



**2022
ANNUAL REPORT
SUMMARY**

CATHOLIC
and **LIVING IT!**

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.



National President's Message

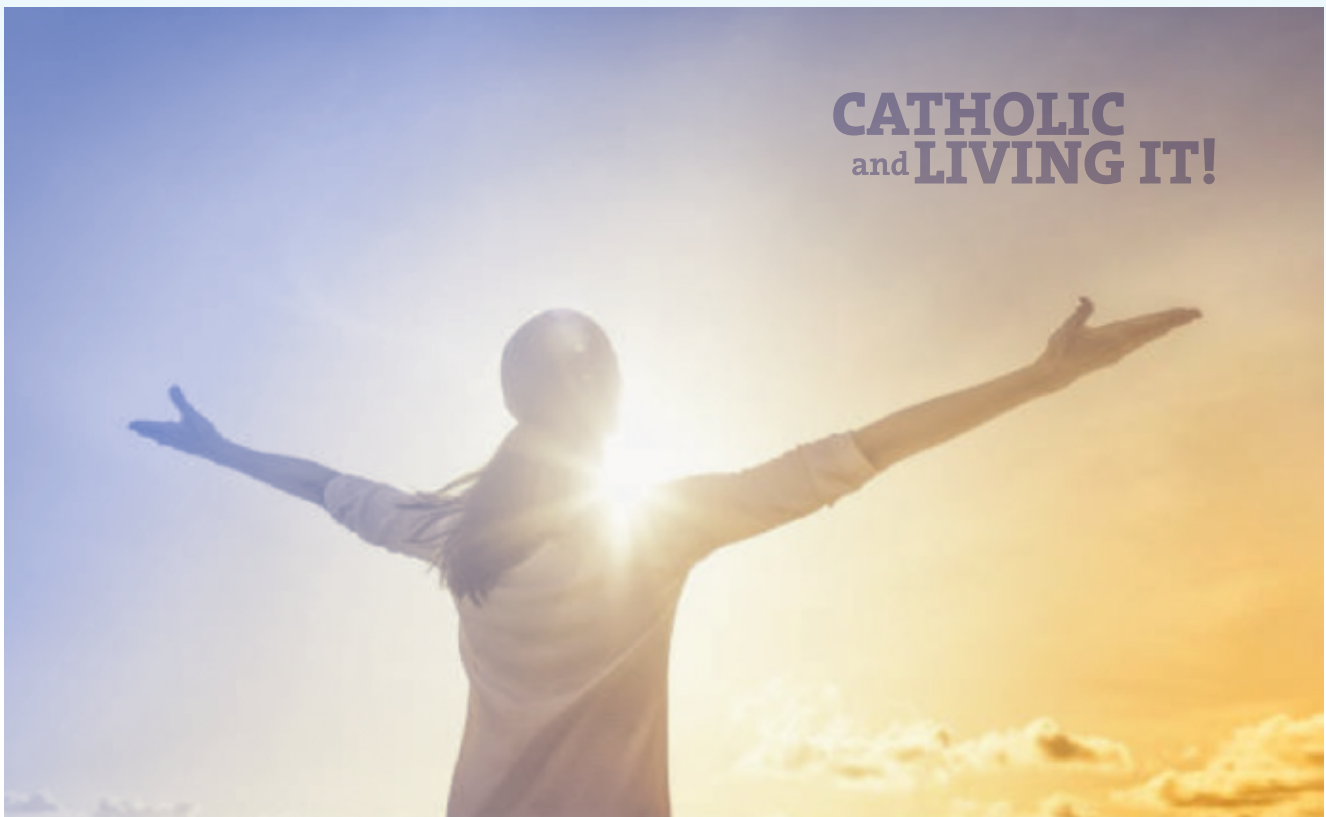


Fran Lucas

National President and Chairperson of International Relations

The Catholic Women's League of Canada under the theme of *Catholic and Living It!* had much to celebrate in 2022 with the gradual return to pre-pandemic activity. Parish councils took re-opening at their own pace as their members felt comfortable. Twenty percent of councils were re-opened fully by the end of the year; one-third were almost fully back to their regular activities; another quarter of councils were able to organize $\frac{1}{2}$ of their former activities; 17% were cautiously doing $\frac{1}{4}$ of what they had previously. Only two percent of councils had not restarted by year end.

