Jesus and His Blessed Mother, in which the action of the Holy Spirit is especially evident, for private or communal use. National President Joan Chesser asked members to seek always to be open to the Holy Spirit and accept the direction offered by the Spirit with a loving heart.

In mid-February, Joan Chesser, National President-elect Sheilah Pellerin, National Convener of Resolutions Sharon Harland and National Convener of Legislation Marie Cameron met with representatives of the federal government in Ottawa, Ontario, to discuss the 1997 Resolutions Brief. They represented 106,603 members. With regard to Resolution 1997.01 Age for Consensual Sexual Relations, the delegates learned that the federal government was reviewing the issue. Regarding Resolution 1997.04 Awareness of another Risk Factor for Breast Cancer, a representative from Health Canada and the secre-

tary of state for the Status of Women commended the League for its extensive research on the relation of abortion to breast cancer. Regarding Resolution 1997.02 Legislation for Prostitution-Related Offences, representatives pointed out that Bill C-27 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (child prostitution, child sex tourism, criminal harassment and female genital mutilation)* had been in effect since May 1997. Regarding Resolution 1997.06 Genetically Engineered Foods, a representative noted that the federal government was monitoring companies and universities engaged in research on novel forms of food.

In a letter of response to Resolution 1997.07 United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the delegates received assurance from the minister of justice that Canada would continue to be an active negotiator and co-sponsor of recommendations by the United Nations' Committee on the Rights of the Child. Regarding Resolution 1997.09 Restorative Justice Programs for Young Offenders, the delegates were told that the department of justice supported restorative justice initiatives for young people in appropriate cases and would continue its funding of programs through the Youth Justice Education Partnership. Regarding Resolution 1997.03 Capital Punishment, the delegates were referred to a press release issued by the minister of justice on August 29, 1997, which stated that the federal government did not intend to reinstate the death penalty.

Regarding Resolution 1997.10 Amendment to the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Interpretations Act* to Recognize the Child as a Human Being from Conception, the representative of

the federal government pointed to the diversity of the Canadian view and repeated the government's standard statement that "...there is a commitment of systemic review of this Act and a consultation process will be in place" (*The Canadian League*, 74, 1, 1998). The problems associated with reproductive and genetic technology were to be addressed by an advisory board that was being established by the federal government. Any legislation with reference to this matter would be carefully studied before a revised bill would be introduced.

Following the meetings, Joan Chesser and Sheilah Pellerin attended non-governmental organizations' consultations in preparation for the 54th Session of the United Nations' Commission on Human Rights in Ottawa, Ontario. The event was organized by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, honouring the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998.

In addition, Joan Chesser reported that the minister of citizenship and immigration had requested the establishment of a legislative review advisory group to analyze current legislative provisions regarding immigration and refugees. The national executive issued a written submission to the advisory group. The report of the legislative review advisory group, *Not Just Numbers: A Canadian Framework for Future Immigration*, was released in January 1998, with the consultation days held throughout the country in February and March. National Convener of Community Life Lorette Noble attended the hearings held in Montreal, Quebec, and submitted a written response to the consultations committee.

In late April, Joan Chesser and Sheilah Pellerin attended a forum held by the CCCB Episcopal Commission

for Relations with Associations of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Laity. The forum, *The Great Jubilee: Crossing the Threshold of the Millennium*, included planning for Jubilee celebrations.

In May, Joan Chesser met with the League's financial advisory committee in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Lorette Noble represented the League at the annual CHAC convention in Toronto, Ontario. In June, Joan Chesser and Sheilah Pellerin attended the first Faith and the Media Conference at the Carleton University School of Journalism and Communication in Ottawa, Ontario. In late June, Sheilah Pellerin and 2nd Vice-President Myrna Murray represented the League at a workshop hosted by COLF to introduce four Choose Life workshops focusing on the 1995 encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life).

Items of interest: National bursaries were awarded to 36 members. Representatives of MaterCare International, a project to improve the lives and health of mothers and their unborn children throughout the world, reported that funding from CIDA had been approved at the highest level. CIDA was to match contributions to MaterCare International on a two for one basis. The Catholic Group for Health, Justice and Life, of which the League was a member, asked the Supreme Court of Canada for intervenor status in a civil case involving a New Brunswick boy suing his mother for injuries received before birth from an accident.

Honorary Life Member Claire Heron (1994-1996) was appointed a representative of the CCCB on the Church Council on Justice and Corrections (CCJC). Honorary Life Member Irene Lefort (1986-1988) was appointed coordinator of the Diploma in Ministry Program at St. Francis Xavier University, in Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

Provincial council conventions held during the spring months of 1998 marked the conclusion of study of the League's Mission Statement, "The Catholic Women's League of Canada is a national organization rooted in gospel values calling its members to holiness through service to the people of God."

The theme of the 78th annual national convention was *People of God – A Time for Healing*. It was held in Ottawa, Ontario, August 9-12 at The Westin Ottawa, in the heart of Canada's capital city. The WUCWO North American regional conference was held August 8-10, in conjunction with the convention. Over 700 members joined with guests from the United States, Africa, Latin America and Europe for the proceedings as well as the attractions of downtown Ottawa – Parliament Hill, Rideau Canal, National Arts Centre, changing of the guard and the National Gallery of Canada.

The convention was opened at Notre Dame Cathedral, the mother church of the Archdiocese of Ottawa. Archbishop Marcel Gervais, of Ottawa, presided at the Eucharistic celebration.

On Gathering Day, the theme was developed by two of the guest speakers. Senator Jean Forest and Dr. Jennifer Welsh shared their stories of life in church and society from entirely different perspectives with participants. Senator Forest had been married for over 50 years and raised seven children while being extremely active in the church – in the League, as a catechetic, in promoting the role of women and serving on the board of governors of Newman Theological College in Edmonton, Alberta. She had also worked in the political sphere and was appointed to the Senate in 1996, when many doors seemed closed to women. She attributed these accomplishments to her own search for a balance in life, maintaining

that if one enjoys a level of spiritual well-being, the levels of emotional, intellectual and physical well-being are heightened. In turn, avenues of growth and development open up, enabling one to contribute more fully to society. As guest journalist Bonnie Brennan related, Senator Forest's life exemplified the strengths and abilities needed for decision making and healing by women of her generation (*The Canadian League*, 74, 3, 1998).

Dr. Welsh, a Rhodes scholar and partner in D-Code, a think tank/consultant company, was of a different generation, one that bridged the transition from the industrial age to the information age of computers and mass media, in which women faced different choices. She pointed out that women in her age group have been educated to expect to be equals in life and the workplace. They are disillusioned when they find that some doors are still shut to them and they have not made a large impact, even though, in many cases, they have put careers before family life. She said that in order to influence the decision making areas of society, women need to gain practical and broad based experience in multiple sectors. They must move beyond short-term goals which consider one's own needs, to taking a long view which considers the needs and constraints faced by all participants. She said that women must develop strong values, "If we don't teach our younger generations about values and how to use judgment they will, by default, assume that deep principles do not have any place in decision-making circles" (Ibid.).

The joint meetings of the League and WUCWO afforded members an opportunity to experience the League's international connection. WUCWO President-General Maria Eugenia Diaz de Pfennich spoke about the desire of WUCWO to be a more effective organ-

ization representing the true dignity of women everywhere. Those present shared stories related to the themes of the joint meetings, the League's *People of God – A Time for Healing* and WUCWO's *Women in Decision-Making*. They examined the lives of women in different countries who, through courage, motivation and compromise were bringing expertise and values to decision making in governments, education and science.

An address by WUCWO Ecclesiastical Assistant Paul-Emile Charland, OMI, *Women: Hope of the Third Millennium*, was read by Abbot Peter Novecosky. It stated that while change is slow in institutions, there have been changes for women in the church. He said that the Vatican was considering two requests from WUCWO – for a commission for dialogue with women in the church and for at least equal representation of men and women in the Pontifical Council for the Laity staff. He asked the audience to be carriers of the Spirit and bearers of hope to the church as it entered the new millennium.

Five women were honoured with a life membership: Constance Firlotte, Bathurst, New Brunswick; Shirley George, Delhi, Ontario; Irene Lamey, Stellarton, Nova Scotia; Thérèse Pottie, River Bourgeois, Nova Scotia; Mary Starek, Burnaby, British Columbia.

Eleven resolutions were adopted. Resolution 1998.01 Oppression of Women under the Taliban Regime in Afghanistan urged the federal government to continue using every diplomatic means possible to protest the oppression of women in Afghanistan. The national council resolved that concern about the plight of the women would be raised with WUCWO. Members were encouraged to write letters to members of parliament and the United Nations about the issue. Resolution 1998.02 Deviant

Sex Establishments/Business targeted venues for deviant sexual behaviour. The national council claimed that the bawdy-house laws in the *Criminal Code* were not specific enough, causing venues for deviant sexual behaviour to be judged as within the community standards of tolerance. Members were urged to become active in establishing more acceptable standards of tolerance in their own communities.

Resolution 1998.03 National Pharmacare urged federal, provincial and territorial governments to work towards an effective, cost efficient national pharmacare program. Members were asked to write to members of parliament, members of legislative assemblies and ministers of health and finance requesting a national pharmacare program for Canadians. Resolution 1998.04 Increase in Funding for Health Research urged the federal government to increase funding to the Medical Research Council of Canada to bring Canada's investment in health research in line with other Group of Eight (G8) countries. Resolution 1998.05 Palliative Care: An Essential Service urged the federal government to designate palliative care an essential service through an amendment to the *Canada Health Act*.

Resolution 1998.06 Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome) urged the federal government to provide funding for research to find the cause and a cure for myalgic encephalomyelitis, a debilitating disease of the nervous system. Resolution 1998.07 Cervical Cancer urged councils at all levels to initiate awareness programs concerning the importance of early detection of cervical cancer by means of a regular Papanicolaou (Pap) test. Members were encouraged to have Pap testing done on a regular basis and to encourage others to do likewise. Resolution 1998.08 Psychotic Disorders urged members to become aware of the needs

of those suffering from mental illness and the needs of their families and caregivers. They were encouraged to lobby provincial and territorial governments to review and revise mental health acts to provide greater community resources for those suffering from psychotic disorders.

Resolution 1998.09 Ethyl Alcohol in Mouthwash questioned the need for ethyl alcohol in many mouthwashes because of known medical problems, in some cases death, when accidentally ingested by young children. Resolution 1998.10 Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) urged the minister for international trade to state the League's concern about many of the concepts contained in the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment. Finally, Resolution 1998.11 Legalization and Decriminalization of Marijuana urged the federal government to reject all demands to legalize and decriminalize marijuana.

The theme, *People of God – A Time for Healing*, was developed throughout the convention with carefully prepared liturgies using the story of the paralytic (Mark 2:1-12) and other examples of healing in the gospels. Days took on a life of their own with morning prayer before sessions, Eucharistic celebrations and later evening prayer rounding out the day. And, not to forget the social events, always a happy addition – the WUCWO/CWL Meet & Greet reception, an Experience the Valley buffet dinner with entertainment, traditional provincial dinners and closing banquet. Abbot Peter Novecosky had completed his five year term as national spiritual advisor and was serenaded with a song prepared and presented by the spiritual advisors.

The newly appointed national spiritual advisor was Bishop Anthony G. Meagher, Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto.

Officers were installed during the closing mass at St. Patrick's Basilica: President Sheila Pellerin, Middleton, Nova Scotia; President-elect Vivian Bosch, Swift Current, Saskatchewan; 1st Vice-President Marie Cameron, Calgary, Alberta; 2nd Vice-President Agnes Bedard, Calgary, Alberta; Secretary-Treasurer Sharon Harland, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Past President Joan Chesser, Russell, Ontario.

National Conveners: Spiritual Development Peggy Nastasiuk, Barrie, Ontario; Organization Vivian Bosch; Christian Family Life Agnes Bedard; Community Life Joan Baudais, Calgary, Alberta; Education Lorette Noble, Candiac, Quebec; Communications Marie Cameron; Resolutions Phyllis Kennedy, Regina, Saskatchewan; Legislation Joan Hastie, Etobicoke, Ontario; International Relations Sheila Pellerin; Laws Joan Chesser.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Janet Cook, Grande Prairie; B.C. & Yukon: Jackie Lenarduzzi, Trail; Manitoba Betty David, Winnipeg; Military Ordinariate Theresa Winchester, Trenton, Ontario; New Brunswick Rejeanne Beaulieu, Perth-Andover; Newfoundland and Labrador Shirley Hibbs, Mount Pearl; Nova Scotia Danielle McNeil-Hessian, Bedford; Ontario Joan Durand, Sault Ste. Marie; Prince Edward Island Agnes MacDonald, Charlottetown; Quebec Yolande Smart, Deux Montagnes; Saskatchewan Lottie Wihak, Melville.

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National President Sheilah Pellerin was from Middleton, Nova Scotia, and a native of Edinburgh, Scotland. She joined the League as a young wife and mother while living at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Cold Lake, Alberta, and became an active member after moving to CFB Greenwood, Nova Scotia, in 1976. She had been employed as an executive secretary for years, was a Girl Guides of Canada leader, member of the Valley Action for Life and served on the board of Upper Room Food Bank in Kingston, Nova Scotia. Along with serving the League at diocesan, provincial and national levels, she was a lay minister in St. Monica's parish, in Middleton. A testimony of her popularity, several members of St. Monica Parish Council attended the national convention to cheer her on!

In September, Sheilah Pellerin attended the Health Protection Branch of Health Canada consultations on possible changes to modernize legislation and provide overall policy direction. In October, she brought greetings from the League to the NCCW general assembly in Dearborn, Michigan. She related that the League has many issues in common with the NCCW, whose theme in 1998 was *Journey to Jubilee: Women of Hope*, although the approach to solve

such issues was often different. In late October, Sheilah Pellerin represented the League as an official observer at the CCCB Plenary Assembly in Niagara Falls, Ontario. The bishops issued a statement concerning the eradication of poverty, an ongoing concern for the League and one of special interest to Sheilah Pellerin, who prayed for debt cancellation for developing countries.

Fresh ideas for projects concerning service to the people of God had been generated by the third annual poster session at the national convention. For example, messages and prayers were sent to sister members who were victims of the ice storms that left damage in New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec in January 1998. At the opposite side of the country, member Nancy Lim looked for a way to "make a difference" and with three others launched a project for newcomers in the Archdiocese of Vancouver. Hands were held out in welcome and friendship, a way of building bridges, not walls. Members of parish councils in Edmonton and Sherwood Park, Alberta raised funds for educating women at the Edmonton Institution for Women, a medium and minimum security correctional institute.

Members of Our Lady of Peace Parish Council, Trenton, Ontario, organized a youth group for girls at the military base, under the guidance of Military Ordinariate Provincial Convener of Christian Family Life Diane Lemay. Immaculate Conception Parish Council, Kelowna, British Columbia, involved elementary students in Project Love, an initiative of CODE. They assembled rulers, pencils, note books and erasers into kits, sent to classrooms in Mozambique, South Africa. Members of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish Council, Candiac, Quebec, gave a toonie at each council meeting for MaterCare International, with the spiritual advisor matching contributions.

National executive projects: National 1st Vice-President Marie Cameron, National Convener of Education Lorette Noble and Halifax Diocesan President Donna Whitehead completed a committee to respond to *Reforming Criminal Code Defences: Provocation, Self-defence and Defence of Property, a Consultation Paper* as requested by the federal government. An ad hoc committee was formed to consider revisions to the conveners' handbook. Despite petitions and letter writing by members and councils, publicly funded Catholic schools ceased to exist in Newfoundland in September 1998. The national executive noted that *Welcome the Stranger*, a five part series on Vision TV showing faith communities offering hospitality to uprooted people and sponsored by the League, was aired in late October and well received. In November, National Convener of Community Life Joan Baudais represented the League at the International Human Rights Conference, sponsored by the Canadian Human Rights Foundation, in Edmonton, Alberta. Also in November, the League welcomed Executive Director Kim Sass, CA, who replaced Carrie Ehman following her relocation to Calgary.

Responding to Pope John Paul II's call to be renewed and strengthened in faith on the eve of the millennium, the League decided to look at its viability and vitality as an organization. A vision committee was formed to coordinate a vision process for the League, a process that would engage all members. The goal of the committee was to unite the expectations of members and potential members with the League's reality and potential.

The first phase of the vision process was to identify emerging trends in the League, the church and society. Workshops, questionnaires and interviews were part of the plan of action in determining the current reality. According to Vision Committee Chairperson Suzanne Barrette, it was a time of risk as well as opportunity. She said, "As women of faith, respecting the past and discerning the present, let us see the shared vision process as an opportunity to build the future that we individually and collectively want for The Catholic Women's League of Canada" (*The Canadian League*, 74, 4, 1999).

1999: People of God – A Time for Celebration: Part I

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, praiseworthy and exalted above all forever. (Daniel 3:52)

1999 was the third year of preparation for Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. The third year focused on God the Father. It was the occasion for the celebration of the sacrament of penance and the virtue of charity.

National President Sheilah Pellerin announced that two national executive

initiatives would be available to members for the Jubilee. The first was a publication to highlight the League's commitment to pro-life issues. The second was a spiritual program for use by members and councils.

1999 was also designated as International Year of Older Persons by the United Nations. According to International Year of Older Persons Subconvener Barbara Jarvis, the theme, *Canada, a society for all ages*, highlighted

the importance of intergenerational dialogue and cooperation about concerns of seniors, the need to involve seniors in decision making, and recognition of the beneficial role seniors play in Canadian society. The CCCB announced a National Day of Compassion for the elderly, to be celebrated by Catholics on May 20, 1999. It was a concrete way for the bishops to proclaim the dignity of the elderly as well as respect for all older persons, especially those unable to be fully autonomous in their daily lives.

