

Spiritual Development Chairperson Cathy Bouchard

There are so many places in the Word of God that we hear of God's gifts to us and our responsibility for sharing these gifts. James 1:17 tells us that every gift is from God. We each have different talents and God-given gifts. These gifts are all important and allow us to be a part of advancing the realm of God, helping others, and improving the world around us. This speaks especially of the Catholic Women's League—we have been gifted in so many ways. We are gifted in these women who have become our sisters, who give us their love and support and even challenge us as a sister should do.

It has been a gift to attend and prepare liturgies for the national administrative and executive meetings and the annual meeting of members. The World Day of Prayer, "I Have Heard About Your Faith," was shared by the national executive at its winter meeting. The Canadian organizers told us this was the first time this was offered in a hotel and at a national executive meeting.

In turn, communiqués were gifted with the opportunity to pray a Rosary for Reconciliation in June. A Lenten retreat was offered along with many other parish, diocesan and provincially organized retreats. For the period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, \$21,824.31 was collected from members and councils for the Catholic Missions In Canada National Voluntary Fund, which is \$688.14 more than in the same time frame from the year before.

In discussion with provincial chairpersons, we clarified the process of moving from chairperson of spiritual development to chairperson of faith. The process was shared through the other national chairpersons to their provincial counterparts and continues to be developed as we move forward.

We have continued the incentive to connect and engage our spiritual advisors. Our advisors are a gift to us, offering counsel and, in the case of ordained advisors, offering the sacraments. We are given the opportunity to have spiritual advisors who wish to submit short articles to *The Canadian League* magazine. This will assist other advisors who may be shy or unsure of how to share their gifts with us. At all levels, we need to continue to work on building relationships with our advisors.

The Synod on Synodality will be a lasting gift to us at all the council levels if we can incorporate the dynamic of discerning and listening together to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Various aspects of the Synod on Synodality have been a focus of the articles in *The Canadian League* this past year. As members of the Catholic Women's League, we must develop a charism of dialogue.

We have been gifted with various resources for the Faith Standing Committee on the national website: The Toolkit for Faith (#640) includes a one-hour event celebrating the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel and a Prayer Service on the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel which could be opened to the parish. The Our Lady of Good Counsel Workshop with PowerPoint is a flexible tool for workshops on Marian devotions as well as a six- to eight-hour retreat for members and documents for use in prayer services, workshops and retreats. Other new or updated documents include (#603) *Ceremonies Booklet*, (#613) *Handbook for Spiritual Advisors* and (#614) *Handbook for Chairpersons of Faith, Service and Social Justice*. 'Prayer and Hymns' as well as 'Workshops' under the Faith standing committee are on the national website in their own section. Please note that the ceremonies in the Prayers and Hymns section are not yet updated to correspond

with the updated *Ceremonies Booklet*. A gift outside of the League that councils may want to take up individually and discuss in a group are the Bible in a Year and Catechism in a Year programs. A calendar is being developed to keep track of important opportunities for prayer within the League.

Please remember: The purpose of the League is to unite “Catholic women to grow in faith, and to promote social justice through service to the church, Canada and the world.” Our Mission Statement: “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.” “If we desire to see the reign of God then WE must help create it by filling the vessels of our lives, [and the lives of our sisters around us] with the Spirit of Love, reaching out to the stranger, challenging corrupt systems and risking the security and comfort of privatism. ...because each of us has the power to make present the living God” (Ilia Delio). We must use our gifts for our sisters, for our families, “For God and Canada.” †