Councils were asked what excited them the most about the changes to the executive structure and the future of the League. Councils shared they were excited to implement the changes to the governance structure, especially the reduction of officers and standing committees positions. They cited being able to fill positions, defining better the chairpersons' roles, engaging members in subcommittees to work on a task-by-task basis, providing for more member participation, reducing bureaucracy, increasing collaboration among chairpersons, streamlining activities



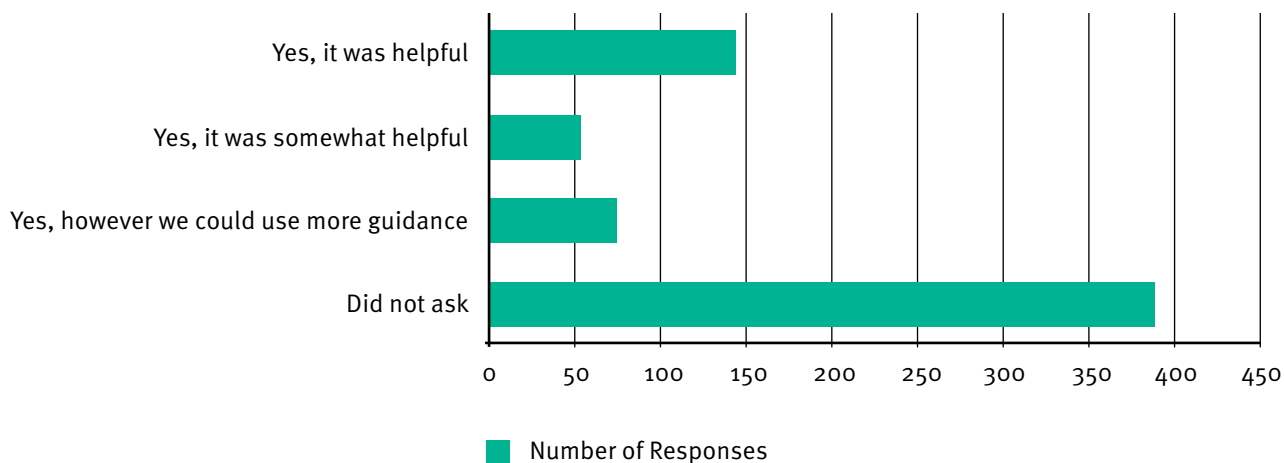


and reporting requirements, simplifying agendas, focusing on goals and core values, and eliminating overlap and duplication of effort. The emphasis on leadership would also hopefully assist rural, small councils with recruiting. Some councils expressed being cautious, but optimistic, about the change in structure. They didn't feel "excited", but anxious about how the changes would impact their councils. They noted that they would not be implementing the change until their next election in 2024. A few councils noted that they felt reducing the positions would create a greater burden on fewer people if the workloads weren't adjusted. And a small number of councils, regrettably, noted that a lack of volunteers and participation could not be overcome by a change in structure.

When asked how councils were preparing for the changes to the executive structure, they cited prayer, realigning executives in time for elections, discussions, teaching, sharing and information sessions, hosting workshops, meeting and teaching sessions with regional and diocesan and provincial teams, reading all communications that are received on the change, updating the policy and procedure manual, visiting the website for information, forming sub-committees to assist the chairpersons, revising agendas, providing guidelines to members, studying how current activities will fit into the new structure, prepare and provide handouts, and prepare new job descriptions. Some councils expressed a desire to receive more guidance, and some mentioned taking it "one step at a time."

A question was posed to gauge the amount and quality of assistance provided to parish councils to navigate to the new structure, with the results as follows:

Have you asked diocesan/provincial for guidance?





Parish councils shared their traditional activities as contributions to living out the national theme, *Catholic and Living It!*, revealing the all-encompassing nature of the chosen theme. The most mentioned activity fell under the core value of “faith” and involved prayer, particularly using the prayer card supplied for all members at council meetings. Spirituality and deepening of faith were the second and third most mentioned activities, whether they were by attending spiritual retreats, reciting the rosary, or ensuring that 1/3 of council time was spent in prayer and reflection. More examples are listed in the Spiritual Development section of this report.

