



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Past President Handbook

Revised 2023

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League Objects

The objects of the League shall be to unite Catholic women of Canada

1. to achieve individual and collective spiritual development
2. to promote the teachings of the Catholic church
3. to exemplify the Christian ideal in home and family life
4. to protect the sanctity of life
5. to enhance the role of women in church and society
6. to recognize the human dignity of all people everywhere
7. to uphold and defend Christian education and values in the modern world
8. to contribute to the understanding and growth of religious freedom, social justice, peace and harmony

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.

Duties of Past President

The past president at any level of the League shall

- a) serve her council and president in a consultative capacity. She may advise and assist the president using her experience and expertise as a member of the council concerned.
- b) be responsible for the archives and history of her council. If a public archives facility is used as a repository for items of historical value, the past president should identify all items in a catalogue format, retaining a copy for the council records. The history of a council is preserved through scrapbooks, photographs and council minutes. The past president should be responsible for these important books so members will have a permanent record of the work accomplished by their council.
- c) facilitate and encourage the study and implementation of the *Constitution & Bylaws*. The past president should help members to become knowledgeable about the *Constitution & Bylaws* and should help the president to conduct the affairs of the council accordingly. Any questions related to the interpretation of the *Constitution & Bylaws* shall be referred to the national past president.
- d) forward to national office any proposed revisions to the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* by December 1st of each year.
- e) be aware that updated pages to the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* are forwarded annually to presidents at all levels.
- f) be prepared to assist the council in developing a parish council manual of policy and procedure if it does not have one or reviewing it annually if it does have one. The vice-president at the next level can provide assistance in developing or revising this document. (See appendix).
- g) submit an annual report. The process and method for compiling the annual reports at other levels and the deadlines for doing so are set by provincial executives and communicated within their provincial council according to the best practice in their region. Diocesan and parish councils should seek instruction from provincial executives no later than September to ensure they have the instructions they need to complete their portion of the annual report (see Guidelines for Reporting). A copy of her monthly and annual reports must be filed with the secretary.

Archives

Archives are important historical material from which information, inspiration and enthusiasm for the League may be derived. They also serve as permanent, lasting records of the achievements of the organization.

For the League, archives are the complete records of the organization—minutes, accounts, correspondence, *Constitution & Bylaws*, handbooks, manuals and all items used in the administrative work of the League. *The National Manual of Policy and Procedure*, Appendix 5: Archives Guidelines for League History Provincial, Diocesan and Parish Councils provides detailed information on archiving all types of League materials.

The records of the organization must be reviewed every two years and material of significant and lasting historic interest selected, while items considered temporary or of no intrinsic value are discarded.

When this work has been completed, remaining material should be arranged so that all material pertaining to each officer is filed together and the file is clearly marked with the name of the officer and appropriate years. Names of executive members and years in office should be marked on the outside of each file folder.

As the archives are compiled, categorized and placed in marked files, an index of all materials contained in the archives should be prepared by the past president and passed on to her successor. This provides continuity so that the system and order will be continued. It is the duty of the executive at each level to provide for the safe storage of these valuable records, preferably in a permanent location.

In addition, the past president should keep a scrapbook in which she keeps press clippings, photographs and other publicity items pertaining to her term of office. This scrapbook should record the name and date of the newspaper from which the clippings were taken and indicate on the cover the subject, dates, years and name of the president and chairperson.

Parish, Diocesan and Provincial Levels

- Archives should be kept in a locked filing cabinet on church property or in a secure facility at the diocesan/provincial archives location.
- A review of all archival materials should be undertaken by the immediate past president or by a member with archival interest appointed by the president, who could serve as ongoing archivist for the council.
- Every two years, an index of archived items should be updated and submitted to the president and noted in the minutes.

Parish archives should include:

- the original charter framed and displayed, if possible
- minutes of executive/general meetings; these are the permanent record of council activities and should be kept in dated binders
 - Note that the secretary should retain minutes and motion books from the previous two terms only; these should be transferred to the archival binders after six years
- all accounting records (including cheques and receipts) should be kept for five years
- a separate binder for other important information related to the life of the parish council
- a list of parish presidents/spiritual advisors/council executives with names and terms of office
- a list of recipients of maple leaf service pins/League pins/diocesan and provincial awards/life memberships with names and dates of presentations

Other possible inclusions:

- a two- to three-page summary of highlights of each past president's term

- annual reports
- sample of newsletters
- scrapbooks and/or albums and/or electronic storage devices labelled with dates and events
- special project file with financial statements
- written histories

The *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*, Appendix 5: Archives Guidelines for League History Provincial, Diocesan and Parish Councils provides detailed information on archiving all types of League materials.

Guidelines for Reporting

These guidelines for reporting conform to the *Constitution & Bylaws*. Also see the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*, which provides detailed information on reporting under the heading “Guidelines for Annual Written Reports.”

1. Have you attended meetings in a consultative capacity?
2. Have you worked at updating council’s archives?
3. Is the history of your council kept up to date? Have you added documents to the history?
4. Did you facilitate the study and implementation of:
 - a. *Constitution & Bylaws*? If yes, how?
 - b. *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*? If yes, how?
 - c. Other? If yes, how?
5. What other duties assigned by the president did you perform in your role as past president?
6. Give recommendations and/or ideas pertaining to the role of past president.

Resources and References

The Canadian League magazine—copies of individual articles are available from national office.

Communiqués from the national executive/board are regularly posted on the League website (cwl.ca).

The following resources are available from national office:

- Archive Guidelines for League History: Provincial, Diocesan and Parish Councils, *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*, Appendix 5

Be familiar with and promote the use of:

- *Constitution & Bylaws*
- *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*

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Appendix: How to Prepare a Parish Council Manual of Policy and Procedure

Procedures

- The president appoints an *ad hoc* committee, usually composed of three past presidents; the chairperson could be the vice-president or another member (may vary from level to level)
- Minutes of council general meetings for the past six years should be made available to the committee
- Date set for completion of task (three to six months)
- Draft manual presented to parish executive for review/approval followed by presentation to members at a general meeting—requires motion/second/approval; copies should be made available to members

Contents

1. Meetings—executive, general (place, time, day)
2. Policies as established by motions or long-standing customs
 - On death of League member or immediate family members, which should be defined
 - Mass intentions (monthly or other)
 - Preparation and presentation of council budget
 - Paid expenses for voting/accredited delegates to diocesan annual meetings of members/conventions (travel, hotel, meals)
 - Paid expenses for members or delegates to other annual meetings of members/conventions (travel, hotel, meals)
 - Travel and/or allowable expenses for other meetings, especially for the council president
 - Safekeeping arrangements for council historical records (location/updates)
 - Petty cash or advances for elected officers
 - Presentation of special pins; e.g., maple leaf service (procedures, criteria, ceremonies)
 - Presentation of going-away gifts to members
 - Honoraria/travel allowance/gifts to guests

- Remembrances for members who are ill, hospitalized, celebrating wedding anniversaries or other special occasions
- Council responsibilities on parish site (altar, kitchen, supplies, other)
- Funeral luncheons
- Ongoing commitments: e.g., diocesan seminarian fund, annual scholarships, gifts (first communion, confirmation), annual parish projects, save-a-family plan, etc.
- Gifts to pastor/associate pastor/parish worker
- Ongoing special events sponsored by the council
- Solicitation of gifts/advertising from outside sources

Other