Sheilah Pellerin reported that Honorary Life Member and WUCWO Vice-President for North America Claire Heron (1994-1996) attended the WUCWO board meeting in Rufisque, Senegal. While there, she visited the National Collective of Inshore Fisherfolk in Joal, Senegal, which was funded by CCODP with financial support from the League. Claire Heron reported that in the cooperatives, men fished and women bought their catch to smoke, salt, dry and sell locally, making them more financially independent. Unfortunately, fish were becoming scarce, and much of the catch was being sold to buyers who trucked it to larger cities, hampering the businesswomen because they did not have finances to pay in advance for fish. CCODP was attempting to help the situation with micro-banking loans at low interest rates.

In mid-March, Sheilah Pellerin, National President-elect Vivian Bosch, National Convener of Legislation Joan Hastie and National Convener of Resolutions Phyllis Kennedy met with representatives of the federal government to discuss the 1998 Resolutions Brief. They represented 105,539 members. With regard to Resolution 1998.01 Oppression of Women under the Taliban Regime in Afghanistan, the delegates were assured that the federal government would continue to condemn the repression of women in Afghanistan.

Regarding Resolution 1998.03 National Pharmacare, the delegates learned that Health Canada was looking at data and would be working on the issue with the provinces. Regarding Resolution 1998.04 Increase in Funding for Health Research, the delegates commended the federal government for an increase in funding for health research. They were told that funding was in place for the Canadian Breast Cancer Research Initiative.

With regard to Resolution 1998.05 Palliative Care: An Essential Service, the delegates learned that the minister of health was interested in promoting plans for palliative care. Health Canada supported the Canadian Palliative Care Association in the development of a research agenda for end of life issues. Regarding Resolution 1998.06 Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome), the delegates learned that the disorder was the subject of research at the Health Protection Branch. Regarding Resolution 1998.09 Ethyl Alcohol in Mouthwash, the delegates were told that legislation concerning amounts of ethyl alcohol in mouthwash was difficult to implement, but some manufacturers were beginning to use childproof tops and others were decreasing the amount of alcohol in the product.

Regarding Resolution 1998.10 Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), the delegates learned that negotiations toward a multilateral agreement on investment had ceased. Regarding Resolution 1998.11 Legalization and Decriminalization of Marijuana, they learned that clinical trials on medical use of marijuana were planned, although the project did not entail legalization or decriminalization of marijuana.

Regarding an earlier concern, Resolution 1996.13 Antipersonnel Landmines, the delegates were in-

formed that a treaty to ban the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of antipersonnel landmines came into effect in March 1999. Landmine stocks in Canada had been destroyed, except for those used for training purposes. Regarding Resolution 1997.09 Restorative Justice Programs for Young Offenders, the delegates learned that the federal government was revamping the country's youth justice system by imposing adult sentences for the most violent repeat offenders while creating more community based options for those convicted of minor crimes. Further, the delegates engaged in a discussion about Resolution 1996.05 Same-Sex Marriages, which opposed legal status for same-sex couples under the term of marriage.

Items of interest: National Convener of Christian Family Life Agnes Beardard reminded members that May 14, 1999, was the 30th anniversary of legalized abortion in Canada. She said that the League would continue to call upon the federal government to enact laws that would once again provide protection for the most vulnerable in society. Sheilah Pellerin reported that the national executive and council members had been writing to members of parliament about a decision of the British Columbia Supreme Court with respect to possession of child pornography, and also about possible changes in legislation in British Columbia to accommodate same-sex relationships.

Sheilah Pellerin and Vivian Bosch attended a forum in Ottawa sponsored by the CCCB Episcopal Commission for Relations with Associations of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Laity. Discussions centred on the apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in America* (The Church in America), a papal response in January 1999 to the Synod for America, held in Rome in 1997. Sheilah Pellerin encouraged members to study the leaflets

published by the CCCB that outlined the themes of *Ecclesia in America*.

Sheilah Pellerin visited Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Borden, Ontario, where Kosovo refugees were being housed before being dispersed into the community. St. Joseph Parish Council (MO) members were involved with the refugees, working in local sponsorship groups to facilitate integration by providing support – driving to appointments, helping buy groceries and tutoring in English.

In the parishes, members were mindful of the virtue of charity in preparation for the Jubilee. St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish Council, Brandon, Manitoba, for example, honoured United Nations International Year of Older Persons with a Valentine's Day social for seniors. St. Michael Parish Council, Brights Grove, Ontario, paid the same tribute by landscaping the grounds at Versa Care, a care facility.

Winnie Ockney, of Our Lady of Victory Parish Council, Inuvik, Northwest Territories, made parkas for League fundraising events. Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Council, Sherwood Park, Alberta, held its annual Angel Connection Mass in remembrance of children lost during pregnancy, infancy or childhood. St. James Parish Council, Wilkie, Saskatchewan, developed a kit for teachers to promote letter writing in campaigns against pornography. Members of St. Peter Parish Council, Nanaimo, British Columbia, welcomed six young women who entered the church through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) Program with a copy of the League's *Constitution & Bylaws* and a membership in the League.

In May, the League called for forgiveness of debt through the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative. Members

worked in parishes alongside CCODP until 615,000 Canadians signed petitions that were presented to the federal government in May 1999. In turn, the petitions were taken to the meeting of the G8 nations in Koln, Germany, in June 1999, together with petitions from many countries, to encourage leaders of developed countries and international institutions to forgive the debt of the world's most indebted countries. National bursaries were awarded to 47 members. The national executive announced that every council had another opportunity to enter a poster in the display at the upcoming convention in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The 79th annual national convention was held August 22-25 and hosted by the St. Boniface Archdiocesan Council. Visitors arriving early toured Winnipeg's Exchange District, an area with a large concentration of heritage buildings, or crossed to historic St. Boniface, the largest francophone community in western Canada. Some chose to view the Leo Mol Sculpture Garden or works of art in the gallery in Assiniboine Park. Delegates and guests met at The Forks (of the Red and Assiniboine rivers) and were treated to the Dugald Costume Museum fashion review, and an evening of song and dance representing many of the interesting characters who contributed to the fabric of the early West.

A Jubilee theme, *Christ yesterday, today, forever*, was celebrated at the convention, calling on members to reflect on the past and the present, and to anticipate the future of the League. According to guest journalist Bonnie Brennan, it was most appropriate that the opening took place at St. Boniface Cathedral Basilica, a graphic example of the theme reflection – fire had destroyed the church in 1968 and a modern cathedral with magnificent stained glass windows was built in the shell of

the building. During the celebration of the Eucharist, Archbishop Antoine Haucault, of St. Boniface, recalled Christ's poignant question, "Who do you say that I am?" He challenged members to reflect on their attitudes about the League, what they said to others about the League and whether or not their lives demonstrated the faith in Christ that the League professes (*The Canadian League*, 75, 3, 1999).

Bishop Anthony G. Meagher, of Toronto, had withdrawn from the position of national spiritual advisor because of commitments and was replaced by Bishop Douglas Crosby, OMI, of Labrador City-Schefferville. Bishop Crosby was installed as the national spiritual advisor by National President Sheilah Pellerin during the opening ceremonies. He reminded participants that a jubilee year is "a time of justice, peace, reconciliation and celebration; a holy year in which we pray for a peaceful transition to the new millennium. It is an opportunity to recover our original goodness, to discover who we are, who we are called to be, and to deepen our relationship with Christ" (Ibid).

On Gathering Day, the League theme, *People of God – A Time for Celebration* was addressed by Dr. Reginald Bibby, a sociologist and professor at the University of Lethbridge, Alberta. He spoke on identifying emerging trends in church and society. He said that although there had been a significant drop in attendance at church services in recent years, particularly among younger members of congregations, interest in the supernatural and belief in God had remained at a high level. Large numbers of people want a loose relationship with a faith and a faith community, and most want to mark birth, marriage and death with a religious observance. Because of a deep sense of tradition, most of these people still claim some denominational con-

nection and the lines of connection provide an opportunity for those who have values and faith to reach out to those who are seeking and have specific needs.

The statistics in Dr. Bibby's address provided food for thought as participants studied the results of the members' questionnaire that aimed to define the current reality of the League. It had been designed by the Vision Committee, commissioned to develop a program that would draw out the commitment of members at all levels of the organization. The committee reported that most respondents were over 50 years of age with fully one-third of these over 70 years of age. They were usually married or widowed, with high school or higher levels of education, retired with middle range incomes and living in cities or towns. Less than 25 per cent lived in rural areas. Most respondents joined the League for friendship, spiritual growth or simply to be involved in the church. For the most part, they thought that the League's strengths were in areas of spirituality and friendship. They favoured League presentations to governments and grass-roots involvement. They were interested in family values, spirituality, community service and social justice issues.

The report included results of interviews with non-members by leaders of Project GROW, another initiative for League development. Many of these respondents thought that membership recruitment was an area that needed improvement. Others felt that the public image of the League needed to be addressed. Many agreed that aging membership was a serious challenge. They called on the League to explore new ideas and be willing to adapt to new ideas and include a strong program of spirituality within those new ideas. The next task of the vision committee was "What does this say about us?" Mem-

bers were urged to participate fully in future workshops as the vision process was unfolded.

Ten resolutions were adopted. Resolution 1999.01 Elder Abuse Assault/Awareness urged provincial councils to encourage provincial and territorial governments to implement effective programs to educate citizens about the signs and dangers of assault or abuse of elders. Members were encouraged to promote awareness of elder abuse or assault. Resolution 1999.02 Child Abuse in Institutions commended the federal government for an initiative to heal the harm for survivors of institutional abuse. The federal government was urged to make resources available for survivors of institutional child abuse who wished to access therapy and counselling. Members were encouraged to write letters of commendation to the minister of justice.

Resolution 1999.03 Banning the Cloning of Human Embryos urged the federal government to introduce legislation that would ban the cloning of human embryos for any purpose. Members were encouraged to write to the federal minister of health about banning cloning of human embryos for reproductive, therapeutic or research purposes. Resolution 1999.04 Reduction of Emissions of Greenhouse Gases urged the federal government to implement strategies ratified in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the Kyoto Protocol on the Climate Change Convention. Members were encouraged to park their cars and walk!

Resolution 1995.05 Macular Degeneration and Education Awareness recommended that provincial councils urge provincial and territorial governments to initiate education awareness programs on macular degeneration, the most common cause of blindness in

people aged 55 and older. Members were encouraged to make eye examinations a regular part of health care. Resolution 1999.06 Unrelated Bone Marrow Donor Registry Program urged councils to become aware of the requirements and expectations of the Unrelated Bone Marrow Donor Registry Program by hosting or attending information sessions and/or inviting speakers to meetings. Members were encouraged to join a bone marrow registry program.

Resolution 1999.07 Support for Canadian Forces Personnel Negatively Affected by Participation in the Gulf War challenged the federal government to be a leader in providing social, economic and medical support to participants and their families who were negatively affected by the war. Members were asked to pray for affected personnel and their families. Resolution 1999.08 Reduction of Export of Military Goods urged the federal government to review its trade guidelines and establish standards to prohibit the sale of military goods to countries with known human rights violations. Members were asked to write to the minister of foreign affairs and international trade and to their members of parliament requesting a ban on the export of military goods to countries with known human rights violations.

Resolution 1999.09 Bulk Fresh Water Resources recommended that the federal government pursue its strategy to prohibit the bulk removal of provincial and territorial water, including water for export from Canadian watersheds. Further, the national council recommended that the provincial councils urge their provincial and territorial governments to prohibit the bulk removal of provincial and territorial water. Resolution 1999.10 Media Access to Trial Exhibits recommended that media access be denied to trial exhibits concerning matters related to child and/or co-

erced pornography and encouraged members to protest if the media published details of such a trial.

Sixteen women were honoured with a life membership: Beatrice August, Moonbeam, Ontario; Margaret Beardon, Courtenay, British Columbia; Shirley Bernier, Lachine, Quebec; Lorraine Clark, Craig Flats, New Brunswick; Marie deBlois, Kapuskasing, Ontario; June Gaw, Thunder Bay, Ontario; Beatrice Gross, Brandon, Manitoba; Hazel Hawrish, Barrie, Ontario (MO); Jakki Jeffs, Guelph, Ontario; Lucille Kilar, Athabasca, Alberta; Dorothy McGuigan, Mississauga, Ontario; Andrea McKenzie, Prince George, British Columbia; Margo Schwerdtfeger, Ingle-side, Ontario; Sylvia Smith, Renfrew, Ontario; Aileen Twohig, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Lottie Wihak, Melville, Saskatchewan.

Officers were reaffirmed at the closing mass. President Sheilah Pellerin, Middleton, Nova Scotia; President-elect Vivian Bosch, Swift Current, Saskatchewan; 1st Vice-President Marie Cameron, Calgary, Alberta; 2nd Vice-President Agnes Bedard, Calgary, Alberta; Secretary-Treasurer Sharon Harland, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Past President Joan Chesser, Russell, Ontario.

Standing committees: Spiritual Development Peggy Nastasiuk, Barrie, Ontario; Organization Vivian Bosch; Christian Family Life Agnes Bedard; Community Life Joan Baudais, Calgary, Alberta; Education Lorette Noble, Candiac, Quebec; Communications Marie Cameron; Resolutions Phyllis Kennedy, Regina, Saskatchewan; Legislation Joan Hastie, Etobicoke, Ontario; International Relations Sheilah Pellerin; Laws Joan Chesser.

Provincial council presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Lucille Partington, Sexsmith; B.C. & Yukon Jackie Lenar-

duzzi, Trail; Manitoba Alice Makodanski, Winnipeg; Military Ordinarate Theresa Winchester, Trenton, Ontario; New Brunswick Rejeanne Beaulieu, Craig Flats; Newfoundland and Labrador Lidwina Critch, Goulds; Nova Scotia Danielle McNeil-Hessian, Bedford; Ontario Betty Anne Brown, Gormley; Prince Edward Island Agnes MacDonald, Charlottetown; Quebec Shirley Bernier, Lachine; Saskatchewan Velma Harasen, Regina.

Members learned of the death of Honorary Life Member Eleanor (Betty) Aitken (1976-1978), a former president-general of WUCWO (1983-1987), on July 28, 1999.

* * *

In October, National President Sheilah Pellerin and National President-elect Vivian Bosch represented the League at the NCCW biennial convention in Kansas City, Kansas. Sheilah Pellerin was invited to attend the CCCB Plenary Assembly in Cornwall, Ontario. Those participating addressed situations facing the church in Canada as well as aspects of the lineamenta, *The Bishop: Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the Hope of the World*. Following the meetings, Sheilah Pellerin and Ontario Provincial Convener of Community Life Patricia Beattie attended a round table discussion hosted by the Canadian Human Rights Act Review Panel in Toronto, Ontario.

The League, as a member of the coalition Catholic Group for Health, Justice and Life, made an unsuccessful intervention in 1998 in the case of a child in New Brunswick who was seek-

ing full compensation for pre-natal injuries. In 1999, the coalition was asking for intervener status in the case of the death, by her father's hands, of a handicapped child in Saskatchewan.

National Convener of Legislation Joan Hastie invited members to follow an upcoming debate on the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, noting that Resolution 1997.09 Restorative Justice Programs for Young Offenders had called on the federal government to implement a healing approach for offenders. In December, Sheila Pellerin represented the League at a forum, *Current Issues in Biotechnology and Theological and Ethical Implications of Biotechnology*, sponsored by the Canadian Council of Churches. Honorary Life Member Joan Chesser (1996-1998) attended consultations hosted by Status of Women Canada in Ottawa.

In an address, National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Douglas Crosby said that during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 members should make every effort to live according to the values of Jesus Christ. He pointed to the 1994 apostolic letter, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (The Coming of the Third Millennium), in which Pope John Paul II called for a renewed commitment to the teachings of Vatican II in the life of every individual and in the church. He said, "The Jubilee Year is a time to do justice. We return that which does not belong to us; we free those who are laden with unjust burdens....It is a special time to return to the roots of our faith" (*The Canadian League*, 75, 3, 1999). On December 24, 1999, before Midnight Mass in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, the Pope opened the Holy Door, beginning the Great Jubilee Year 2000.

2000: People of God – A Time for Celebration: Part II

It was a year of the Lord's favour!
An occasion of special grace! In her address, National President Sheila Pellerin said, "As we begin our celebration of this Great Jubilee, let us hold the great eucharistic feast in jubilation and gratitude, for it is a time of thanksgiving" (*The Canadian League*, 75, 4, 2000). She suggested that part of celebrating the Jubilee could be a review of past resolutions and consideration of those which could be re-addressed as part of the celebration.

In March, Honorary Life Member Joan Chesser (1996-1998), National President-elect Vivian Bosch, National Convener of Legislation Joan Hastie and National Convener of Resolutions Phyllis Kennedy re-addressed the League's concern for the elderly when they met with representatives of the federal government to discuss the 1999 Resolutions Brief. They represented over 105,384 members. Resolutions on the topic were adopted in 1986, 1988, 1989, 1991 and 1999. The delegates learned that the federal government was constructing an interdepartmental framework on aging and the department of justice was seeking suggestions regarding seniors (Resolution 1999.01 Elder Abuse/Assault Awareness).

Several issues were re-addressed. Resolution 1996.05 Same-Sex Marriages was still an issue of debate across the country. The delegates emphasized that the League supported maintaining the distinction between marriage and other relationships because of its proven contribution to the stability of the family and society. They objected to Bill C-23 *An Act to modernize the Statutes of Canada in relation to benefits and obligations*, which proposed to extend benefits and obligations to same-sex partners on the same basis as opposite-sex common law couples. Regarding Resolution 1998.01 Oppression of Women under the Taliban Regime, the delegates learned that the situation had not improved despite Canada's condemnation of actions of the Taliban at sessions of

the United Nations. Regarding Resolution 1998.04 Increase in Funding for Health Research, the delegates were told that the Canadian Institutes of Health Research would be funding four areas of research – biomedical, health services, applied clinical and social, and economic and population health. Regarding Resolution 1997.06 Genetically Engineered Foods, the delegates reiterated the League's stance about labels on genetically engineered products.