The second core value, service, was also a natural fit with the national theme. Service to the membership by reaching out, particularly to shut-ins, was the most noted activity, an activity that is described in the Organization and Christian Family Life sections of this report. Donating to worthy causes, the fifth most popular action in support of the theme, is mentioned under the Secretary-Treasurer section as well as under many of the standing committees. Finally, performing corporal works of mercy, such as volunteering at food banks and hospice was included in the list of theme activities.

The final core value, social justice, was mentioned sparingly, and often in reference to service activities, suggesting that more could be done to strengthen the definition and understanding of social justice as being actions that address the root cause of inequality and marginalization in society. Archbishop Desmond Tutu defined it best when he stated, “There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in.”

The final question posed to councils related to how parish spiritual advisors were involved. Cited were attending meetings and special events, providing words of encouragement, promoting the CWL at masses, offering advice, celebrating mass, contributing to newsletters, and informing councils how they may assist the parish.





Representing Catholic Women

The national president represented the League at the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops plenary session in Cornwall, the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League annual congress in Edmonton, and the National Council of Catholic Women in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The League was also represented at the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada's national virtual conference and Development and Peace's orientation assembly in Halifax.

Advocacy through Resolutions and Legislation

At the national level, one resolution was adopted at the annual national convention, Resolution 2022.01 Enact Federal Legislation to Reduce Food Loss and Waste. Other topics considered by the national resolutions committee were child labour in mining mica, including palliative care facilities and ambulance services in the *Canada Health Act*, the termination of pregnancy through violence, and developing a national strategy to reduce loneliness.

As follow up on previously adopted resolutions, parish councils identified the following resolutions as having been topics they willingly and passionately advocated for and acted upon:

- 2013.01 Building Relationships and Partnerships with Canada's Indigenous Peoples
- 2015.03 Banning the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides
- 2016.04: Amend to Canada Health Act to Identify Palliative Care as an Insured Health Service
- 2017.01 Full Implementation of the Supreme Court Decision in R. V. Gladue for Indigenous Offenders
- 2017.04: Protect from Coercion of Conscience for Healthcare Professionals





- 2018.03: Legislate Designation of Hospice/Palliative Care Services in Facilities to Exclude Medical Assistance in Dying
- 2019.01 Canada to Honour its Commitment to the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child
- 2019.02 Canadian Support for the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
- 2022.01: Enact Federal Legislation to Reduce Food Loss and Waste

With regard to monitoring and speaking out about proposed and enacted legislation, most parish councils were aware of *Bill C-7 An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)* and about one quarter of parish councils were aware of *Bill C-230 An Act to amend the Criminal Code (intimidation of health care professionals)*.

Other bills studied, monitored or acted upon included:

- *C-3 An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Canada Labour Code*
- *C-4 An Act to amend the Criminal Code (conversion therapy)*
- *C-5 An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*
- *C-8 Economic and Fiscal Update Implementation Act, 2021*
- *C-11 Online Streaming Act*
- *C-12 Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act*
- *C-14 An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying)*
- *C-21 An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms)*
- *C-36 Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act*
- *C-214 An Act to amend the Canadian Navigable Waters Act (lakes and rivers in British Columbia)*
- *C-207 An Act to amend the Canadian Bill of Rights (right to housing)*
- *C-214 An Act to amend the Canadian Navigable Waters Act (lakes and rivers in British Columbia)*
- *C-217 National Freshwater Strategy Act*
- *C-228 Pension Protection Act*





- *C-291 An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts (child sexual abuse and exploitation material)*
- *C-295 An Act to amend the Criminal Code (neglect of vulnerable adults)*
- *S-8 An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*
- *S-210 Protecting Young Persons from Exposure to Pornography Act*
- *S-211 Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act*
- *S-219 National Ribbon Skirt Day Act*

- *C-233 An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act (violence against an intimate partner)*
- *C-245 An Act to amend the Canada Infrastructure Bank Act*
- *C-243 An Act respecting the elimination of the use of forced labour and child labour in supply chains*
- *C-246 Constitution Act, 2022 (representation of Quebec)*
- *C-252 Child Health Protection Act*
- *C-262 Corporate Responsibility to Protect Human Rights Act*
- *C-265 National Perinatal Mental Health Strategy Act*
- *C-268 Protection of Freedom of Conscience Act*
- *C-270 Stopping Internet Sexual Exploitation Act*
- *C-281 International Human Rights Act*



- *S-233 National Framework for a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income Act*
- *S-248 An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)*

Whilst only one in eight parish councils professed to being involved in the legislative aspects of social justice, a tremendous number of bills were monitored and acted upon indicating the passion of the League's social justice focused councils across the country.

