

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial President Mary Hunt

Madam president,

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council is comprised of councils in Alberta and the Northwest Territories with a membership of almost 8,000 faith-filled women in five dioceses who, with gratitude and joy, are *Catholic and Living It!* The past year was a blur of activity and change in Alberta Mackenzie as we continued to close the door on the COVID-19 pandemic.

We celebrated 110 years of service in the Diocese of Edmonton and the 100th anniversary of St. Patrick's Parish Council in Medicine Hat. We noted with sadness and gratitude the 205 Alberta Mackenzie members who passed away in 2022.

I had the privilege and joy of attending conventions throughout Alberta Mackenzie. The women I met shared a love of the League and the graced opportunities it provides. Their reports reflected striving to meet the challenges that COVID has amplified in our communities. All diocesan councils talked about the increased challenge of attracting leadership and members after COVID, as there is a significant number who have not renewed their memberships. They spoke about needing to make sure that we leave no member behind.

The focus of the provincial council is to educate through faith, service and social justice. Some of our accomplishments include the introduction of a new website, a virtual Lenten Retreat which attracted 187 members from across Canada, meeting with two provincial government cabinet ministers to share our concerns and recommendations, which included information about Resolution 2022.01, which calls for the government to enact federal legislation to reduce food loss and waste, the need for an independent seniors advocate, the need for good palliative care, we highlighted our work nationally to inform our members and the communities they live in about the insidious devastation of pornography and our opposition to pornography and the passing of Bill S-210 to prevent children from accessing pornographic content online. We share with all League members pride in the national postcard campaign we mounted for many years. We mentioned our concerns about human trafficking. We spoke with them about our efforts to support and educate others about sanctity of life issues such as medical assistance in dying, euthanasia and abortion. We do not consider the killing of the most vulnerable to be health care.

We actively participate in the Alberta March for Life Association with three of our provincial officers serving on the board, and as provincial president, I accepted an invitation to speak at the Alberta March for Life Association rally, which attracted over 1,000 attendees. We find motivation in the words of Albert Einstein, who said, "The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything."

We share the belief that the Catholic Women's League must be an advocacy voice for the vulnerable in society who have lost their voices and cannot fend for themselves, which includes the unborn, the elderly who need care, the mentally ill, the homeless, the unemployed, the terminally ill—all who become invisible because they place demands on the system.

Our 76th Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Convention attracted almost 200 members, which included 47 women who had never previously attended a provincial convention. As one of the goals of the

provincial council is to develop relationships with our Indigenous brothers and sisters, we celebrated our opening mass and ceremony at Sacred Heart of the First Peoples Catholic Church. The convention program included outstanding presentations from Archbishop Richard Smith (Edmonton), National President Fran Lucas and Chief Wilton Littlechild, who was instrumental in bringing Pope Francis to Canada last summer. Chief Littlechild encouraged us to look at the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* and to choose one that speaks to us and do something about the action we have chosen both as individuals and possibly as an organization.

We embrace the belief that we are one in the Spirit, women entrusted by God to the well-being of our society as rooted in our children and grandchildren. We seek to involve God in the healing process in our new era of understanding, reconciliation and healing in our relationship with our Indigenous family.

Alberta Mackenzie members have continued their efforts to support and resettle families escaping the war in Ukraine through our prayers and fundraising efforts. In recent months, many of our communities have been affected by wildfires. Some experienced unprecedented flooding last year and raging fires this year. There is a strength of spirit and joyful determination in these women living in these affected areas who are in desperate need of our prayers and support.

For the coming year, our plan is to continue with the national Unity Outreach, continue to educate on how to implement the new executive structure, continue to advocate with the provincial government on our issues, and continue the education process for building relationships with our Indigenous brothers and sisters in our service, "For God and Canada."

This concludes my report. †