

The Catholic Women's League of Canada  
**Core Principles; Constitution & Bylaws;  
Policy and Procedures; Executive Handbook**  
Executive Orientation Handout



**Core Principles Include:**

- **Core purpose:** the reason an organization exists. The League exists to unite Catholic women to grow in faith, and to promote social justice through service to the church, Canada and the world.
- **Core values:** the fundamental beliefs of an organization that determine the behavior of its membership.
- **Mission statement:** The statement captures and identifies the scope of an organization's operation. The League's mission statement is "The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service."
- **Envisioned future:** A description of what the organization strives to become. Members want the League to be an inclusive and engaged community of Catholic women inspired by Catholic faith.
- We are reminded the League is:
  - a vital participant in the church
  - a valued partner for social justice
  - a respected advocate at all government levels
  - connected to the world

**Core Values Guiding the League:**

1. **Faith** - Our shared Catholic faith is the reason we choose to belong to the League and guides activities in all that we do.
2. **Service** - The League has a long-standing tradition of service in their parishes and the communities in which they live. Members are involved in many church ministries including: Eucharistic ministers, lectors, ushers, members of pastoral councils, liturgy committees, Catholic Girl's League, St. Vincent De Paul Society, prayer shawl ministry, soup kitchens and much more.
3. **Social Justice** - Every member is asked to share through resolutions and legislation any social injustice in her community, throughout Canada and globally. Many resolutions have resulted in legislation and social change.

**Constitution & Bylaws**

As an executive member, you will want to know what kind of information is contained in the *Constitution and Bylaws*. The following information is intended as an introduction:

- **Part I: Name**
- **Part 2: Patroness:** Our Lady of Good Counsel. **A change in patroness has been circulated as a proposed amendment in 2021. The results of the decision will be known in August 2022.**

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- **Part 3: Crest, Corporate Seal and Flag.** The crest, as designed and adopted in 1922, shall be the cross, symbolic of faith, surmount 10 maple leaves, symbolic of the provinces of Canada, with the words “The Catholic Women’s League of Canada for God and Canada” enclosed in an unbroken circle, symbolic of constant service to God and Canada. The colours of the crest shall be blue, chosen for Our Lady, and the papal colours, white and gold.
- **Part 4: Objects** of the League are as follows:
  - to achieve individual and collective spiritual development
  - to promote the teachings of the Catholic church
  - to exemplify the Christian ideal in home and family
  - to protect the sanctity of human life
  - to enhance the role of women in church and society
  - to recognize the human dignity of all people everywhere
  - to uphold and defend Christian education and values in the modern world
  - to contribute to the understanding and growth of religious freedom, social justice, peace and harmony
- **Part 5: Policy**
- **Part 6: Spiritual Program**
- **Part 7: Membership**, which includes the four types of membership:
  - general membership
  - life membership
  - honorary life membership
  - associate membership
  - These four types of membership will be covered under another module
- **Part 8: Organization**, which was covered in a previous module
- **Part 9: The League and the church** covers the appointment and role of a spiritual advisor
- **Part 10: Directors (at the national level)**
- **Part 11: Officers:** describes the composition of the executive of all levels of the League including parish, diocesan, provincial and national. **A change in the number of officers at each level has been circulated as a proposed amendment in 2021. The results of the decision will be known in August 2022.**

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### **Preparation of a Manual of Policy and Procedure for a Parish Council**

There is a *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*, a provincial manual of policy and procedure and a diocesan manual of policy and procedure, and yet, many parish councils do not have their own policy and procedure manual.

**Preparing a Parish Council Manual of Policy and Procedure**

- Appoint an *ad hoc* committee.
- Gather the minutes of council general meetings for the past six years and make them available to the committee.
- Set a target date for completion of the task.
- Present draft manual to the parish executive for review and approval.
- Draft manual is presented to members of the council at a general meeting.

### **Suggestions for the Contents of a Manual of Policy and Procedure:**

- A good starting point are the first two suggestions: executive and general meeting dates, place and time. It has been proven that consistency is important. For example, the date for the executive meeting can always be the first Monday of each month. The start time at 7:00 p.m. The location: church boardroom.
- It is very important that councils include their own traditions and practices in order to make this a vital document for them. These policies and procedures should align themselves with the national manual.
- The policy and procedure manual does not have to be a lengthy document tying people to policy forever. It is meant to be a guideline which means external or internal changes may require slight deviations subject to review.
- It is suggested that a manual of policy and procedure be reviewed at least every two years and more often if changes have been introduced.

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**Other Possible Items for Inclusion:**

### **Preparing a Parish Council Manual of Policy and Procedure**

- Paid expenses for voting/accredited delegates to attend diocesan convention (travel, accommodations and meals).
- List of ongoing commitments.
- Gifts to pastor/associate pastor/parish staff.
- On-going special events sponsored by the council.
- Solicitation of gifts/advertising from outside sources.
- Petty cash or advances for elected officers.
- Travel and/or allowable expenses for other meetings, especially for the council president.
- Preparation of annual reports.
- Any other items of important relevance to the council.

Please remember you can seek advice from the:

- diocesan council executive
- provincial council executive
- life members