National Standing Committees

Spiritual Development: In February, members were encouraged to participate by voicing their dreams, ideas and concerns in preparation for the Synod of Bishops in 2023. “Under the theme For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission, the pope has called the church to practice synodality, that is listening to—and hearing—one another in all facets of church life” (*National Catholic Reporter*). The process was launched worldwide on October 17, 2021 and continued into 2022.

In March, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle, a coalition of Catholic partners to strengthen relationships and partnerships with Indigenous peoples, asked for the League’s

cooperation to engage the Catholic faithful in Canada in the Indigenous delegation journeying to Rome for a papal visit. Members were invited to join in solidarity with the delegation by praying and lighting a candle as part of a sacred fire on the first day of the visit (March 28th).

Also in March, Pope Francis consecrated Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Members were encouraged to join in prayer by praying the Annunciation Novena.

Organization: Councils were asked what resources they were looking for or need. Broken down by the new structure, councils shared the following:

President	List of League achievements, speakers bank, on demand speaker sessions
Vice-President	Membership recruitment and retention, member engagement ideas, list of key resources available, orientation programs, outcome of strategic plan, executive training, tutorials on technical matters such as how to use projectors or navigate software, free membership drive material, leadership development, updated Catch the Fire session, material in other languages
Secretary	Promotional brochures and posters, modern marketing, professionally written articles, national and provincial website navigation tutorials, advertising material
Treasurer	Fundraising ideas
Past President	Information on new positions and structure, print copies of the Constitution & Bylaws
Faith	Meeting prayers, spiritual development, information on the changing role of women in the church
Service	Community involvement suggestions
Social Justice	List of successful resolutions

Nationally, an ad hoc committee was struck to examine and make recommendations to tighten the criteria to qualify for life membership. The recommendations were accepted by the board and implemented in the fall. Much time was spent as liaison to the implementation committee, attending working group meetings and promoting the new resource material.

Christian Family Life: Parish councils were encouraged to participate in World Day of Prayer for Vocations (May 8th) and to continue “to focus on protecting the sanctity of life by working on and praying to change the minds and hearts of women contemplating abortion as a solution to their problems, rather than accepting members’ support for them and their children. Members should also be encouraged to contact their member of parliament and



ask them to protect the sanctity of life by passing into law a ban on abortion.”

In her winter 2022 article, the national chairperson of Christian family life appealed to members to “encounter someone they already know, members might be ready to meet a new person and continue their journey by making a stranger into a neighbour. They could gather up their courage and perhaps, together with some of their League sisters, go farther afield and find people who are obviously in need. By meeting them, listening to their stories and then providing what they need, members will show they are *Catholic and Living It!*”, tying the theme into the selfless acts of service undertaken in ministry to others. She followed up in the spring issue with an article on members taking care of themselves before they give selflessly to the task of caring for others.

Community Life: On February 24th, Russia invaded Ukraine which caused a mass exodus of Ukrainians looking to resettle temporarily. League members leapt to action assisting Ukraine with its war efforts and Ukrainian refugees with donations that were funneled through the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, Canadian Red Cross, St. Vincent de Paul, Development and Peace, Ukrainian Catholic Church and Canadian Ukrainian Congress; gifting of clothes, furniture, household items, books and food; hosting fundraisers; English language training; making and wearing yellow and blue ribbons in a show of solidarity; prayers for peace; offering employment and employment search assistance; providing temporary shelter; and making quilts.

