

Ontario Provincial President Linda Squarzolo

Over the past year, the 30,000 members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in Ontario made every effort to live out the Objects of the League.

Members continued to embrace the national theme, *Catholic and Living It!* and to focus on the provincial theme, *Go Make a Difference!* It is so amazing to hear the hymn "Go Make a Difference" sung across the province and to learn about the projects provincial officers and the diocesan councils have initiated to bring this theme to life. Traditionally, the Ontario president chooses a logo for her term, and I chose the bee. St. John Chrysostom stated, "The bee is more honoured than other animals, not because she labors, but because she labors for others." And, I may add, all worker bees are female. I have been gifted with every imaginable product with the bee logo on it. It is quite the collection.

Although meetings began to be held in person, it was decided that the provincial winter meeting would be held virtually. Not only was it a cost-saving measure, but it also saved the worry of travel during the winter months. Members were informed about current issues and new programs through directives, emails and monthly articles in the Ontario Provincial Council's *ON-Line Newsletter*. The provincial council continues to offer a subsidy to each diocesan council to help with the cost of accessing a virtual platform for their members.

The Unity Outreach project has been successfully launched in Ontario. Some dioceses have visited all of their parish councils. However, three dioceses have more than 90 councils, so this initiative will take them a little longer to complete. The overall response has been favourable. The parish councils welcomed the visits and the opportunity to express their views.

One of the most noticeable changes in our province was the amalgamation of two diocesan councils. In 2020, Pope Francis announced that the dioceses of Ottawa and Alexandria-Cornwall would be amalgamated into one diocese. The League councils also had to be joined. Over the last year, committees were formed to develop policies and procedures, determine the combining of finances and hold elections. The amalgamation was completed on June 10th with the election and installation of a new executive, a mass celebrated by Archbishop Marcel Dampousse, and a luncheon was held afterwards. The new diocese is called Ottawa-Cornwall.

The *ad hoc* Truth and Reconciliation Working Group continues to be important to the Ontario Provincial Council. This subcommittee of the community life standing committee developed a resource page on the provincial website for members, which provides links to various resources, both technical and spiritual, and a calendar of upcoming events. The provincial meeting happened to be held on September 30th, and all in attendance wore orange in support of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. A reconciliation rosary was hosted virtually on that day, as well as on the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12th, with over 100 participants at each event. Provincial Spiritual Advisor Bishop Thomas Dowd (Sault Ste. Marie) gave a presentation at the fall provincial meeting to inform us about the Papal visit and what the church is doing moving forward and offered suggestions on how the League can become more involved.

In order to support the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' Indigenous Reconciliation Fund, the Ontario Provincial Council has pledged a \$25,000 donation over five years. The second cheque was presented at the provincial convention in July.

The support of the clergy is vital to all councils. In the fall, we made a presentation to the Ontario bishops about the current state of the Catholic Women's League in Ontario, as well as the topics of past and upcoming resolutions.

Two government visits were held, one virtually and one in person, and two resolutions were approved at the annual provincial convention.

The Catholic Women's League in the Province of Ontario continues to work "For God and Canada," facing its challenges with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel.

This concludes my report. †