With regard to the 1999 Resolutions Brief, the delegates learned that the department of health had drafted a workbook on reproductive and genetic technologies, recognizing that public policy leadership should address reproductive and genetic issues before the federal government proceeded with legislation (Resolution 1999.03 Banning the Cloning of Human Embryos). Regarding Resolution 1999.04 Reduction of Emissions of Greenhouse Gases, the delegates commended the department of the environment for establishing a fund of \$100,000,000 to stimulate development of new technologies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Regarding Resolution 1999.09 Bulk Fresh Water Resources, the representatives of the department of the environment told delegates that the protection of ecosystems and exotic species was consistent with a Canada wide accord, which protected water in its natural state.

Regarding Resolution 1999.07 Support for Canadian Forces Personnel Negatively Affected by Participation in the Gulf War, the representatives of the federal government noted that the department of defence had extended benefits to as many as 4,000 veterans and peacekeepers involved in the Gulf War. Regarding Resolution 1999.08 Reduction of Export of Military Goods, the delegates were assured that bans were in effect concerning selling of goods to India, Pakistan, Iran and Sudan.

Regarding Resolution 1999.10 Media Access to Trial Exhibits, the delegates learned that the department of justice had decided that changes to the *Criminal Code* concerning media access were not necessary because judges had sufficient discretion under current laws. Regarding Resolution 1999.02 Childhood Abuse in Institutions, the delegates were told that a report of the Law Commission of Canada on institutional child abuse had been tabled in the House of Commons.

According to biblical tradition, a jubilee year was a time for a fairer distribution of worldly goods, a time for sharing and mutual support. Since 1969, the League had supported social and economic projects through CCODP to assist women in the Americas, Africa and Asia. Members contributed one per cent of the amount they spent on personal items such as clothing, jewellery or cosmetics to the CCODP 1% Program, with parish councils contributing at least one per cent of total funds raised during the year to CCODP. National Convener of Community Life Joan Baudais reported that the goal in the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 was to reach the \$1,000,000 mark. Reporting that women made up 70 per cent of the poor of the world and represented the majority of the world's refugees, she said that Catholic social teaching called the faithful to transform the world in solidarity with the poor.

The League demonstrated a commitment to social justice by participating in the World March of Women 2000, which sought to draw attention to the need for governments to address the issue of poverty and violence against women. There were four goals – to encourage grassroots women's groups to jointly address these issues, to connect women's struggles around the world, to promote equality between women and men, and to demand action from gov-

ernments to improve the quality of women's lives.

The march involved 4,190 groups from 153 countries. Beginning March 8 through to October 17, women marched in different forms – in rallies, marches, educational forums and prayer services – demanding action from governments. CCODP contributed to the march, ensuring that women in developing countries were fully involved in an event that would hopefully help to bring about lasting change in their own countries. The League was involved in a planning committee for the march, under the auspices of WICC.

The world demands of the march included cancellation of debts of developing countries, an end to loan conditions that forced countries to cut education, health and basic services, an end to sweatshop conditions in free trade zones, food security for countries, an end to trafficking in women and girls as well as persecution of those using rape as a weapon of war. The League did not support one of the demands – the right to free, public abortion services – and remained firm in its commitment to respect all life from conception until natural death.

In a joint statement of clarification issued May 15, 2000, four major national Catholic organizations reaffirmed support of the objectives of the march – to end violence against women and poverty. The League, CCODP, Canadian Religious Conference and CCCB stated, "We believe that Canadian Catholics should not allow themselves to be shut out of the World March of Women because some groups decide to press for demands that are clearly unacceptable to us. The basis of Catholic participation should be the long-held church teaching on respect for human life from its very beginning to its natural end, the preferential option for the

poor, marriage as an equal partnership between husband and wife to whom the transmission of life is entrusted, solidarity with the oppressed, and the equality of men and women.

“As Catholic groups, we engage in the march in a spirit of respect for women around the world, acknowledging our differences and finding the common ground on which to build change. The World March of Women 2000 is a powerful bridge of solidarity to our sisters – across hemispheres, languages, faiths and experiences. They seek justice. We are there for them” (*The Canadian League*, 76, 2, 2000).

The controversy caused a serious rift in relations between many councils and bishops throughout Canada, especially in Ontario. The League did join the CCCB and CCOOP in objecting to later initiatives of the international organizing committee of the march that promoted abortion.

In addition to the march, members worked on jubilee projects in the parishes. Some examples: A prayer capsule was sent to Jerusalem by members of St. Theresa Parish Council, Halifax, Nova Scotia. St. Emile Parish Council, Legal, Alberta, involved parishioners in a baby shower for their chapter of Birthright International. Good Shepherd Parish Council, Brossard, Quebec, hosted a marriage enrichment evening. Members of St. Mary Star of the Sea Parish Council, Mount Pearl, Newfoundland, took part in the Out of the Cold Program, responding to the needs of those less fortunate by preparing and serving meals in the church hall. Our Lady of Peace Parish Council, Trenton, Ontario (MO), made and raffled a quilt for MaterCare International. A Jubilee banner depicting liturgical themes was created by parishioners and members of St. Luke Parish Council, Dollard des Ormeaux, Quebec.

Items of business: National bursaries were awarded to 62 members. National Convener of Education Lorette Noble attended the Catholic Conference 2000, in Calgary, Alberta. *The Canadian League* received a facelift – becoming larger in size with visually more attractive articles. A steering committee of the Care-In-Dying Coalition/Canadian Coalition Against Euthanasia, a group the League had joined, met to consider the implications of Senate Bill S-2, *Medical Decisions Facilitation Act*. A position paper explaining the coalition's concern was drafted, to be the basis for a care-in-dying presentation to any senate standing committee hearings on Bill S-2. Of note, the right of landing fee previously imposed on all immigrants and refugees entering Canada was removed for refugees (Resolution 1995.04 The Right of Landing Fee).

Sheilah Pellerin informed members that the British Columbia Court of Appeal upheld a decision in the lower court that the section of the *Criminal Code* that considered simple possession of pornography to be a crime contravened the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The decision was appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada. Mindful of a response that was approved by the national executive in 1990, *Deletions to the Proposed Criminal Code Revisions on Sexual Assault, Pornography and Prostitution*, she contacted the minister of justice, asking her to ensure that new legislation would be introduced immediately if the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the original decision about possession of pornography. In addition, she wrote to all justices of the Supreme Court of Canada indicating the League's stand on the issue.

Sheilah Pellerin was pleased to report that the Catholic Group for Health, Justice and Life had been granted intervenor status at the Supreme Court of

Canada when the case concerning the role of a father in the death of his handicapped daughter was heard. Because his appeal raised legal, moral, social, philosophical and pastoral issues that had serious implications for Canadian society, Sheilah Pellerin and Joan Chesser attended the hearing in Ottawa.

Sheilah Pellerin was invited to attend the Evangelical Lutheran Women Quadrennial Convention in Vernon, British Columbia, in July. In turn, the organization's president, Carolyn Hertzberger, was invited to participate in Gathering Day at the 80th annual national convention, held August 13-16 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, at the Delta Prince Edward hotel.

The theme of the convention acknowledged the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, *People of God – A Time for Celebration*. Opening ceremonies were at St. Dunstan's Basilica with Bishop J. Vernon Fougere, of Charlottetown, presiding at the Eucharistic celebration.

The theme for Gathering Day was *We Celebrate by Opening the Holy Doors of our Lives*. Women from Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran, Presbyterian and United churches, along with representatives from the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada and the NCCW, joined members in "opening" a door of faith, a door of reconciliation and a door of justice. Later, they "opened" a door of Christian unity, a door of evangelization, and a door of the heart and mind.

Keynote speaker and Director of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations for the CCCB, Donna Geernaert, SC, drew out views about the ecumenical movement while explaining the sometimes difficult process of resolving the differences that keep Christians apart. She stressed that, "The church participates in ecumenism because Christian unity is

the will of the Lord, it involves true dialogue which demands listening carefully to the other person" (*The Canadian League*, 76, 3, 2000). Guest journalist Bonnie Brennan related that she urged members to become involved in ecumenical work in their communities. She said, "It is one thing for bishops and theologians to agree, but it won't come alive unless the people of God at the local level participate, understand the discussions, and agree with them" (Ibid).

Following a later session, women of faith walked in pilgrimage from the convention site to St. Dunstan's Basilica, a designated Jubilee site. They went silently through the holy door and together prayed for strength to forgive and asked that others would forgive them as they reflected on the words of Jesus Christ, "I am the door. If anyone enters by me he shall be safe, and shall go in and out, and shall find pastures" (John 10:9).

Those receiving League bursaries to study at the Coady International Institute were introduced by Director Mary Coyle. Sister Mary Lourdes Joseph of Sri Lanka, Asia, had worked with victims of Sri Lanka's civil war. Kamala Hemchuri, of Kathmandu, Nepal was editor of a magazine for the Dalit Welfare Organization, and worked on human rights for women. Patricia Fomadi of Ghana, Africa, was the Women and Development coordinator for her diocese. Recipients said that they planned to return to their countries to live out Christ's message of love.

A study program, *Belonging*, was launched at the convention. It had been compiled by National Convener of Organization Vivian Bosch, and developed as a workshop for parish councils based on working units that were designed to renew interest in the League.

Nine resolutions were adopted. Resolution 2000.01 Our Lady of Guadalupe – Mother and Evangelizer of America honoured Pope John Paul II's call for a new evangelization in the western world. Resolution 2000.02 The Prohibition of the Sale of Human Embryonic or Foetal Tissue, or Reproductive Services urged the federal government to enact legislation prohibiting the sale or exchange of human embryonic tissue or fetal tissue or human reproductive services. Resolution 2000.03 Promotion of Fair Trade Coffee encouraged members to support the efforts of the International Fair Trade movement to deal justly with coffee growers in developing countries and to use and promote use of Fair Trade coffee. Resolution 2000.04 Endometriosis Research/Awareness urged the federal government to increase funding for endometriosis research and urged members to become informed about the disease.

Resolution 2000.05 Violence on Television as it relates to Children urged the federal government to enact further legislation outlining a code of standards concerning children. Members were asked to protest to the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission about violence on television. Resolution 2000.06 Violence in Music Lyrics urged the federal government to enforce provisions in the *Criminal Code* to restrict the production, distribution and importation of music that offends these provisions. Resolution 2000.07 Teen Suicide: Prevention/Awareness urged the federal government to provide funding to address the problem of teen suicide, provincial and territorial governments to implement effective programs to address teen suicide, and councils to promote awareness programs on the prevention of teen suicide. Resolution 2000.08 Sweat Shops urged the federal government to develop a meaningful code of conduct

and instructed members about taking action against the sweatshop conditions behind many clothing labels. Resolution 2000.09 Establishment of a National Registry of Convicted, Dangerous, High-Risk Sex Offenders urged members to write to the federal solicitor general about establishing a national registry of dangerous, high-risk sex offenders.

Members resolved to support MaterCare International as a national project for three years upon hearing that Dr. Robert Walley, who initiated the West African project, was developing programs in Kosovo, East Timor and Sierra Leone. A collection was taken at one of the Eucharistic celebrations to launch the WUCWO Endowment Fund. Honorary Life Member Claire Heron (1994-1996) was chairperson of the campaign which aimed to raise \$1,000,000 to aid WUCWO in becoming a financially autonomous organization. Sheilah Pellerin, who would be national past president, was appointed to oversee implementation of the recommendations of the Vision Committee regarding planning for the future of the League.

An amendment to the *Constitution & Bylaws* created an education and health standing committee from the former education standing committee and the health portfolio of the community life standing committee. A motion was adopted that the national council henceforth would distribute the National Pro-Life Fund between Care-In-Dying Coalition/Canadian Coalition Against Euthanasia and COLF. A motion supporting the national executive's decision to participate in the World March of Women 2000 was given overwhelming support by accredited delegates. Addressing the issue, Sheilah Pellerin said, "Those individuals and groups who consider we should not be involved because there are some taking

part in the March who do not accept our values and beliefs, are losing an opportunity to be heard. Opposing poverty and violence against women is supporting and promoting the dignity of human life" (*The Canadian League*, 76, 3, 2000).

Sixteen women were honoured with a life membership: Pearl Bridgewater, Candiac, Quebec; Elizabeth Condon, Peterborough, Ontario; Anna Downing, Perth-Andover, New Brunswick; Agnes Ebbs, Topsail, Newfoundland; Margaret Fitzpatrick, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Clare Flagler, Bancroft, Ontario; Kay Kiss, Welland, Ontario; Danielle McNeil-Hessian, Bedford, Nova Scotia; Cecile Miller, North East Margaree, Nova Scotia; Muriel Murphy, Goderich, Ontario; Erica Perk, Peterborough, Ontario; Yolande Perry, Fredericton, New Brunswick; Mary Sullivan, Kensington, Prince Edward Island; Barbara Vincent, Bathurst, New Brunswick; Annie Wilman, Marmora, Ontario; Corry Wink, Peterborough, Ontario.

The convention attracted 944 members and delegates to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. Celebrations had included an "all you can eat" lobster party featuring local entertainment as well as an island *ceilidh* following a dinner at the Prince Edward Hotel. At the closing banquet, members paid tribute to the honorary life members who were present: Mary Matthews (1974-1976), Jean Mahoney (1982-1984), Dorothy Brocklehurst (1980-1982), Irene Lefort (1986-1988), Lucille Cullen (1990-1992), Heather Kolla (1992-1994), Claire Heron (1994-1996), Joan Chesser (1996-1998). An added touch, Ontario Provincial President Betty Anne Brown presented a peace candle to Sheilah Pellerin who, in turn, gave a candle to a delegate from each diocesan council represented to be shared with parish councils. The flame

originally came from a woman of Russian Orthodox faith in Russia who had asked that a small flame of peace go around the world.

At the closing mass at Holy Redeemer Church, National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Douglas Crosby, of Labrador City-Schefferville, challenged members to recognize the presence of Jesus Christ not only in Eucharistic celebrations but in the day to day dealings with others, "For where two or three are gathered together for my sake, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Officers installed: President Vivian Bosch, Swift Current, Saskatchewan; President-elect Marie Cameron, Calgary, Alberta; 1st Vice-President Agnes Bedard, Calgary, Alberta; 2nd Vice-President Lorette Noble, Candiac, Quebec; Secretary-Treasurer Sharon Harland, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Past President Sheilah Pellerin, Middleton, Nova Scotia.

Standing Committees: Spiritual Development Agnes Bedard; Organization Marie Cameron; Christian Family Life Joan Hastie, Etobicoke, Ontario; Community Life Danielle McNeil-Hessian, Bedford, Nova Scotia; Education and Health Phyllis Kennedy, Regina, Saskatchewan; Communications Lorette Noble; Resolutions Jackie Lenarduzzi, Trail, British Columbia; Legislation Joan Baudais, Calgary, Alberta; International Relations Vivian Bosch; Laws Sheilah Pellerin.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Lucille Partington, Sexsmith; B.C. & Yukon Margaret Beardon, Courtenay; Manitoba Alice Makodanski, Winnipeg; Military Ordinate Elaine Black, Bushell Park, Saskatchewan; New Brunswick Ann Doucet, Rothesay; Newfoundland and Labrador Lidwina Critch, Goulds; Nova Scotia Patricia Crossman, Kentville; Ontario Betty Anne Brown, Gormley;

Prince Edward Island Marion Buote, Rusticoville; Quebec Shirley Bernier, Lachine; Saskatchewan Velma Harasen, Regina.

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When National President Vivian Bosch took over the opening pages of *The Canadian League* to inform members about the objectives of the national executive, they gained a skilled writer with definite plans for her two years at the helm. She said that the challenge for the League in the year 2000 was the same as in 1920, to establish 100 new councils within a year and asked, "Are we ready to take up this challenge in the first year of the new millennium?" (Ibid.). She was convinced that new programs and well planned projects became the "open door" to new beginnings and the new beginnings fostered new ideas, through the advocacy of the Holy Spirit.



Vivian Bosch was raised in Liebenenthal, Saskatchewan, and joined the League in 1967 while raising a family. It was her "new beginning" that led to opening the doors of her home to disabled adults, a lasting interest. She completed a Lay Formation Program at the John Paul II Centre in Regina, Sas-

katchewan. She was employed as Renew Director in the Diocese of Gravelbourg, pastoral assistant for St. Michael's parish, in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, and family life coordinator for the Diocese of Gravelbourg and the Archdiocese of Regina. Along with accepting positions on parish, diocesan, provincial and national councils, she was the author of several League publications, *the Beatitudes* (1993), *Humble Prayer* (1994), *Called to Cana* (1995) and *Step forward in faith and action!*, a promotional brochure.

Vivian Bosch encouraged members to participate in a Global Coffee Party for the million dollar endowment fund campaign for WUCWO, to promote the presence and responsibility of Catholic women in society and church. She reported that National Chairperson of Organization Marie Cameron participated in a conference in Calgary, Alberta, on the structure of small Christian communities. National Chairperson of Education and Health Phyllis Kennedy represented the League at the Canadian Council of Churches Biotechnology Reference Group Regional Consultation in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Life Member Anida Simurda represented the League in receiving an award from Canadian Blood Services for involvement through parish councils in blood donor clinics. Vivian Bosch and Executive Director Kim Sass attended the CCCB Plenary Assembly in Cornwall, Ontario. Foremost among discussions was planning for World Youth Day 2002, slated for July 23-28, 2002 in Toronto, Ontario.

Phyllis Kennedy and National Chairperson of Community Life Danielle McNeil-Hessian compiled a resource of the League's policy, position, and discussion papers, and briefs and resolutions pertaining to bioethics for the database of information on bioethics built by the Institute of Bioethics of Catholic University of Rome. National

Chairperson of Christian Family Life Agnes Bedard reported that National Campus Life Network was attempting to link campus pro-life groups across the country through a website, a newsletter and an annual symposium.