The 2nd National Truth and Reconciliation Day, September 30th, which was established by the federal government, was heavily promoted in the standing committee. Approximately one-third of parish councils reported organizing an event. Initiatives included: praying the rosary, arranging prayer services and attending mass; wearing orange shirts to raise awareness about the residential school system’s impact; participating in organized walks, marches, pow wows and flag raising events; arranging for guest speakers and educational forums on the topic; discussing the 94 calls to action outlined in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; attending ceremonies on reserve; donating to, attending, and/or viewing the broadcast of the papal visit; placing orange ribbons outside the church; reciting territorial acknowledgements before events and meetings; supporting local Indigenous artists and displaying their works; hosting or attending candlelight vigils for murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls; attending the 4 Seasons of Reconciliation course developed in partnership with First Nations University of Canada; participating in the blanket exercise; and providing orange hearts to parishioners to attach to their shirts or purses.

Education and Health: The national standing committee gave priority to the topics of Catholic Education Week, Coady International Institute, National Bursary Fund, Canadian Blood Services donations, Bell Let’s Talk Day, the Horizons of Hope palliative care kit, National Hospice Palliative Care Week, National Catholic Health Care Week, Earth Day and Laudato Si’ Week.

Events planned and organized by the national chairperson garnered the following uptake from councils. Events are listed in order of interest to parish councils.

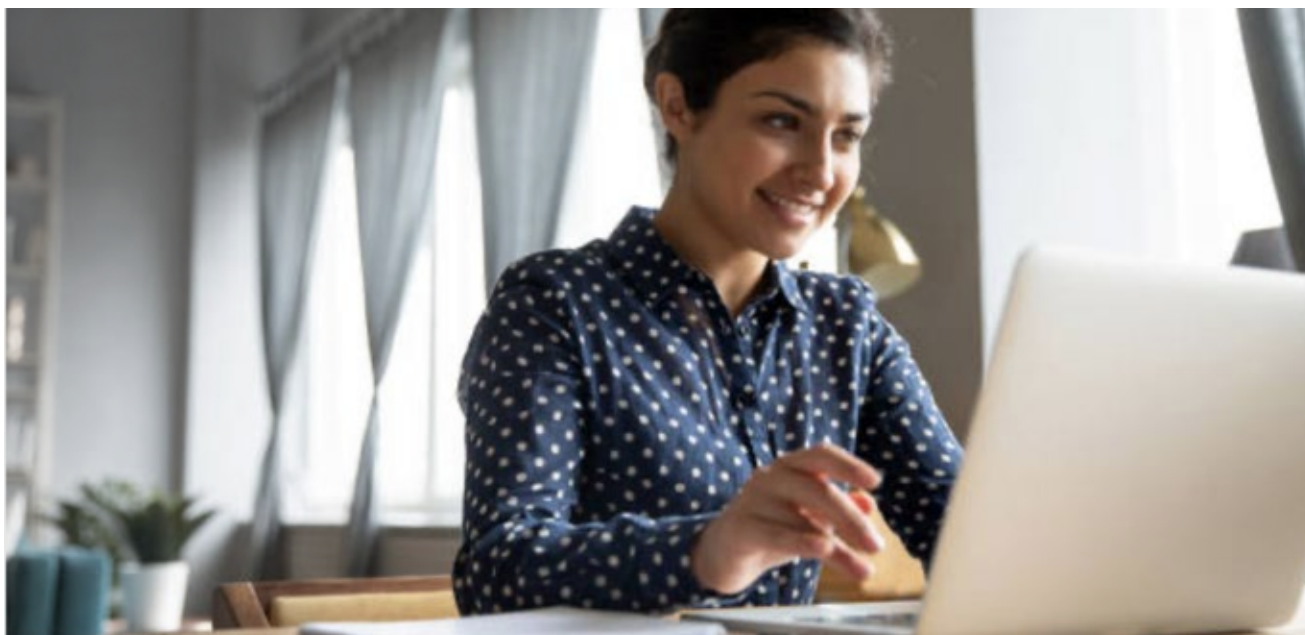
Event	Participated
12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care	54 %
Palliative Care Webinar	27 %
Canadian Blood Services Partnership	24 %
Palliative Care Postcard Campaign	22 %
Earth Day (April 22)	13 %
Mental Health Postcard Campaign	9 %
World Water Day (March 22)	9 %
Earth Action Initiative (September)	4 %

Communications: The national chairperson of communications was interested in knowing more about how members and councils communicate within the League and received the following feedback:

Method of Communication	Prevalence
Email	76%
Telephone call	36%
Parish bulletin	34%
Meetings	22%
Parish and CWL websites	8%
Postal mail	8%
Personal interaction/word of mouth	7%
Facebook page	6%
Parish bulletin boards	5%
Pulpit announcements	4%

Social media usage and social media awareness has been a large part of the national marketing campaigns, with almost all marketing efforts put into creating digital assets and promoting them through digital means, such as Facebook and Instagram. In 2022, the national level launched a new website designed to draw in those with values similar to League members. Called catholicwomenunite.ca, the new website was designed to draw women to the League’s official website by offering a degree of engagement with those who would provide their email addresses and consent to being contacted by the marketing agency.

The spring issue of *The Canadian League* magazine was circulated in digital format only, to reduce strain on the national treasury while the League awaited the results of the proposed per capita fee increase. Once the fee increase was approved in August by the majority of members across the country, it became financially feasible to once again produce all issues of the magazine in hard copy for members who preferred this mode of delivery.



Organizational Structure and Statistics

NATIONAL COUNCIL

11

Provincial
Councils

34

Diocesan
Councils

1,094

Parish Councils

60,000

Members

The League was saddened by the loss of 29 parish councils that chose to leave the organization and 21 others that chose not to renew the memberships of women in their councils but celebrated the return of 17 others and two new councils. The League gained almost 3,800 members who either were new to the League or had chosen to renew their membership.

Organizational Renewal

Recognizing the service-oriented mission of the organization demands youthful energy and action, and further recognizing a resistance of existing members to take on leadership roles to help the League achieve its mission, the national executive struck a committee in 2017 to develop a strategic plan to address these and other issues faced by the membership.

The steering committee generated 50 strategies to move the League in the direction set in the 17 objectives approved in 2017. These 50 strategies were tested at diocesan and provincial conventions. With feedback from more than 4,000 members from conventions, the steering committee determined which strategies would have the most significant impact and should be addressed first over a five-year period of implementation.

A synopsis of the tremendous effort put forward in 2022 by volunteers to advance the League into the 21st century based on the extensive research done by members yields the following remarkable resources designed to assist councils:

- Balanced Meeting Postcards
- Catholic Social Teaching Institutions
- Community and the Common Good
- Faith Committee Toolkit
- How to Actively Engage Members
- Intergenerational Benefits
- Joy of Leadership
- Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- List of Spiritual Retreat Centres
- Misconceptions Workshop
- Newsletter Template
- Option for Poor and Vulnerable

- Service Committee Toolkit
- Simplifying Meetings Guidelines
- Social Justice Committee Toolkit

Love for the League and the deep commitment of these members who so generously offered their time and talent to embrace the future was awe-inspiring for all who witnessed their work. Volunteer efforts to the end of 2022 totaled a tremendous 13,226 hours. A special thank you must be extended to Sharon Ciebin, Christa Grillmair, Jacqueline Nogier and Sr. Susan Scott along with all members and leads of the working groups.





Leadership and Recognition

Through its system of election to office and its organizational structure, The Catholic Women's League of Canada offers opportunities for leadership, personal and spiritual development with increasing levels of responsibility and at a pace chosen by the member. With 11 positions at the national level, 132 at the provincial level and 408 at the diocesan level, a total of 551 senior leadership opportunities to serve "For God and Canada" exist.