Vivian Bosch called the jubilee year a memorable time and cause for celebration. In the provinces: Victoria Diocesan President Sheila Quinn introduced the peace candle which began its journey throughout the diocese, visiting each council in turn. Members of the Military Ordinariate Provincial Council worked with the Protestant Chapel Guild in bringing about Operation Common Ground. Prince Edward Island Provincial Council initiated two projects - a provincial *Book of Life* to honour deceased members and a compilation of the history of each parish council in the province. Turning to Pope John Paul II's decree, *Incarnationis Mysterium* (Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000), Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Council encouraged members to make a pilgrimage during the jubilee year as a sign of their living Christian faith. Councils across Newfoundland and Labrador celebrated December 12th, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Nova Scotia Provincial Council promoted the Elizabeth project - as Elizabeth and Mary shared a common bond, councils were twinned and shared information through scrapbooks, letters and spiritual programs.

In the parishes: Mary Gougeon, of St. John Vianney Parish Council, Penticton, British Columbia, and Bernice Beeby, of St. Peter Parish Council, Trenton, Ontario, were presented with the Governor General's Caring Canadi-

an Award. Members of St. Joseph Parish Council, Huntindon, Quebec, lent their support to a project that brought children from Belarus who lived near the site of the Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster (1986) to Canada for the summer. Members of Mary Queen of the World Parish Council, Mount Pearl, Newfoundland, Labrador, coordinated a knitting project for missions in Labrador. Members of St. Thomas a Becket Parish Council, Pierrefonds, Quebec, held a Power Breakfast, enhanced with prayer and song. Councils in Richmond County, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, joined other denominations taking part in the Canadian Bible Society's proclamation for 2000 - the public reading of the Word of God. A pilgrimage to Ste. Anne de Beaupre, Cap-de-la-Madeleine, Notre Dame Cathedral and St. Joseph's Oratory in Quebec was the jubilee project of Stella Maris Parish Council, Saint John, New Brunswick. A jubilee pilgrimage to the Middle East attracted 39 members, who were able to see such holy places as the Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Mount Tabor, Jerusalem and the River Jordan. In remembrance of members and their families, a wreath was placed by the Ottawa Archdiocesan Council, as was done every year, at the foot of the National War Memorial on Remembrance Day.

Members of the League were named Churchpersons 2000 by the *Prairie Messenger* for the organization's support of the World March of Women 2000. The editor stated that they supported the main issues of poverty and violence against women, but also used this opportunity to speak out against abortion, an issue that was supported by some of the organizations involved in the march.

2001: The Open Door: Part I

The League theme from January 1, 2001, until December 31, 2002, was *The Open Door*. National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Douglas Crosby, of Labrador City-Schefferville, told members that open doors are invitations in that one may enter or go out, "Either way, they invite us to make a commitment, to become engaged in something new, something interesting. Go in and meet new people, hear new stories, break bread and celebrate life. Go out and see new sights, walk old roads in new ways and find interesting pathways that lead to exciting new discoveries" (*The Canadian League*, 76, 3, 2000).

National President Vivian Bosch said that living the gospel in the new millennium called members not to re-evangelization but to a new evangelization – new in ardour, methods and expression. She called a personal encounter with Jesus Christ a starting point for the work of the new evangelization, adding that *The Open Door* welcomed members on a journey with Jesus that is "a continuous going forth, crossing over, turning here and there" (*The Canadian League*, 76, 4, 2001).

The national executive used the theme in launching its new evangelization project, the Catholic Missions In Canada (CMIC) National Voluntary Fund. The purpose of CMIC was to "open the door to Christ" in 26 dioceses in Canada that were termed mission because the Catholic population was too poor or too sparse to support its own church and ministry. National Chairperson of Spiritual Development Agnes Bedard invited parish councils to twin with a mission to provide moral, financial and spiritual support for those who were doing the work of God in outlying communities.

In late February, Vivian Bosch, National President-elect Marie Cameron,

National Chairperson of Legislation Joan Baudais and National Chairperson of Resolutions Jackie Lenarduzzi met with representatives of the federal government to discuss the League's 2000 Resolutions Brief and related issues. They represented 104,560 members. With regard to Resolution 2000.02 The Prohibition of the Sale of Human Embryonic or Foetal Tissue, or Reproductive Services, the delegates learned that a bill with regulatory framework was being drafted and would be going to a standing committee on health. Regarding Resolution 2000.04 Endometriosis Research/Awareness, the representatives gave no assurance that endometriosis would be included in funding allotted for endocrinology research in the near future.

Representatives of the federal government explained that violence on television and in music lyrics was a concern to the Department of Justice Canada (Resolution 2000.05 Violence on Television as it Relates to Children, Resolution 2000.06 Violence in Music Lyrics). The delegates were advised that legislation in place, such as maintaining the current rating system, adhering to a five-point plan developed in 1993 and implementation of the V-chip developed by Canadian Broadcasting should provide the necessary protection.

Regarding Resolution 2000.07 Teen Suicide: Prevention/Awareness, the delegates were advised that provincial and territorial governments were to provide funding for prevention and awareness programs. Regarding Resolution 2000.08 Sweat Shops, the delegates were told that a declaration on child labour, adopted by the federal government in 1998, was a step toward effectively eliminating child labour. In a lengthy discussion about Resolution 2000.09 Establishment of a National Registry of Convicted, Dangerous,

High-Risk Sex Offenders, the delegates learned that a national screening system under the Canadian Police Information Centre included a registry of high risk offenders.

Regarding Resolution 1995.02 Abortion Funding, the delegates were advised that the abortion drug RU 486 was not being marketed in Canada. Finally, delegates were advised that governmental sanctions on Iraq would continue until humanitarian conditions were improved.

In anticipation of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the delegates attended the Annual Human Rights Consultations organized by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada for Canadian non-governmental organizations. They also attended a seminar on biotechnology that was initiated by the COLF.

The WUCWO General Assembly was held March 17-25 in Rome. The theme was *The Prophetic Mission of Women*, a reference to one who has received an assignment from God to communicate a message. Along with Honorary Life Member (1994-1996) and WUCWO Vice-President for North America Claire Heron, Vivian Bosch, Marie Cameron and National Past President Sheilah Pellerin attended as delegates.

Of interest, the national executive responded to three important issues: A letter was sent to the minister of justice requesting the federal government to preserve the definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. A letter was sent to the minister of health in response to the statement by the federal government indicating that provincial governments that refused to pay for abortions performed at private clinics could be given penalties. The national executive

and the Catholic Group for Health, Justice and Life issued a joint statement about the sanctity of life following the Supreme Court of Canada decision that determined a Saskatchewan farmer was guilty in the case involving the death of his handicapped daughter. Vivian Bosch encouraged members to study these issues and to respond to them by writing letters to the federal government. Referring to the euthanasia case, she encouraged members to take a stand about the suitability of homes for the handicapped in their respective communities.

The United Nations designated 2001 as International Year of Volunteers. In the spirit of new evangelization, members gave generously of their time, treasure and talent. Some examples: Members of St. Vincent Parish Council, Meaford, Ontario, made blankets for Canadian Food for Children. Members of St. James Parish Council, Wilkie, Saskatchewan, made quilts for a family in a Kurdish refugee camp. St. Peter Parish Council, Nanaimo, British Columbia, paid the shipping charges for ostomy supplies sent to Lusaka, Zambia. Six members of Guadalupe House, an Aboriginal parish in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, attended a Building Bridges evening sponsored by Christ the King Parish Council, Foam Lake, Saskatchewan. St. Gregory Parish Council, Etobicoke, Ontario, hosted a workshop, Climate Control for Ten Days, working through an inter-church coalition known as Ten Days for Global Justice. Members of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish Council, Vancouver, British Columbia, collected rosaries for victims of an avalanche in El Salvador.

Ann Teschke, of St. Dominic Parish Council, Thunder Bay, Ontario, was among recipients of the *Bene Merenti* papal medal for distinguished contributions to church, community and family. Eryn Hessian, of St. Ignatius Parish Council, Bedford, Nova Scotia, took

part in the Coady International Institute's Youth Internship Program in Ethiopia. Marisa de Souza, of St. Bonaventure Parish Council, Calgary, Alberta, joined the Holy See Mission to the United Nations internship program in New York.

In the provinces: Parish councils in Prince Edward Island took part in the Vigil of Hope, raising funds that allowed three women in Africa to start businesses through a micro-banking system. The Military Ordinariate Council held a convention in conjunction with the Protestant Chapel Guild in Trenton, Ontario. A stained glass window was commissioned to commemorate the event.

All levels of councils volunteered to support Women Changing the World, a League campaign in support of the CCODP 1% Program National Voluntary Fund. The project sponsored programs in El Salvador, Bangladesh and Nigeria that were helping grassroots organizations of women to assume leadership roles that would lead to literacy, understanding of rights, access to credit and an increase in food production. National Chairperson of Community Life Danielle McNeil-Hessian reported that councils were contributing one per cent of funds that members raised and individual members were contributing one per cent of the cost of personal entertainment, jewellery and luxury items purchased.

Throughout 2001, an increase in membership was a priority for the League. To assist councils in membership drives, Vivian Bosch recommended a brochure, *Step forward in faith and action!*, a study program, *Belonging*, and the new *Executive Handbook*, compiled by the standing committees. Provincial presidents presented possible incentives for recruitment and promotion to the national executive, to be used

in a national action plan for the future of the League.

An incentive offered by the national executive was a membership contest that offered an all expenses paid trip to conventions for a new member and her sponsor. The winners of the draw for a trip to the national convention in 2001 were Annette De Boer and new member Joan Bogner of St. Joseph Parish Council, Whitecourt, Alberta. Mary Ann Ackerson and new member Gail Cogle of St. Dunstan Parish Council, Fredericton, New Brunswick, won trips to their provincial convention. Agnes O'Mara and new member Agnes Fekete of St. Thomas of Villa Nova Parish Council, Topsail, Newfoundland and Labrador, won trips to their provincial convention.

The 81st annual national convention was held in Calgary, Alberta, August 12-15 at the Coast Plaza Hotel with over 750 members receiving the city's wide open welcome and famous western hospitality. There was something for everyone – a tour of the city that included a brunch at the Spruce Meadows equestrian centre, a trip to Canada Olympic Park, to The Canadian Badlands Passion Play, even a paddle down the Bow River.

The theme of the convention was *The Open Door*. Bishop Frederick B. Henry, of Calgary, presided at the Eucharistic celebration that marked the opening at Holy Spirit Parish.

On Gathering Day, keynote speaker Director of the National Office of Religious Education for the CCCB Joanne Chafe, led members in a workshop, New Evangelization, inviting them to learn ways to bring the good news of the gospels to others in an ordinary manner. Guest journalist Bonnie Brennan related that she spoke of three stages of evangelization – missionary activity, catechetical activity and pastoral

activity. She said that members encountered many opportunities for evangelization in their everyday lives, adding that they were already involved in missionary activity when they were submitting letters to governments or were involved in community service. She said that the gospel had not lost its appeal. Rather, new ways needed to be found to let people know about the gospel – evangelization needed new models, goals and ideas. An example, the exciting power breakfast that members of St. Thomas á Becket Parish Council, Pierrefonds, Quebec, held October 14, 2000!

During an early session, members joined in prayer and song to “open the door” of belonging by recalling their baptism. Waters brought from across the country were joined together, blessed and used to bless those present, then separated again to be taken back to the dioceses. The gestures were symbolic of new life that is received through baptism, when Christians become as one, and through this unity become a sign of Christ to the world. During a later session, the focus was on reconciliation with God and others, another way to open the door to being fully alive.

Director at St. Joseph's College Ethics Centre, in Edmonton, Alberta, Dr. Mary Lou Cranston, CND, spoke of finding new ways and a new vocabulary to discuss issues related to the beginnings of life, especially in debates with those at odds with the belief system of members. Addressing the controversy over stem cell research, she illustrated her points by using current draft legislation before the federal government, the *Assisted Human Reproduction Act*. In outlining the various stages of human life, she stressed the need to use commonly accepted medical terms to indicate to others a sound knowledge of the subject.

Other speakers: Rev. Thomas Rosicca, CSB, and Dr. Katherine Rouleau, leaders of the World Youth Day 2002 team, invited members to open their doors and hearts to the one million young people set to visit Canada during the summer of 2002, about one-third of whom would be visiting 55 dioceses across the country. Members responded enthusiastically, expressing willingness to welcome visitors to their respective dioceses. Catholic Missions In Canada President Rev. Roger Formosi thanked members for their participation in CMIC's new evangelization project while speaking of the needs of the mission parishes. He described the breadth of the work of Catholic missions – which ranged from adult faith formation, marriage enrichment and family counselling to offering programs for lay ministry and sacramental preparation for children without Catholic schooling.

Seven resolutions were adopted. Resolution 2001.01 End-of-Life Care supported the conclusions of the federal government's report, *Quality End-of-Life Care: The Right of Every Canadian*, which updated *Of Life and Death*, issued by the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. The final report stated that “a more compassionate and comprehensive approach to end-of-life [seems] to be assigned a low priority in the existing health care system.” The national council urged the federal government to assess the need for home care and pharmacare for the dying and to establish the funding required by these programs, implement income security and job protection for family members who care for the dying, and encourage the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to establish an institute which would focus on end-of-life issues. In Resolution 2001.05 National Strategy for Arthritis, the national council urged the federal government to establish a national strategy for arthritis, noting that

the number of people with the disorder was expected to rise dramatically in coming years.

Resolution 2001.06 Spousal Benefits Under the *Canadian Forces Superannuation Act (CFSA)* considered the sacrifices occasioned by a military career. The national council urged the federal government to amend Chapter C-17, Section 25 (1) of the *Canadian Forces Superannuation Act* to grant spouses of deceased Canadian forces members an annuity equal to 60 per cent of a deceased spouse's pension. Resolution 2001.07 Discrimination in the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) urged the federal government to amend the CPP to allow calculations for survivor benefits to be based only on the income of the contributor, not by the financial circumstances of the surviving spouse.

In Resolution 2001.04 Water Quality in Canada, the national council considered water quality in Canada a matter of concern to health, along with hunger in Canada (Resolution 2001.03 Hunger in Canada), which was statistically at an unacceptable level. Members were urged to write letters to appropriate federal and provincial/territorial ministers about each resolution.

The United Nations declared the years 2001-2010 International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. In Resolution 2001.02 Toward a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence, the national council resolved to provide a list of resources aimed at correcting forms of violence that would be forwarded to parish councils.

National bursaries were awarded to 42 members. The national voluntary funds, monies forwarded by councils to the national office for disbursement, were awarded to the CCOOP 1% Program, Collection for Pope's Pastoral

Works, Breast Cancer Research Challenge Fund, Coady International Institute and MaterCare International. The National Pro-Life Fund was disbursed to COLF and Birthright International.

Thirteen women were honoured with a life membership: Patricia Battersby, Surrey, British Columbia; Jessie Bousquet, Cornwall, Ontario; Betty David, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Jean Falck, Kelowna, British Columbia; Anne Gallagher, Sault Ste Marie, Ontario; Shirley Hibbs, Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador; Margaret Ann Jacobs, Elmvale, Ontario; Margaret LaRose, Welland, Ontario; Connie Lavallee, Cobalt, Ontario; Catherine Lortie, Morrisburg, Ontario; Shirley Marcotte, North Bay, Ontario; Marion Nygren, Creston, British Columbia; Elsie Sullivan, Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec.

Members learned of the death of Honorary Life Member Ruth Cooney (1978-1980) of Calgary, Alberta, on May 25, 2001.

Officers were reaffirmed at the closing mass, celebrated by Bishop Douglas Crosby at St. Mary's Cathedral. President Vivian Bosch, Swift Current, Saskatchewan; President-elect Marie Cameron, Calgary, Alberta; 1st Vice-President Agnes Bedard, Calgary, Alberta; 2nd Vice-President Lorette Noble, Candiac, Quebec; Secretary-Treasurer Sharon Harland, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Past President Sheila Pellerin, Middleton, Nova Scotia.

Standing Committees: Spiritual Development Agnes Bedard; Organization Marie Cameron; Christian Family Life Joan Hastie, Etobicoke, Ontario; Community Life Danielle McNeil-Hessian, Bedford, Nova Scotia; Education and Health Phyllis Kennedy, Regina, Saskatchewan; Communications Lorette Noble; Resolutions Jackie Leonarduzzi, Trail, British Columbia; Leg-

isolation Joan Baudais, Calgary, Alberta; International Relations Vivian Bosch; Laws Sheila Pellerin.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Connie McBride, Edmonton; B.C. & Yukon Margaret Beardon, Courtenay; Manitoba Dr. Rayleen DeLuca, Winnipeg; Military Ordinate Elaine Black, Bushell Park, Saskatchewan; New Brunswick Ann Doucet, Rothesay; Newfoundland and Labrador Colleen Galloway, Manuels; Nova Scotia Patricia Crossman, Kentville; Ontario Joleene Kemp, Thunder Bay; Prince Edward Island Marion Buote, Rusticoville; Quebec Eleanor Arless, Lachine; Saskatchewan June Krogan, Regina.

Music was a high point of each day of the convention. Monday evening had featured a dinner followed by a musical and dramatic presentation by the choir of The Canadian Badlands Passion Play. A concert by popular Alberta singer Mark Mallett followed the Tuesday night provincial dinners. The classical bass voice of David Bedard, son of Agnes Bedard, entertained delegates and guests at the closing banquet.

* * *

The theme, *The Open Door*, continued to invite members to open their lives to Jesus Christ in order to become a light for the world. National President Vivian Bosch acknowledged that it was a challenge to follow Jesus yet suggested that members ask themselves, "What is Jesus saying to us?" Jesus told his disciples to leave what they had and follow Him. Were they simply to take themselves? Or did Jesus encourage companionship as He did when He sent His group of 70 out in pairs? As the fall activities began, Vivian Bosch asked the membership, "Who hears your stories, laughs and cries with you, affirms

you in the good work you endeavour to accomplish, allows you to see the hand of God in the pattern of your life and work?" She suggested that members search for and cherish such a companion and, in turn, try to be such a companion to other members (*The Canadian League*, 77, 3, 2001).

In September, Vivian Bosch attended the CCCB Plenary Assembly in Cornwall, Ontario. Former Manitoba Provincial President Alice Makodanski represented the League at a conference on restorative justice in Winnipeg. The theme was *Restorative Justice 2001: Justice, Reconciliation, Forgiveness, Peace*.

With open arms, minds and hearts, members opened their lives to Christ. Examples: Members of Newfoundland and Labrador councils welcomed, assisted and befriended many of the air travellers stranded following the event of September 11, 2001 (9/11). The veneration of the relics of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, in Canada from mid-September until mid-December 2001, resulted in increased devotion to the saint in Quebec councils. Members of St. Mark Parish Council, Quispamsis, New Brunswick, enjoyed the lighter side of their League work with a fundraiser, My Mother's Wedding Dress: Bridal Gowns of the Past, for their graduates' bursary fund.

Following the fall meetings in Winnipeg, the national executive, Honorary Life Member Jean Mahoney (1982-1984), Honorary Life Member Heather Kolla (1992-1994) and members were among those who attended the funeral mass for Honorary Life Member Evelyn Wyrzykowski (1988-1990), who died October 24, 2001. A red rose was placed on the Book of Life.

2002: The Open Door: Part II

As the League moved into 2002, members reflected on the upcoming convention theme, *The Open Door: You are the Light of the World*. National President Vivian Bosch said, "The League is alive! It has the capability and opportunity to serve – to be an instrument of Jesus, *The Open Door*. What greater feeling of satisfaction is there than for all women to participate in ministry within the church and society?" (*The Canadian League*, 78, 2, 2002).

At the beginning of Vivian Bosch's term, a national action plan was assigned to the national executive. It was to focus on training, education, flexibility and communication within the League. A committee working under the leadership of Saskatchewan Past President Velma Harasen reviewed the structure of the League, examined the roles and responsibilities of its various levels and compiled a clear and informative resource, *Leading the League*. Vivian Bosch recommended that councils use *Leading the League* to inform new members about the organization and assist facilitators of leadership training workshops. She also pointed to the *Executive Handbook* and *Belonging* as resources for promoting League growth and development.

Noteworthy: Vivian Bosch reported that the League intended to contribute to the consultation process for the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada. National Chairperson of Legislation Joan Baudais, Ontario Provincial Chairperson of Education Margaret Ann Jacobs, Nova Scotia Provincial Chairperson of Legislation Shirley MacDougall, and Life Member Betty Anne Brown were appointed to draft a submission for the commission.

In March, Vivian Bosch, National President-elect Marie Cameron, National Chairperson of Resolutions Jackie Lenarduzzi and Joan Baudais represented 103,137 members when they met with representatives of the federal government to discuss the 2001 Resolutions Brief. Concerning Resolution 2001.03 Hunger in Canada, a representative from the secretary of state (children and youth) advised that several programs were helping the needy. As well, the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative had been established to address the problem of homelessness.

With regard to Resolution 2001.01 End-of-Life Care, there had been an announcement about funding for the Canadian Virtual Hospice, which would enable professional and informal caregivers to consult with experts in palliative care through a website-based forum. As well, the Nova Scotia Hospice Palliative Care Association was working toward having palliative care nursing designated as a speciality through the Canadian Nurses Association.

Regarding Resolution 2001.06 Spousal Benefits under the *Canadian Forces Superannuation Act* (CFSA), the delegates learned that there would be no increase in pensions of surviving spouses. Regarding Resolution 2001.07 Discrimination in the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), they learned that the plan was administered as a social insurance program rather than as a retirement program, and should possibly be reviewed.

Regarding Resolution 2001.04 Water Quality in Canada, the delegates learned that British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and Alberta had water standards in place. In response to inquiries about an earlier con-

cern, Resolution 1999.09 Bulk Fresh Water Resources, they learned that no transfer of boundary water was permitted under Bill C-6 *An Act to Amend the International Boundary Waters Treaty Act*.

The delegates expressed disappointment in talks with the Department of Justice Canada about a report by the Law Commission of Canada, *Beyond Conjugal*, which recognized and supported close personal adult relationships. They reiterated the League's position, that is, of preserving the traditional definition of marriage. They expressed concern that adult stem cell research was not included in the *Assisted Human Reproduction Act* legislation that been introduced by the federal government. Finally, they requested that the federal government introduce a national day of prayer.

While in Ottawa, the delegation met with the CCCB Executive Committee to discuss issues of common interest. They also met with the public relations representative of CHAC and with a representative of the CCJC. Finally, they attended COLF's 4th seminar on biotechnology, concerning the status of the human embryo.

In April, the Third Continental Congress on Vocations to the Ordained Ministry and Consecrated Life in North America was held in Montreal, Quebec, bringing together over 1,100 delegates. National 2nd Vice-President Lorette Noble reported that prior to the congress, mini-congresses were held at diocesan and regional levels to discuss the hopes and challenges facing vocations, with a goal of building a pastoral plan to be implemented by the delegates attending the congress.

Throughout the early months of 2002, members worked toward welcoming the youth of the world to Toronto,

Ontario, July 23-28 by offering prayers, volunteering services and opening homes as the World Youth Day cross travelled to dioceses throughout Canada. They contributed over \$200,000 toward the funding of a pilgrim kit that contained prayers and the *Gospel of Matthew*, inscribed with the League name and crest, and given to every delegate to World Youth Day as a keepsake.

Items of interest: National bursaries were awarded to 48 women. The national executive decided to publish three rather than four issues of *The Canadian League* each year, a cost saving measure taken in response to the loss of the Publications Assistance Program postal subsidy from Canadian Heritage. A League scarf was made available to members, a fitting method of identification when representing the League at conferences, community functions and meetings with various levels of government. Life Member Alice Makodanski and members of CCODP met with women from *Concertacion de Mujeres*, a coalition of women's organizations in El Salvador and beneficiary of the League's CCODP 1% Program.

According to Marie Cameron, members should "toot their own horn" (*The Canadian League*, 78, 1, 2002). A sampling of creative projects: members of Pembroke Diocesan Council collected clothing, books and videos for its twin diocese in Moosonee, Ontario. Members of Immaculate Conception Parish Council, Deer Lake, Newfoundland and Labrador, raised funds to purchase pagers for doctors in the area of Deer Lake and White Bay South, enabling residents to call toll free. Members of Queen of Peace Parish Council, Victoria, British Columbia, focused their personal and fundraising efforts on the parish of Christ the King, in Mayo, Yukon, enabling Sister Angela, the administrator, to enjoy a summer holiday.

A stained glass window depicting Our Lady of Good Counsel was donated to the church by St. Joseph Parish Council, Kelly's Cross, Prince Edward Island. Members of St. Patrick Parish Council, Campbell River, British Columbia, created *Cooking for Pennies with the Catholic Women*, to aid families managing with a small food budget.

A national project that had been successful in 2001, and repeated in 2002, was the membership contest. The national executive offered an all expenses paid trip to League conventions to a new member and her sponsor. Natalina Ferrari and sponsor Antonietta Nicolletti, of Sacred Heart Parish Council, King City, Ontario, won the draw for a trip to the national convention. Winners at the provincial level were Joy Madubuike and Barbara Williams, who invited her to join St. Andrews Parish Council, Etobicoke, Ontario. Winners at the diocesan level were Linda Nicholson and Valerie Becher, who invited her to join St. Thomas More Parish Council, Fairview, Alberta.

The 82nd annual national convention was held in Moncton, New Brunswick August 11-14, at the Delta Beausejour hotel. The convention theme was *The Open Door: You are the Light of the World*. Weekend entertainment for those participants who arrived early included a trip to Bouctouche, Le Pays de la Sagouine and a brunch at Festival Hall.

The Eucharistic celebration that marked the opening was celebrated at Our Lady of Assumption Cathedral by Archbishop Andre Richard, of Moncton. On Monday, the audience was led in prayer and music by young members of the Mi,kmmaq and Maliceet people, who performed drum greetings and dances.

A keynote speaker on Gathering Day was Executive Director Mary Jo Leddy, of Romero House in Toronto, Ontario. Addressing the issue of immigration, she pointed to flaws in Canada's immigration policies, claiming that the point system worked against single mothers with children. Another speaker was Judge Graydon Nicholas, a member of the Maliceet, who talked of Aboriginal spirituality within a Catholic context. He lamented what he considered to be a lack of compassion exhibited by the church during the years in which it refused to accept either the language or the culture of the Maliceet.

Twelve resolutions were adopted. Resolution 2002.01 Christian Prayer at National Ceremonies urged the development of a protocol that would include Christian prayer at national ceremonies. Resolution 2002.02 Anti-Bullying Programs encouraged parish councils to work toward eliminating bullying in schools to promote a positive school climate. Resolution 2002.03 Accessibility of the Work Place for Persons with Disabilities urged members to write to municipal chambers of commerce and provincial and federal governments to ensure that people with disabilities were able to fully participate in the work place. Resolution 2002.04 Income Supplement Programs for Seniors commended the federal government for its outreach program to notify pensioners of their possible entitlement to the Guaranteed Income Supplement. Resolution 2002.05 Tax on Currency Exchange Transactions urged the federal government to actively pursue global support for a currency exchange transaction tax.

Resolution 2002.06 National Home Care Program urged the federal government to amend the *Canada Health Act* to include a comprehensive universal home care program. Resolution 2002.07 Fetal Alcohol Syndrome urged

provincial/territorial governments to implement programs directed at educating middle school students about the cause, effects and prevention of fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects. Resolution 2002.08 Labelling on Prepackaged Foods supported proposed legislation on nutrition labelling regulations for prepackaged food. Resolution 2002.10 Biopatenting opposed patenting of seeds and living organisms. Resolution 2002.09 Human Stem Cell Research urged the minister of health to promote and fund human adult stem cell research for the treatment and cure of disease and tissue or organ repair. Resolution 2002.11 Responsible Internet Use for Children supported research to develop tools to protect children from offensive content on the Internet. Resolution 2002.12 Child Pornography urged the federal government to legislate that any written materials or other representation depicting child pornography has neither artistic merit nor any educational, scientific or medical purpose.

Recipients of national voluntary funds were the CCODP 1% Program, Collection for Pope's Pastoral Works, Canadian Breast Cancer Research Challenge Fund, Coady International Institute, MaterCare International, Catholic Missions In Canada and World Youth Day 2002. The National Pro-Life Fund which was divided between COLF and CHAC.

Eleven women were honoured with a life membership: Patricia Crossman, Kentville, Nova Scotia; Dr. Rayleen De Luca, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Gladys Dewey, Forest, Ontario; Velma Harasen, Regina, Saskatchewan; Marguerita Johnson, Eastern Passage, Nova Scotia; Rebecca Kallal, Edmonton, Alberta; Suzanne Kiazzyk, Brandon, Manitoba; Agnes MacDonald, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Alice Makodanski, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Mary

Van Dyk, Waterloo, Ontario; Theresa Winchester (MO), Orleans, Ontario.

Officers were installed at the closing mass, celebrated at St. Bernard's Church by National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Douglas Crosby, of Labrador City-Schefferville. President Marie Cameron, Calgary, Alberta; President-elect Agnes Bedard, Calgary, Alberta; 1st Vice-President Lorette Noble, Candiac, Quebec; 2nd Vice-President Danielle McNeil-Hessian, Bedford, Nova Scotia; Secretary-Treasurer Shirley Bernier, Lachine, Quebec; Past President Vivian Bosch, Swift Current, Saskatchewan.

Standing Committees: Spiritual Development Jackie Lenarduzzi, Trail, British Columbia; Organization Agnes Bedard; Christian Family Life Patricia Crossman, Kentville, Nova Scotia; Community Life Velma Harasen, Regina, Saskatchewan; Education and Health Ann Doucet, Rothesay, New Brunswick; Communications Danielle McNeil-Hessian; Resolutions Lorette Noble; Legislation Lucille Partington, Sexsmith, Alberta; International Relations Marie Cameron; Laws Vivian Bosch.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Connie McBride, Edmonton; B.C. & Yukon Madeline Kurjata, Dawson Creek; Manitoba Dr. Rayleen De Luca, Winnipeg; Military Ordinatee Lynn Cashin, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; New Brunswick Anna Blakney, Sackville; Newfoundland and Labrador Colleen Galloway, Manuels; Nova Scotia Cecile Miller, North East Margaree; Ontario Joleene Kemp, Thunder Bay; Prince Edward Island Bertha Lawless, Kinkora; Quebec Eleanor Arless, Lachine; Saskatchewan June Krogan, Regina.

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National President Marie Cameron brought welcomed skills to the table when she accepted the gavel at the national convention. Gifted in music and a lawyer by profession, she joined the League in 1973 in London, Ontario, and again in Calgary, Alberta, where her family re-located in 1978. Raised in Saskatchewan and British Columbia in a "League family," she served at diocesan, provincial and national levels before becoming national president. In Calgary, she was chairperson of the Diocesan Social Justice Commission, the St. Mary's CWL Chair Foundation, Inter-faith Youth and Family Services Society, and a board member of Father Lacombe Care Center. She was a director of St. Mary's College, the Ecumenical Task Force for Prevention of Family Violence and Discovery House, a second stage home for abused women and children.

Marie Cameron was quite willing to take members into uncertain waters, confident that they would learn more about themselves and their relationship with God. She pointed out that Pope John Paul II asked the faithful to learn more about Jesus Christ and his Word through a study of the Sunday readings and she promoted establishment of small Christian communities (SCC) as a

way to accomplish this goal. In SCC, participants meet regularly to discern the words of Holy Scripture through prayer, reflection and dialogue.

In September, Marie Cameron and National President-elect Agnes Bedard attended the NCCW General Assembly in Miami, Florida. In Marie Cameron's absence, Life Member Betty Anne Brown represented the League at the National Dialogue on a Preferred Future for the Catholic Health Ministry, sponsored by CHAC in Ottawa, Ontario. National 1st Vice-President Lorette Noble and National Secretary-Treasurer Shirley Bernier attended the Conference on Pluralism, Religion and Public Policy in Montreal, Quebec.

In October, Marie Cameron attended the CCCB Plenary Assembly in Cornwall, Ontario. Diocesan councils in New Brunswick, British Columbia and Ontario worked on the WRAP Campaign, lobbying the federal government about two loopholes in the anti-pornography legislation, the age of consent and artistic merit clauses, which placed children at risk.

Ontario members Patricia Beattie, Margaret Ann Jacobs, Dorothy McGuigan and Jo-Anne Young attended the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute (CCBI) workshop in Toronto, Ontario. An ad hoc committee was struck to prepare a response to *Marriage and Legal Recognition of Same-Sex Unions: A Discussion Paper*, issued by the Department of Justice Canada. Position papers were prepared on marriage and stem cell research. Honorary Life Member Vivian Bosch (2000-2002) was appointed to chair a committee to review the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*.

In the parish councils: Members of Holy Rosary Parish Council, Regina, Saskatchewan, were acknowledged for

years of volunteering by the Regina Health District. Ciara Dunn-Giroux aimed to become a fourth generation member of the League when, at 15 years of age, she became a founding member and first president of the Catholic Girl's League of Sacred Heart of Jesus, based on the League format, in Marmora, Ontario. Members of Church of the Ascension Parish Council, Parksville, British Columbia, raised funds to purchase the Risen Christ for the large cross behind the altar of the Church of the Ascension. Members of Annunciation of the Lord Parish Council, Gloucester, Ontario, held a bazaar to raise funds for MaterCare International. Monica Hughes, of St. Andrew Parish Council, Edmonton, Alberta, was invested in the Order of Canada. Queen of Heaven Parish Council (MO), Greenwood, Nova Scotia sponsored the Good Start Program, feeding children in Kingston Elementary School and knitting mittens for students at Dwight Ross School and Ecole Rose des Vents. Members of St. Clement Parish Council, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, raised funds for a chair lift for patients in the palliative care unit of Dartmouth General Hospital through a Walk for Life. Members of Mary Queen of Peace Parish Council, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, took part in a multicultural Sunday, with the gospel proclaimed in Croatian, Russian, Spanish and English.

In late November, Marie Cameron, Agnes Bedard, Lorette Noble and National Chairperson of Legislation Lucille Partington met with federal ministries to discuss the 2002 Resolutions Brief. With regard to Resolution 2002.01 Christian Prayer at National Ceremonies, which dealt in particular with ceremonies honouring those who died in the Swissair crash near Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia, in September 1998, the delegates were told that lobbying would encourage the minister of Cana-

dian Heritage to develop an official protocol for public occasions, which would include Christian prayer.

Regarding Resolution 2002.03 Accessibility of the Work Place for Persons with Disabilities, the delegates were encouraged to make it known that companies hiring disabled people were valued, commended and, in some cases, supported by subsidies for a time. Regarding Resolution 2002.04 Income Supplement Programs for Seniors, representatives of the department of human resources development assured delegates that the department had tried to reach eligible seniors through a country wide television and radio campaign and was considering adding a checkbox to income tax forms.

Regarding Resolution 2002.06 National Home Care Program, representatives of the health ministry noted the issue was being addressed in the Romanow Commission's *Building on Values: The Future of Health Care in Canada*, to be presented November 28, 2002. Regarding Resolution 2002.07 Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, representatives of Health Canada and the Women's Health Bureau agreed that education was a key factor in eliminating fetal alcohol syndrome. Regarding Resolution 2002.08 Labels on Prepackaged Foods, the delegates commended the federal government for its new labels, and suggested that symbols could be added for those with literacy problems.