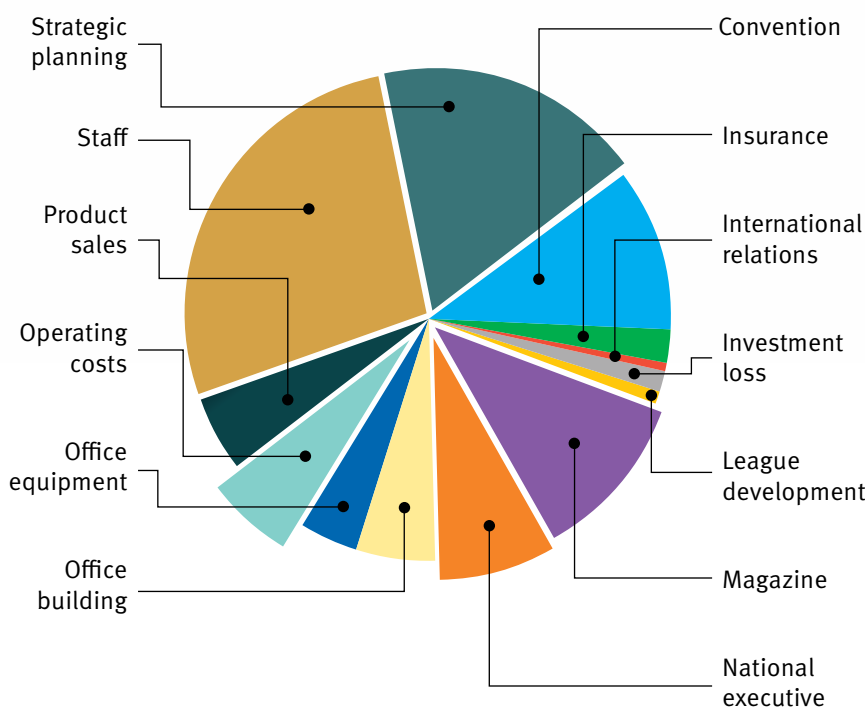
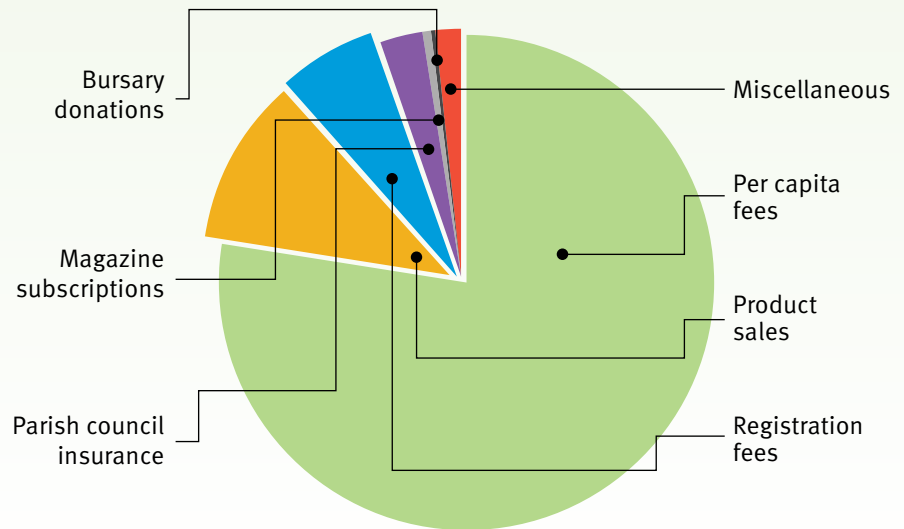
Five members were added to the rolls of Bellelle Guerin award recipients, bringing the total to 218 members or 0.4% of the membership. An additional 154 members received a maple leaf service pin, bringing the total to 4,224 members or 7.0% of the membership.



Financial Information

Recognizing the League had experienced operating deficits for a number of years and also that an investment of more than \$1,000,000 would be needed to re-vision the League so it could evolve into the organization members had been requesting for almost two decades, the national executive received news of a successful vote to increase the national per capita fee, a process that involved all parish councils across Canada.

REVENUE RECEIVED	
Per capita fees	\$ 823,272
Product sales	\$ 115,299
Registration fees	\$ 68,100
Parish council insurance	\$ 31,565
Magazine subscriptions	\$ 3,816
Bursary donations	\$ 4,038
Miscellaneous	\$ 16,818
\$ 1,062,908	



EXPENDITURES	
Convention	\$ 162,527
Insurance	\$ 31,593
International relations	\$ 6,052
Investment loss	\$ 22,323
League development	\$ 13,264
Magazine	\$ 160,408
National executive	\$ 117,055
Office building	\$ 77,060
Office equipment	\$ 54,735
Operating costs	\$ 86,273
Product sales	\$ 75,344
Staff	\$ 396,022
Strategic planning	\$ 264,361
\$ 1,467,017	



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

C-702 Scotland Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3M 1X5
Tel: (888) 656-4040
Fax: (888) 831-9507
Website: cwl.ca
E-mail: info@cwl.ca