The delegation was disappointed with the reluctance shown by the Department of Justice Canada about raising the age of consent for sexual activities because of concern that any sexual activity between teenagers might be deemed criminal (Resolution 2002.12 Child Pornography). In addition, the department was refraining from recommending elimination of artistic merit as a defence in cases involving child

pornography because of a person's right to freedom of expression. Regarding Resolution 2002.11 Responsible Internet Use for Children, representatives of the departments of justice and Canadian heritage pointed to the cybertip.ca program that was being tested in Manitoba. It allowed the public to report potentially illegal content and activities through an on-line reporting form and toll free hot line, and provided victim support and referral services as well as education about using the Internet safely.

Regarding Resolution 2002.09 Human Stem Cell Research, the League's support for research using only adult stem cells was reiterated. Regarding Resolution 2002.10 Biopatenting, the League's objections to biopatenting were emphasized because of its concern about possible ramifications in areas of health and trade with developing countries. Regarding Resolution 2002.05 Tax on Currency Exchange Transactions, the League's support for an excise tax on cross border currency transactions was affirmed.

While in Ottawa, Ontario, the delegates met with the CCCB Executive Committee, whose members urged the League to participate in the federal government's debates over the definition and status of marriage in society. The delegates also met with the policy analyst for the CHAC, who presented them with a description of the main issues facing Canada's health care system, while encouraging members to participate in a survey administered by the CHAC on the future of Catholic health care in Canada. Further, the delegates met with board members of the CCJC and were offered resources to promote an awareness of restorative justice. A discussion ensued about a new project that involved women in the church helping women who were being released from federal penitentiaries.

December 2002 marked the end of the two year theme, *The Open Door*. Bishop Douglas Crosby called for reflection on Jesus Christ, the "door" that never closes.

2003: cast out into the deep: Part I

The theme, *cast out into the deep*, called on members to try the untried, to develop and use God given talents and to cease to be spectators as they journeyed – with faith, with hope and in charity. In an address to members in *The Canadian League*, National President Marie Cameron shared her thoughts about the theme. She said that *cast out into the deep* meant leaving behind the habit forming nets that had entangled her thoughts and actions and becoming more active in reaching out to others, even if it meant delving into unknown territory.

National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Douglas Crosby, of Labrador City-Schefferville, said that *cast out into the deep* was an excellent choice, referring to Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter published in 2001, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (At the Beginning of the New Millennium), in which he encouraged the faithful to "put out into the deep" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, Introduction).

Bishop Douglas Crosby also pointed out that the pope had issued an apostolic letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (The Rosary of the Virgin Mary), to commemorate the 25th year of his papacy in which he proclaimed from October 2002 to October 2003 The Year of the Rosary. He had also announced five new mysteries, the Luminous Mysteries, and called the rosary a wonderful form of family prayer, a treasure waiting to be re-discovered. Bishop Crosby added to his invitation by suggesting, "Why not try it?" (*The Canadian League*, 79, 1, 2003).

Marie Cameron reminded members that the fifth Sunday of Lent was Solidarity Sunday and noted the League's commitment to CCODP through the 1% Program. Members were encouraged to

contribute one per cent of their personal spending to the project, which assisted women in El Salvador, Bangladesh and Nigeria.

Items of business: Marie Cameron asked all parish councils to participate in the CHAC National Dialogue on a Preferred Future for the Catholic Health Care Ministry. The national executive urged members, their families and friends to write letters to the prime minister, minister of justice and members of parliament asking them to refrain from extending the definition of marriage to include same sex couples. The League continued to stand in solidarity with Pope John Paul II and the Canadian bishops as they followed church law that affirmed the definition of marriage should remain as a covenant between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

The League approved of an initiative of the CCCB that requested that the minister of justice appeal the Ontario Court of Appeal decision that common law limiting marriage to heterosexual couples was unconstitutional and discriminatory. It held parliamentary members accountable to affirming marriage as stated in a motion of June 9, 1999, that marriage is a union between one man and one woman. Members were asked to continue writing letters to the federal government ministers, members of parliament and senators.

Marie Cameron announced that another priority in 2003 was to establish small Christian communities in parishes. They were to consist of groups of eight to ten people gathering in one of their homes at a convenient time to engage in faith sharing, a group process based on the promise of Jesus Christ, "...where two or three are gathered in

my name, I am there among them” (Matthew 18:20). Participants were to engage in prayerful dialogue and reflection, trying to see connections between their own life experiences and the Sunday readings.

Noteworthy: National bursaries were awarded to 37 members. The League and CMIC staff developed a new program, CWL Mission Partners, to provide spiritual and financial support for religious education programs in six mission dioceses across Canada. St. Francis Xavier University Vice President and Coady International Institute Director Mary Coyle reported that three women from developing countries were attending the Institute through League donations. They were – Mary Omolara Ajayi of Lagos, Nigeria, executive director of Women's Development and Cooperatives and president of the Catholic Women Organization in Lagos, Ram Keshari Shrestha of Kathmandu, Nepal, member secretary of the Disabled and Women Rehabilitation Society, and Sister Rita Denis of the Diocese of Gorakhpur, India, coordinator of development activities at Purvanchal Gramin Seva Samiti, the social service society of the diocese.

Life Member and National Subcommittee Chairperson for Wellness and Sickness/Disease Ethel Gravelle encouraged members to promote *Building on Values: The Future of Health Care in Canada*, since it addressed the dignity and value of human life. She suggested that members inform the federal government about the League's objections to the privatization of health care to ensure that the report would be implemented.

The national executive announced that the winner of the new category of the membership contest, which offered an all expenses paid trip to the national convention, was “renewed” member

Mary Shea of St. Patrick Parish Council, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. Other winners in the draw were Leanne Jackson and her sponsor, Wilma McNeill, of Sacred Heart Parish Council, Sarnia, Ontario.

The 83rd annual national convention was held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, at the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel Saskatoon from August 10-13. Members of the Diocese of Saskatoon extended a warm welcome to 836 participants. The visitors were offered a variety of summer activities, including visiting the Saskatchewan Western Development Museum to view a recreation of a typical Saskatchewan town and an evening of entertainment featuring the Golden Girls serenading guests with old favorites. A tour of Saskatoon, also called the City of Bridges, was on the agenda, along with a choice of trips to the Berry Barn or to the Wanuskewin Heritage Park.

Another first, members attending had an opportunity to attend a luncheon with a national officer of choice!

The opening mass was celebrated at St. Patrick Church by Bishop Albert LeGatt, of Saskatoon. He spoke of small Christian communities and reminded participants that they were called to be attentive to the voice of Jesus Christ in one another. Guest journalist Manitoba Provincial 2nd Vice-President Susan Bernier related that he said, “Members will cast deeply when Christ's voice echoes in their hearts. Called to hunger and thirst for the voice of Christ in each other, members evangelize and *cast out into the deep* with new vigour and words” (*The Canadian League*, 79, 3, 2003).

Gathering Day began with members praying the rosary while reflecting on the Luminous Mysteries; it was a day of faith. Archbishop Peter Mallon,

of Regina, spoke on the convention theme, *cast out into the deep*. He was followed by keynote speaker Saskatoon Diocese Small Christian Communities Coordinator Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers, a former editor of *Our Family* and author of *Finding the Treasure Within: A Woman's Journey into Preaching*. She led members through sections of the 2001 apostolic letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (At the Beginning of the New Millennium), and invited them to look for God in daily encounters with others. She said, "We have come away to seek Jesus Christ, to see Jesus in one another in these days of gathering. Fed through this gathering of friends, we are drawn into greater intimacy with Christ so that we can return with greater energy" (Ibid.)

During the afternoon session, Father Frank Ruetz, CR., publisher of a weekly guide, *Celebrating the Word*, led a workshop about relating life experiences to the Sunday readings. He challenged members to initiate small Christian communities in their parishes, learn more about the Liturgy of the Word and to share their faith, which he said was a group process based on our Lord's own invitation. He urged those present to *cast out into the deep* and experience a new way of evangelization.

The following day was a day of hope. After morning prayer, the new life members were acknowledged in a liturgical ceremony conducted by Bishop Douglas Crosby, Marie Cameron, National President-elect Agnes Bedard and National Chairperson of Spiritual Development Jackie Lenarduzzi. Eighteen women were awarded a life membership: Eleanor Arless, Lachine, Quebec; Lidwina Critch, Goulds, Newfoundland and Labrador; Anne Dobie, Surrey, British Columbia; Patricia Dorigo, Vernon, British Columbia; Barbara Dowding, Coquitlam, British Columbia; Anne Dubé, Sudbury, Ontario; Anne-

Marie Gorman, Stanley, New Brunswick; Geraldine Hasey, Hamilton, Ontario; Barbara Mary Hendry, Perth, Ontario; June Krogan, Regina, Saskatchewan; Karen Lawless, Mississauga, Ontario; Shirley MacDougall, Antigonish, Nova Scotia; Connie McBride, Edmonton, Alberta; Irene Perrault, Pembroke, Ontario; Carmel Rumleski, Barry's Bay, Ontario; Marie-Lucie Schaff, Salmon Arm, British Columbia; Margaret Silverthorne, St. Malo, Manitoba; Mary Ellen Villeneuve, Moose Creek, Ontario.

During a session, Marie Cameron clarified any misinterpretation that had taken place about the wording of the League's stand on marriage, clearly stating that the national executive always had, and would continue to stress that marriage is a sacrament, commitment and covenant between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. A position paper, *Definition of Marriage*, had been prepared for approval following indications that the federal government had proposed a reference to the Supreme Court of Canada with draft legislation showing that marriage would be defined as between two persons. Once approved, members were invited to add their signature before it was forwarded to the prime minister. A copy of the position paper was sent to all members of parliament and senators. As well, it was used in press releases to outline the League's official position on marriage.

The final day of the convention was a day of love. Participants were commissioned by one another to love and serve others by blessing one another in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit with the sign of the cross. In a symbolic gesture, Bishop Douglas Crosby and Marie Cameron *cast out into the deep* by washing the feet of the provincial presidents.

The resolutions adopted reflected the concerns of over 102,000 members. In Resolution 2003.01 Affordable Housing for Low-Income Canadians, the national council urged provincial, territorial and municipal governments to increase funding for affordable housing for low-income persons. Members were asked to investigate whether such housing was available in their communities and, if not, write letters to appropriate ministries requesting that funding and housing for low-income families be increased. In Resolution 2003.02 Increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement, members were asked to join the national council in requesting that the guaranteed income supplement be raised so that no Canadian seniors fell under low-income cut-off levels.

Health Canada's Advisory Committee on Animal Uses of Antimicrobials and Impact on Resistance and Human Health had recommended changes to the way that antimicrobials were regulated, distributed and used in animals because of a possible impact on human health. In Resolution 2003.03 Use of Antimicrobials and their Impact, members were urged to become aware of the effect of antibiotics on their bodies and the environment. In Resolution 2003.04 Healthy Living for Life, councils were encouraged to promote fitness programs and disseminate information about healthy, active lifestyles to all members. Resolution 2003.05 Type 2 Diabetes and You and Resolution 2003.06 Health Danger from Exposure to Lead in Consumer Products asked members to educate themselves about prevention of late onset diabetes and Health Canada's Consumer Products Safety Bureau to continue to monitor lead content in consumer products.

In Resolution 2003.07 Education on Marijuana, the national council registered a concern about the detrimental effects and consequences of using mari-

juana. In Resolution 2003.08 National Strategy to Eliminate Computer-Based Child Pornography, the national council commended the federal government for its efforts to protect children from criminals on the Internet by enacting amendments in the *Criminal Code* (Bill C-15A *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to amend other Acts*) and urged the solicitor general to develop a strategy regarding pornography. In Resolution 2003.09 Age of Consent for Sexual Activity, the national council asked the minister of justice to amend the *Criminal Code* to change the age of consent from 14 to 18 years in order to protect children from sexual exploitation. In Resolution 2003.10 Tax Deduction for Post-Secondary School Textbooks, the national council requested the federal minister of finance to allow the cost of required textbooks as a tax deduction for students.

A permanent national voluntary fund in favour of Catholic Missions in Canada was established. National voluntary funds were awarded to the Coady International Institute, National Pro-Life Fund – to be divided between COLF and CHAC, CCOOP 1% Program and MaterCare International. The Canadian Breast Cancer Research Challenge Fund, in place for ten years, was discontinued effective December 31, 2003, when provincial councils were to look after fundraising for breast cancer research.

For three days, members and guests had prayed, studied, listened and joined together for light hearted evenings of gospel music and singsongs culminating with a gala banquet at the Centennial Auditorium. At the closing mass, held at Holy Spirit Church, the home of Our Lady of the Prairies Shrine, Bishop Douglas Crosby invited members to see Jesus Christ in others and to “*cast out into the deep and be good news!*” (Ibid.). Bishop Crosby's term as nation-

al spiritual advisor expired at the close of convention. He was presented with a League rosary, in recognition of his service.

Officers reaffirmed: President Marie Cameron, Calgary, Alberta; President-elect Agnes Bedard, Calgary, Alberta; 1st Vice-President Lorette Noble, Candiac, Quebec; 2nd Vice-President Danielle McNeil-Hessian, Bedford, Nova Scotia; Secretary-Treasurer Shirley Bernier, Lachine, Quebec; Past President Vivian Bosch, Swift Current, Saskatchewan.

Standing Committees: Spiritual Development Jackie Lenarduzzi, Trail, British Columbia; Organization Agnes Bedard; Christian Family Life Patricia Crossman, Kentville, Nova Scotia; Community Life Velma Harasen, Regina, Saskatchewan; Education and Health Ann Doucet, Rothesay, New Brunswick; Communications Danielle McNeil-Hessian; Resolutions Lorette Noble; Legislation Lucille Partington, Sexsmith, Alberta; International Relations Marie Cameron; Laws Vivian Bosch.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Mary Heinzlmeir, Rockyford; B.C. & Yukon Madeline Kurjata, Dawson Creek; Manitoba Sandra Byrnes, Winnipeg; Military Ordinatee Lynn Cashin, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; New Brunswick Anna Blakney, Sackville; Newfoundland and Labrador Peggy Roche, Torbay; Nova Scotia Cecile Miller, Northeast Margaree; Ontario Patricia Beattie, Toronto; Prince Edward Island Bertha Lawless, Kinkora; Quebec Lorna Halderman, Deux Montagnes; Saskatchewan Mary Nordick, Saskatoon.

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At the national convention, Bishop Albert LeGatt had called on members to

be attentive to Christ's voice in one another. National President Marie Cameron asked members to place into practice the concept of seeing the face of Christ in other members. She said that spiritual discernment provides insight into the heart and will of God and urged councils to encourage members to learn to understand the spirituality of other members. She recommended a resource, *Spirituality: A Day of Discovery*.

The WUWCO North American Regional Conference was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota September 24-25, featuring the theme, *The Prophetic Mission of Women*. Honorary Life Member (1994-1996) and WUCWO Board member Claire Heron, Marie Cameron, National President-elect Agnes Bedard, National Chairperson of Community Life Velma Harasen and Executive Director Kim Sass attended the conference.

Members were asked to complete and return *The Canadian League Readership and Website Survey* to rate *The Canadian League* and the League website in order to improve publications. *Resolutions Supplement to the Executive Handbook* was published after consultation with councils and in light of the experience of past conventions.

In October, a spiritual bouquet was forwarded to Pope John Paul II from members on the occasion of his 25th pontifical anniversary. National 1st Vice-President Lorette Noble represented the League at the CCCB Plenary Assembly in Ste. Anne de Beaupre, Quebec. During the WRAP week, St Mary Parish Council Brooks, Alberta, joined with Brooks Evangelical Free Church, Brooks United Church, Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Alban Anglican Church and the Chinook Credit Union to obtain a ribbon of signatures for their member of parliament. St. Andrew the Apostle Parish Council, Welland, On-

tario, and Church of the Ascension Parish Council, Parksville, British Columbia, also presented their members of parliament with ribbons of petitions.

In the parishes: National bursary recipients attending Coady International Institute – Miriam Awad, from Cairo, Egypt, Sister Lucious from North East Province, India, and Theresa Awuni from Ghana, Africa – were invited to a potluck dinner given by St. Ninian Parish Council in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. The Slovenian community of St. Gregory the Great Parish Council, Hamilton, Ontario, organized a fashion show that was well received by the entire community. St. Paul Parish Council, Summerside, Prince Edward Island, held Day of the Rosary in celebration of The Year of the Rosary. Members of Little Flower Parish Council, Bathurst, New Brunswick, organized a bake sale to assist a family blessed with triplets. Members of St. John the Baptist Parish Council, Burlington, Ontario, donated to flood stricken members in Badger, Newfoundland and Labrador. Members of St. Joseph Parish Council, Salmon Arm, British Columbia, raised funds for the Chilcotin, British Columbia, missions while gaining in fitness by walking the trails in local parks, enjoying fresh air and making a donation at the end of each outing.

Members of St. Andrew the Apostle Parish Council, Welland, Ontario, and members of Our Lady of Grace Parish Council, Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, were among those who hosted World Day of Prayer services at their respective churches with other faith groups in attendance. Members of St. James Parish Council, Maxville,

Ontario, assisted in a food drive that enabled the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to distribute in drought stricken Ethiopia. St. Patrick/St. Noel Parish Council, in Stayner and Wasaga Beach, Ontario, initiated a Shower the Babies with Love project for the northern missions. St. Stephen Parish Council, North Vancouver, British Columbia, helped the Sisters of Atonement make and serve a hot Sunday meal to the needy in downtown, east side Vancouver. Members of Nativity of Our Lord Parish Council provided a Reading Intervention Program at the Nativity of Our Lord School, Etobicoke, Ontario. Members of St. Joseph Parish Council, North Sydney, Nova Scotia, formed a Catholic Girls' League, after reading in *The Canadian League* about the Catholic Girls' League in Marmora, Ontario.

In November, the national executive welcomed National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Richard Smith, of Pembroke, during fall meetings in Winnipeg. He joined the national executive in a visit to the shrine of Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky, CSsR, at St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church. Due to uncertainty surrounding a federal election, it was decided to postpone formal visits with the federal government to discuss the 2003 Resolutions Brief until a future date.

In December, Life Member Dr. Rayleen De Luca was appointed by the CCCB to serve as a member of the Special Task Force for the Review of *From Pain to Hope*, to assist dioceses in establishing policies on sexual abuse and to implement pastoral programs to help victims and their families.

2004: cast out into the deep: Part II

The 10th anniversary of the declaration of International Year of the Family by the United Nations was marked in 2004. National President Marie Cameron urged all members to keep issues of family and marriage at the forefront of their prayers. National Chairperson of Christian Family Life Patricia Crossman asked them to support programs initiated by COLF to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage.

Introducing himself to members, National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Richard Smith, of Pembroke, remarked, "You are women who are faithful to the Lord Jesus as disciples in his church and devoted to the spread of the gospel in Canada. In particular, your commitment to the protection of human life at all stages is well known and needed, as is your work in support and defence of marriage and the family" (*The Canadian League*, 80, 1, 2004).

In March, Marie Cameron, National 1st Vice-President Lorette Noble and National Chairperson of Community Life Velma Harasen reviewed several resolutions pertaining to marriage, abortion, euthanasia and palliative care with representatives of the departments of health and justice as well as the deputy prime minister. While in Ottawa, Ontario, they attended the COLF seminar on biotechnology. They also visited the offices of CCJC, where they learned of Circles of Support and Accountability, a network for released offenders.

Members were represented by National President-elect Agnes Bedard, along with Life Members Anida Simurda and Diane Curley, at the Department of Foreign Affairs 16th Annual Human Rights Consultations in Ottawa, Ontar-

io. Marie Cameron and National 2nd Vice-President Danielle McNeil-Hessian attended the CCCB Annual Forum with National Associations in Ottawa, Ontario. Life Member Mary Hass represented the League at the annual meeting of the CCJC in Ottawa, Ontario. Life Members Margaret Ann Jacobs and Moira Ste. Marie attended the CCBI colloquia in Toronto, Ontario. National Chairperson of Education and Health Ann Doucet attended the CHAC annual convention in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Items of interest: National bursaries were awarded to 54 members. Executive Director Kim Scammell reported that *The Canadian League* Readership and Website Survey, carried out in fall of 2003, was well received with excellent response from members. A National Communications Plan was approved by the national executive. Honorary Life Member (2000-2002) Vivian Bosch invited members of parish councils to initiate and promote spiritual programs for members, children, youth and adults in their respective parishes. Her publication, *Discovering My Story!*, was designed to link participants' lives to the life of Jesus Christ, and was available through the Catholic Bible Association of Canada. Marie Cameron encouraged members to become familiar with the spiritual writings of Megan McKenna, slated to be the keynote speaker at the upcoming convention.

The 84th annual national convention was held August 8-11 at the Hilton London, Ontario. More than 270 members attended an afternoon of dialogue concerning the resolutions prior to the opening at St. Michael Church. Bishop

Ronald Fabbro, CSB, of London, presided at the Eucharistic celebration.

On Gathering Day, Megan McKenna developed the theme, *cast out into the deep*, and challenged members to lower their nets and, like the apostles, work together in community. Guest journalist Manitoba Provincial 2nd Vice-President Susan Bernier related that she stirred the hearts of members when she asked, "Are you content to live in your own fish tank? If you've been caught by Christ you need to be out of the tank and in the stream, heading toward the ocean" (*The Canadian League*, 80, 3, 2004). She challenged members to stand up for their belief in the risen Christ, "Why do so many live with so little and so many others have so much? ... Are you one of the many who claim to be followers [of Jesus] or are you a true follower, living your faith?" (Ibid.).

Honorary Life Members attending were introduced: Mary Matthews (1974-1976), Dorothy Brocklehurst (1980-1982), Jean Mahoney (1982-1984), Ardis Beaudry (1984-1986), Lucille Cullen (1990-1992), Heather Kolla (1992-1994), Claire Heron (1994-1996) and Joan Chesser (1996-1998). A liturgical service was conducted by Bishop Richard Smith, Agnes Bedard, Mary Matthews and Dorothy Brocklehurst to acknowledge the new life members: Donna Bates, Sydney, Nova Scotia; Elaine Black (MO), Cornwall, Prince Edward Island; Colleen Galloway, Conception Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador; Patricia O'Toole, Hammonds Plain, Nova Scotia; Anne Plaunt, Englehart, Ontario. Marie Cameron paid tribute to Honorary Life Member Sheila Pellerin (1998-2000), who died July 26, 2004.

Twelve resolutions were adopted. Resolution 2004.01 Protection of Human Life and Resolution 2004.02 Children Living in Poverty demonstrated the

League's deep concern about lack of legislation to protect human life and eliminate child poverty. Resolution 2004.03 Abuse of Residents in Long-Term Care Facilities urged provincial councils to ask provincial/territorial governments to allot funding to improve working conditions in facilities and provide support and training to those working directly with residents.

Resolution 2004.04 Child Care Tax Deduction for Families with a Stay-at-Home Parent and Resolution 2004.05 End Trafficking of Children asked the federal government for child care tax deductions for families with a stay-at-home parent and aimed for a national plan to end trafficking of children. Resolution 2004.06 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention urged the federal government to assist provinces and territories in developing and implementing suicide prevention programs.

Resolution 2004.07 Water Use in Canada and Resolution 2004.10 Effective Participation in Application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* looked to planning for problems anticipated concerning water and the environment. Resolution 2004.08 Treatment of Autistic Persons and Resolution 2004.09 Ovarian Cancer sought to raise awareness of the benefits of early detection and treatment of autism and ovarian cancer. Resolution 2004.11 Link between Violent, Graphic Imagery and Aggressive Behaviour and the Mechanics of Killing was an expression of alarm about violent and graphic imagery in videos, movies and games. Resolution 2004.12 Marijuana Possession/Use – A Criminal Offence targeted the harmful effects of marijuana.

Chief Executive Officer Father Thomas Rosica, CSB, of Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation, spoke to members about Salt + Light Television,

Canada's first Catholic television network. He presented a video depicting the life of St. Gianna Beretta Molla, an Italian physician and proponent of Catholic Action. She died of cancer following the birth of a daughter in 1962 and was canonized May 16, 2004, by Pope John Paul II. Father Rosica introduced her son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter to the audience.

Our Lady of Good Counsel Society, comprised of several in the Archdiocese of Vancouver who came together to assist victims of domestic violence, presented a skit about women and abuse. National Chairperson of Legislation Lucille Partington presented an updated position paper, *Youth Violence and the Youth Criminal Justice Act*. Vivian Bosch announced that *Guide to Hosting the Annual National Convention* and *Guide to Hosting the Diocesan/Provincial Convention* were available through national office. National Chairperson of Spiritual Development Jackie Lenarduzzi reported an increase in numbers of small Christian communities. Velma Harasen introduced the resource manual, *Healing Waters*, promoted by WICC.

Marie Cameron reported that the League's policy of representation to WUCWO had been reviewed by the national executive. Velma Harasen reported that the League had nominated CCODP for the 2004-2005 King Baudouin International Development Prize, awarded to an organization for achievements in improving the lives of people in the developing world. Patricia Crossman promoted *Marriage Matters*, a brochure prepared by COLF that was proving to be an invaluable asset in current discussions and debates. A position paper, *Water*, was presented. Discussion papers on waste management and attention deficit/hyperactivity were presented. *Handbook for Past Presi-*

dents and a *Privacy Policy* were introduced as resources.

National voluntary funds were awarded to Coady International Institute, CCODP 1% Program, Catholic Missions In Canada and MaterCare International. The National Pro-Life Fund was divided between COLF and CHAC. The final collection for the Canadian Breast Cancer Research Challenge Fund was forwarded.

On the light side, members enjoyed Vintage, a group that brought them to their feet with renditions from the 1950s, 60s and 70s, and another evening of song following the provincial dinners. Some of the participants who had arrived enjoyed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Stratford, Ontario. Others opted for the Lighthouse Festival Theatre production of *Two Pianos, Four Hands* in Port Dover, Ontario. Mary O'Laughlin of Upper Tantallon, Nova Scotia, and Jeanne Huibers and Patricia Yanez of Thompson, Manitoba, won the membership contest.

Officers were installed at the closing mass, celebrated at St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica. Former National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Douglas Crosby presided over the installation of Bishop Richard Smith as national spiritual advisor. President Agnes Bedard, Calgary, Alberta; President-elect Lorette Noble, Candiac, Quebec; 1st Vice-President Lucille Partington, Sexsmith, Alberta; 2nd Vice-President Velma Harasen, Regina, Saskatchewan; Secretary-Treasurer Shirley Bernier, Lachine, Quebec; Past President Marie Cameron, Calgary, Alberta.

Standing Committees: Spiritual Development Betty Anne Brown, Wellington, Ontario; Organization Lorette Noble; Christian Family Life Cecile Miller, Northeast Margaree, Nova Scotia; Community Life Ann Doucet,

Rothsay, New Brunswick; Education and Health Velma Harasen; Communications Lucille Partington; Resolutions Dr. Rayleen De Luca, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Legislation Danielle McNeil-Hessian, Bedford, Nova Scotia; International Relations Agnes Bedard; Laws Marie Cameron.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Mary Heinzlmeir, Rockyford; B.C. & Yukon Patricia Battersby, Surrey; Manitoba Sandra Byrnes, Winnipeg; Military Ordinariate Gabriele Kalincak, Calgary, Alberta; New Brunswick Yolande Perry, Fredericton; Newfoundland and Labrador Peggy Roche, Torbay; Nova Scotia Mary MacLeod, Halifax; Ontario Dorothy McGuigan, Mississauga; Prince Edward Island Judy Lewis, Summerside; Quebec Lorna Halderman, Deux Montagnes; Saskatchewan Mary Nordick, Saskatoon.

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In her first message to members in *The Canadian League*, Agnes Bedard related that she had been asked about her dreams for the League as national president. She had replied, "That every woman finds within this blest sisterhood, acceptance, encouragement, love

and support; that the meetings provide sustenance for her body and for her soul; that she finds in the service of God's people great joy and peace; and having found the treasure that is the League, she then cannot help but share with all those she meets the wonder of her League journey" (Ibid.).

A tall order, but one within the grasp of Agnes Bedard, as members had elected a leader endowed with a quick wit and lively intelligence. From another "League family," she was raised on a farm that was the post office for Allerton, Alberta, and taught school before marrying and raising a family in Calgary, Alberta. She was a founding member and active in Birthright Calgary before joining the League. Along with serving at diocesan, provincial and national levels of the League, she returned to teaching and was a chairperson of St. Mary's CWL Chair Foundation and a cantor at St. Gerard's Church in Calgary, Alberta.

Agnes Bedard asked members to continue to *cast out into the deep* and across Canada councils responded with enthusiasm. Several examples: Members of St. Ann Parish Council, Thornburn, Nova Scotia, baked scotch cookies to raise funds for the Red Cross relief effort that followed an earthquake in Iran. Believing that sick children who have a bear to cuddle recover quickly, members of St. Clement Parish Council, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and counterparts far away in St. Henry Parish Council, Melville, Saskatchewan, knitted teddy bears for children in developing countries. St. Stephen Parish Council, North Vancouver, British Columbia, sent treats to parishioner Private Alan Rath and soldiers in Kabul, Afghanistan where they were serving as peacekeepers. Margaret MacLean-Wade, a member of St. Gregory Parish Council, Etobicoke, Ontario, joined in Paddle to a Cure, a kayaking journey to raise funds

for the Canadian Breast Cancer Research Foundation.

In September, Agnes Bedard attended the CCCB Plenary Assembly in Cornwall, Ontario. Quebec Provincial Chairperson of Spiritual Development Cathy Ryan organized a visit to St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal, Quebec, which was celebrating its 100th anniversary. B.C. & Yukon Provincial President-elect Barb Dowding was appointed vice-chancellor of the Archdiocese of Vancouver.

Honorary Life Member Irene Lefort (1986-1988) was granted an honorary doctor of laws degree from St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. She said that she was accepting the degree on behalf of women who had given and continued to give in the service of God and their community.

In November, Agnes Bedard, National President-elect Lorette Noble, National 1st Vice-President Lucille Partington and National Chairperson of Resolutions Dr. Rayleen De Luca, representing 101,635 members, met with ministries of the federal government in Ottawa, Ontario, to discuss the 2003 and 2004 resolutions briefs. Resolution 2004.01 Protection of Human Life was introduced at every meeting to firmly assert the League's position that human life is precious at all stages of development.

In response to a discussion regarding the overwhelming number of Canada's vulnerable living in poverty as described in Resolution 2004.02 Children Living in Poverty and Resolution 2003.02 Increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement, federal representatives noted that a gradual increase in the National Child Benefit and a seven per cent increase to the Guaranteed Income Supplement was planned.

In a discussion concerning Resolution 2004.08 Treatment of Autistic Persons, the importance of early diagnosis for effective treatment was emphasized. The delegates added that few families could afford expensive treatments such as applied behavioural analysis for autism.

Regarding Resolution 2004.04 Child Care Tax Deduction for Families With a Stay-at-Home Parent, representatives from the ministry of finance expressed sympathy for these families but emphasized the complexity of the tax system. The delegates discussed the inconsistency in tax credits available for textbooks purchased for some post-secondary studies but not others as outlined in Resolution 2003.10 Tax Deduction for Post-Secondary School Textbooks.

Regarding Resolution 2004.06 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, the delegates pointed out that Canada was lacking a policy on suicide prevention even though the World Health Organization had recognized suicide as a major health problem and developed guidelines to help nations to create strategies. The delegates were informed that the issue was a concern to the prime minister.

Regarding Resolution 2004.12 Marijuana Possession/Use – A Criminal Offence, the delegates voiced concern to representatives of the minister of justice and the attorney general of Canada about the federal government's plan to allow possession of small amounts of marijuana to be within the law. The delegation further expressed concern about the harmful effects of marijuana and its potential to become a gateway to other illicit drugs as iterated in Resolution 2003.07 Education on Marijuana.

Regarding Resolution 2004.07 Water Use in Canada, the national council

had encouraged members to lobby their municipal governments to take measures to limit unnecessary use of potable water. Representatives of the federal government enlightened the delegates about Bill C-6 *An Act to amend the International Boundary Waters Treaty Act* (2001), which prevented the export of bulk water from Canada. Regarding Resolution 2004.10 Effective Participation in Application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, the delegation emphasized that the Act would invoke more participation by Canadians if plain language was used in its application.

Regarding Resolution 2003.08 National Strategy to Eliminate Computer-Based Pornography, Resolution 2003.09 Age of Consent for Sexual Activity and Resolution 2004.05 End Trafficking of Children, the delegation explained the need to eliminate exploitation of women and children in all its forms.

Pope John Paul II declared a Year of the Eucharist, beginning in October

2004. Elaborating on the subject, National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Richard Smith, of Pembroke, said that in setting aside a special year to pay homage to the Eucharist, the pope invited Catholics to make the sacrament a priority. He proposed that a deepened appreciation of the Eucharist would give unity of purpose to League endeavours.

Bishop Smith suggested that another reference point for pastoral activity was the Pope's 2001 apostolic letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (At the Beginning of the New Millennium), which set out his pastoral vision for the church. He said that because the League received the theme, *cast out into the deep*, from *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, it should be studied continually. He expressed a hope that members would use it as a base of all initiatives in spiritual development in coming years because in the document the pope outlined the path members must tread if they were to grow in holiness – a path that included prayer, celebration of the Eucharist and attentiveness to the Word of God.

2005: companions on the journey: Part I

National President Agnes Bedard invited members, as sisters in Christ, to be companions to one another and to others. In 2001, they were to lift up their lives to the light of Jesus Christ, cross through *The Open Door* and become part of new ways to evangelize. In 2003, they were to *cast out into the deep*, try the untried in forms of social action that called them to see Christ in the other person. In 2005 the theme, *companions on the journey*, called them to see the face of Christ in others as they opened the door to a journey into unknown territory in the spirit of fellowship.

Agnes Bedard said that every interaction is an opportunity to bring forth the presence of Jesus. Just as Christ sees, hears and cares for everyone, in a like manner, as his companions, members were to see one another, and all others, with his eyes, welcoming those who held out their hands in need, "We are invited to see, in the eyes of the lonely, the discouraged and the tired, and in the eyes of our League sisters, His eyes – the eyes of Jesus" (*The Canadian League*, 81, 1, 2005).

Agnes Bedard designed a workshop, *On Being Kinder to Each Other*, to assist councils and members as bear-

ers of “joy, comfort and peace.” It was comprised of a series of activities to sensitize members to the possibility of unknowingly hurting others even though they were striving to see the face of Christ in everyone encountered. Participants were taught how to handle the inevitable mistakes or uncomfortable situations that seemed to be a regular part of personal interaction at meetings, and how to not only improve the situation but to make it a memorable experience. They were to look for opportunities for random acts of kindness – a quick hug, a kind word – ways to enhance relationships as *companions on the journey*.

Indeed, members demonstrated in many and varied ways that they were *companions on the journey*. St. Mary Parish Council, Westlock, Alberta, met with Grade 6 students on Valentine's Day to share strawberry shortcake and talk about the work of the League in the community. Sacred Heart Parish Council, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, held a Mother's Day tea to raise funds for a parish mission in Haiti. Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish Council, Sherbrooke, Quebec, collected gifts for a women's shelter. Members of St. John Bosco Parish Council, Dalhousie, New Brunswick, combined knitting and praying into a prayer shawl ministry. Lorrilee Jordan, Armstrong, British Columbia, received a Circle of Love Award from Kamloops Diocesan Council for writing a resolution concerning proposed marriage ceremonies for same-sex couples. St. Clement Parish Council, McGregor, Ontario, packaged infant and maternity wear for Birthright International. The Military Ordinariate Provincial Council sent boxes of candy along with notes of encouragement to a priest in Afghanistan, a morale booster for soldiers who were stationed in Kabul. St. Augustine Parish Council, Brandon, Manitoba, sponsored the Keepsake Program Room for families

who suffered the loss of a child at any gestational age, part of a new addition to the Brandon Regional Health Centre.

Members were *companions on the journey* toward a better life for women in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Agnes Bedard announced that the League would be supporting three new projects of CCODP through the 1% Program over three years: Concertacion de Mujeres in El Salvador – a program training women in political, economic and social skills to improve the lives of their families and communities; Self-Help Circle for Sustainable Development, a program in Benin, providing training and small loans for women's business ventures; and, REDE Feto in East Timor – supporting a network of women involved in gender justice.

In addition, members responded generously to the tsunami disaster of December 26, 2004, in India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand through a nation wide parish collection that was organized by the Canadian bishops. Donations made to CCODP were a significant portion of the collection, matched dollar for dollar by CIDA.

Items of interest: National bursaries were awarded to 32 members. The national executive donated ten cents of members' per capita fee to WUCWO as a pledge of solidarity with women around the world. In February, members were represented by National Chairperson of Community Life Ann Doucet along with Life Members Diane Curley and Anida Simurda at the Department of Foreign Affairs 17th Annual Human Rights Consultations in Ottawa, Ontario, which focused on the upcoming United Nations Commission on Human Rights (March 14-April 22, 2005). In April, Honorary Life President Claire Heron (1994-1996) attended WUCWO's annual board meeting in Rome. In May, Life Member Carmel Rumbles-

kie attended CCBI colloquia in Toronto, Ontario. In June, national office moved to C – 702 Scotland Avenue in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Richard Smith, of Pembroke, instructed that members were companions in faith by their common baptism, and strengthened in their journey with the Lord by their frequent celebration of the Eucharist. He said, “Relating the theme to the great mystery of the Lord’s abiding presence in the Eucharist will bear great fruit for the League” (Ibid.).

Bishop Richard Smith encouraged members to pray for the protection of marriage and family in Canadian society following the announcement that Bill C-6 *An Act respecting certain aspects of legal capacity for marriage for civil purposes* had been introduced in the House of Commons to alter substantially the nature of marriage by re-defining it as a union of two persons. He said, “let us entrust this concern to the intercession of Mary, Our Lady of Good Counsel, and to St. Joseph, patron of the church and of Canada. We ask them to pray for us and Canada” (*The Canadian League*, 81, 2, 2005).

Items of business: National Chairperson of Christian Family Life Cecile Miller announced that a new resource, *Families: Stories of Faith*, had been compiled for the 10th anniversary of the UN International Year of the Family.

Members learned that the Catholic Missions In Canada Fund had been influential in providing religious education programs in six mission communities through Catholic Missions In Canada (CMIC). The mission partners were – Father Gerald McDougall, Thunder Bay, Ontario; Sister Anna Stauber, Nelson, British Columbia; Sister Lorraine Couture, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan; Sister Margaret Sadler, Keewatin-

LePas, Manitoba; Sisters Frances Molloy, Mary Ryan and Carmelita MacNeil, St. George’s, Newfoundland and Labrador. The Catholic Missions In Canada Fund was established at the national convention in 2003 and further endorsed in 2004.

The 85th annual national convention was held August 14-17 at the Westin Bayshore Resort and Marina in Vancouver, British Columbia. For the occasion, Mayor Larry Campbell proclaimed The Catholic Women’s League of Canada Week. Participants arriving early dined while cruising around the inner harbour on the Magic Charm or enjoyed a bus trip to Storeyum in Gastown, a theatrical presentation of British Columbia’s history followed by an authentic Chinese dinner at Floata, in Vancouver’s Chinatown. Also available was a trip up Grouse Mountain on a gondola, a journey aboard the Skyride, Vancouver’s aerial tramway system, or a picnic in Stanley Park. Suzanne Rebeiro of St. Paul Parish Council, Airdrie, Alberta, was the winner of the membership contest, receiving an all expenses paid trip to the convention.

Nearly 800 participants attended, representing 99,910 members. The opening mass was celebrated by Bishop Richard Smith at St. Helen’s Church in nearby Burnaby, British Columbia. Guest journalist Susan Bernier related that he spoke of the beauty of the surroundings, “drawing us to see the dignity and beauty of each human person as the pinnacle of God’s creation, each loved by God and each called to love deeply” (*The Canadian League*, 81, 3, 2005).

During a session, Bishop Smith noted that the issue of marriage had been foremost in members’ minds for two years and they had spoken clearly and strongly, along with other church organizations and the Canadian bishops,

in defence of the traditional definition of marriage. He said that although Bill C-38 *An Act respecting certain aspects of legal capacity for marriage for civil purposes* was passed by the House of Commons on June 28, 2005, the battle was not over and encouraged members to witness the truth of marriage in their lives.

On Gathering Day, the theme, *companions on the journey*, was developed. Several women spoke of accepting the grace of God and help from those who served in the name of God. They praised ministries that provided safe housing and/or treatment programs for recovery from substance and/or domestic abuse – Covenant House, Sancta Maria House and Our Lady of Good Counsel Society, which several members in the Archdiocese of Vancouver organized, based on League principles. During a later session, Nancy Brown, SC, and Deborah Isaacs, GSS, gave a presentation on trafficking of women and children (*The B.C. Catholic*, August 29, 2005).

Keynote speaker Star of the North Retreat House Director Sandy Prather, of St. Albert, Alberta, spoke of the companionship of Mary, the Mother of God. She said that in order to fully grasp Mary as a blessed woman, and understand how fully she accepted God's request, members must relate to Mary as a woman. She asked them to think about Mary as a young, pregnant woman living in a patriarchal society and the courage it must have taken to say "yes" to God's plan.

Bishop Richard Smith spoke of Christ's presence in the Eucharist as a *companion on the journey* and proposed that during the Year of the Eucharist members should reflect deeply on the sacrament. He asked if they were prepared to live out the consequences of saying "yes, I believe" to the Eucharist

which signified union with one another as members of Christ's body and a readiness to offer their lives as "...spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

In another session, several members of the national executive tackled a serious subject in a light hearted way. Susan Bernier related that Hat Friends was about members coming together from parish, diocesan, provincial and national councils, but were they *companions on the journey*? Using characteristic humour, Agnes Bedard, National President-elect Lorette Noble, Honorary Life Member (2002-2004) Marie Cameron and National Chairperson of Legislation Danielle McNeil-Hessian talked of the challenges facing four women who were designing a workshop to improve League membership. After too much time spent on choosing hats for one another, and realizing how much energy had been used on such a trivial and non-related matter, they began to work on the project and completed it quickly.

A thought-provoking discussion about life within the League followed the antics. Marie Cameron believed that conflict among members could be managed if councils had spiritual programs that over-shadowed personality differences. She suggested that members consider forming small Christian communities within their councils. Lorette Noble challenged members to think about what they expected from the League, and ask themselves what they could offer, adding that prayer and enthusiasm were ways to encourage women to join councils. Danielle McNeil-Hessian spoke of the League as a means of bringing congregations together, especially those facing amalgamation. She suggested working with the clergy to build bridges that would renew parish life. Agnes Bedard addressed the difficulty of inevitable changes in the

League and asked members to ask themselves, "What is? What could be? What should be?" Like the different hats, there were differences within councils but the same prayers were shared and by seeing one another as sisters in Christ, there would be solutions (*The Canadian League*, 81, 3, 2005).

Over 250 members examined the proposed resolutions beforehand. Twelve resolutions were adopted. They covered a wide range of concerns and included plans for action. Resolution 2005.01 Christmas Postage Stamps urged Canada Post to include a nativity related theme in its stamp issues as had been the case prior to 2003. Resolution 2005.02 The Children of Mothers in Prison asked provincial councils to urge provincial/territorial governments to address the negative factors associated with having a mother in prison. Resolution 2005.03 Protection of Farmers' Rights to Save Seed asked the federal government to protect farmers' rights to save, select, reuse, exchange and sell seeds. Resolution 2005.04 Ratification of International Covenant Re: Death Penalty urged the federal government to sign the *Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty*. Resolution 2005.05 Appeal Provision for Refused Refugee Claimants urged the federal government to establish the refugee appeal division that was approved with the endorsement by the government of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (2002). Resolution 2005.06 Developing Countries and Water asked the federal government to exert pressure on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to cease placing conditions on loans with regard to water resources and systems and to advocate for access to clean, affordable water for all. Resolution 2005.07 The Illegal Manufacture and Trafficking of Crystal

Methamphetamine urged the federal government to continue its efforts to implement strategies for education about the dangers of crystal methamphetamine use, and give support to community policing of the illegal manufacture and trafficking of crystal methamphetamine. Resolution 2005.08 MaterCare International Funding urged the federal government to renew funding that provided pre-natal and post-natal treatment and training programs through MaterCare International's birth trauma centre in Ghana. Resolution 2005.09 Support for Families Experiencing Perinatal Loss encouraged provincial councils to write to provincial/territorial ministers of health to ensure that adequate programs for grieving families were in place in hospitals. Resolution 2005.10 Strategy to Reduce Polybrominated Diphenyl Ether Flame Retardants asked the federal government to pass legislation eliminating the use of polybrominated diphenyl ether in manufactured goods. Resolution 2005.11 Assisted Suicide – a Criminal Offence asked the federal government to retain Section 241 of the *Criminal Code* which states, "Every one who (a) counsels a person to commit suicide, or (b) aids or abets a person to commit suicide, whether suicide ensues or not, is guilty of an indictable offence..." Resolution 2005.12 Grandparents' Rights of Access to their Grandchildren urged the federal government to pass legislation to ensure grandparents' access to grandchildren.

The National Voluntary Fund continued to support CMIC. Funds were also dispersed to the CCODP 1% Program, Coady International Institute and WUCWO. The National Pro-Life Fund was divided between COLF and Euthanasia Prevention Coalition.

Danielle McNeil-Hessian voiced concern about Bill C-407 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (right to die*

with dignity). It would amend the *Criminal Code* to allow a person, under certain conditions, to assist a person close to death or suffering a debilitating illness to die if the person expressed an informed wish to die. The national council sent a letter to the prime minister that stated, "On behalf of the 779 members attending the 85th Annual National Convention of The Catholic Women's League of Canada who represent over 99,000 members across Canada, the national council wishes to reaffirm its respect for the gift of human life and its support for allowing people to die a natural death" (CWLCA).

Twenty women were honoured with a life membership: Anna Blakney, Sackville, New Brunswick; Sandra Byrnes, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Geraldine Canning, Smith Falls, Ontario; Betty Colaneri, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario; Lois Crider, Cobourg, Ontario; Patricia Gauthier, Chateauguay, Quebec; Helen Gordon, Fort St. John, British Columbia; Shari Guinta, Waterloo, Ontario; Lorna Halderman, Deux Montagnes, Quebec; Teresa MacInnis, Cornwall, Ontario; Kathleen Masse, St. Catharines, Ontario; Barbara McDonald, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories; June Meady, Thunder Bay, Ontario; Mary Nordick, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Carol Penno, Golden, British Columbia; Lynne Persson, Devon, Alberta; Peggy Roche, Torbay, Newfoundland and Labrador; Margaret Rondina, Sudbury, Ontario; Winnifred Russell, Dalhousie, New Brunswick; Mary Ellen Stinson, Whitby, Ontario.

Officers were reaffirmed early in the week, before Bishop Richard Smith left to attend World Youth Day 2005 in Cologne, Germany. The closing mass was celebrated at Holy Rosary Cathedral by Bishop Frederick Henry, of Calgary. President Agnes Bedard, Calgary, Alberta; President-elect Lorette Noble, Candiac, Quebec; 1st Vice-President

Lucille Partington, Sexsmith, Alberta; 2nd Vice-President Velma Harasen, Regina, Saskatchewan; Secretary-Treasurer Shirley Bernier, Lachine, Quebec; Past President Marie Cameron, Calgary Alberta.

Standing Committees: Spiritual Development Betty Anne Brown, Wellington, Ontario; Organization Lorette Noble; Christian Family Life Cecile Miller, Northeast Margaree, Nova Scotia; Community Life Ann Doucet, Rothesay, New Brunswick; Education and Health Velma Harasen; Communications Lucille Partington; Resolutions Dr. Rayleen De Luca, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Legislation Danielle McNeil-Hessian, Bedford, Nova Scotia; Laws Marie Cameron; International Relations Agnes Bedard.

Provincial Council Presidents: Alberta Mackenzie Ella Ell, Calgary; B.C. & Yukon Pat Battensby, Surrey; Manitoba Terri Scott, Winnipeg; Military Ordinariate Gabriele Kalincak, Calgary, Alberta; New Brunswick Yolande Perry, Fredericton; Newfoundland and Labrador Marie Raymond, St. John's; Nova Scotia Mary MacLeod, Halifax; Ontario Shirley George, Delhi; Prince Edward Island Judy Lewis, Summerside; Quebec Pearl Bridgewater, Candiac; Saskatchewan Joan Petracek, Esterhazy.

* * *

Following the national convention, the theme, *companions on the journey*, continued to be a point of reference. Members of the national executive were companions in preparing workshops for parish councils, available on the League's website. National Chairperson of Community Life Ann Doucet and Manitoba Provincial President Terri Scott prepared a workshop, *Trafficking of Women and Children*. In the councils: Our Lady of the Assumption Parish

Council, Brentwood, Ontario, participated in the WRAP Campaign. St. Francis of Assisi Parish Council, Cornwall, Prince Edward Island, sponsored Listen to the Whispers/A Day for Women, an event that included talks by professionals on women's health issues.

In September, members were represented by National President Agnes Bedard, National President-elect Lorette Noble and Honorary Life Member (1994-1996) and WUCWO Board Member Claire Heron at the NCCW Biennial Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. Agnes Bedard was an observer at the CCCB Plenary Assembly in Cornwall, Ontario, where a presentation used at the general assembly of the synod of bishops in Rome, Italy, *The Eucharist: Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church*, was discussed. In October, Ann Doucet attended a conference on gender equality in Ottawa, Ontario, organized by the Status of Wom-

en. National 2nd Vice-President Velma Harasen and Ann Doucet attended the World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence in Banff, Alberta.

Agnes Bedard reported that during the fall months the League had been represented at the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition Symposium, the CCBI colloquia, the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention Annual Conference and the preparatory meeting for the 49th International Eucharistic Congress, to be held in Quebec City, Quebec. National Chairperson of Spiritual Development Betty Anne Brown announced that a brochure, *The Gift of the Eucharist*, was developed for personal meditation before the Blessed Sacrament.

In 2005 Catholics bid *Requiescat in Pace* to His Holiness Pope John Paul II and *Ad multos Annos* to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.

Conclusion

The Mission Statement of The Catholic Women's League of Canada gives a clear view of the organization: women rooted in gospel values, called to holiness, through service to the people of God. Agnes Bedard called it both an invitation and a promise – an invitation to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and a promise that opportunities would be given to members on their journey to God with their sisters. The spiritual component has always been a motivating force for women leading the League and is the key to the longevity of the organization. They have faithfully followed the guidelines set out in the early years, but at the same time, have prayerfully discovered those areas that should be surrendered to God. They seek to develop a practical Catholicity among the members in order to promote Catholic interests. Differences of opinion, and

there have been more than a few, seem to be worked out amicably within the organizational structure, with the national executive always mindful of the views and needs of the grassroots members. A glance at the resolutions that have been adopted at the annual national conventions has reminded members of what is important and, as well, of their need to respond as women of faith.

In 1921 Margaret Jones, one of the founding members of the League, observed, "Our deliberations will provide charts for the guidance of future generations; let us see to it that we do our curve-plotting wisely" (CWLCA). In the years that followed, a national effort has developed a complete and effective organization that has been an instrument of Catholic social action. Every link of the chain has been strong. The national

viewpoint has been impressed upon every council. As the strength of the parish councils has depended upon the interest of the individual members, so the strength of the national organization has depended upon the quality of the parish councils.

At the close of 2005, with an active membership of 98,647 Catholic women, the national executive is looking to preserving tradition while allowing clear realities to foster adjustments in the League. A strong working relationship with the hierarchy continues to be mutually beneficial. Careful management has enabled the organization to remain financially stable. The problems associated with having an aging membership

have been addressed with programs and approaches that are new and flexible. Some questions remain unanswered: How to attract younger women? How to meet the needs of the immigrant population, many of whom are Catholic women and would be a welcome addition to councils? A League membership offers a "blessed sisterhood" and promises a supportive, caring and committed group to assist each woman to fulfill the Christian life.

Sheila Ross
Historian

April 24, 2007

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Primary sources used for writing the history included minutes and documents from the archives of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, documents from the archives of the Archdiocese of Edmonton and Diocese of Calgary, *The Canadian League* and articles from Catholic newspapers, identified in chapters. Among the secondary sources were: T. J. Fay, SJ, *A History of Canadian Catholics* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002) and T. M. Hesburgh, CSC, STD, *The Theology of Catholic Action* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1946).

Sheila Ross is a graduate of St. Thomas More College, University of Saskatchewan. She received her Bachelor of Social Work and M.A. in Italian Renaissance history from the University of Calgary. She is a member of Sacred Heart Parish Council in Calgary, Alberta.

Commonly Used Acronyms

CCBI	Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute
CCODP	Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace
CCCB	Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
CCCLA	Canadian Conference of Catholic Lay Associations
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CCESC	Catholic Church Extension Society of Canada
CHAC	Catholic Health Association of Canada
CMIC	Catholic Missions In Canada
COLF	Catholic Organization for Life and Family
CCJC	Church Council on Justice and Corrections
G8	Group of Eight
GST	Goods and Services Tax
NCCW	National Council of Catholic Women (USA)
WRAP	White Ribbon Against Pornography
WICC	Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada
WUCWO	World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations

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