



# The Canadian League



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# National President's Message

Shari Guinta



*"When you say to God, Our Father,  
He has His ear right next to your lips."*

St. Andre Bessette

As I take on the presidency of this amazing organization named The Catholic Women's League of Canada, I am humbled by the support and prayers offered as I took office. And prayers, not only for me, but for the entire national executive. The amazing women that sit at the national executive table all appreciate your prayers and support. I welcome them on your behalf and a particular welcome to National Spiritual Advisor Auxiliary Bishop Wayne Lobsinger (Hamilton).



The annual meeting of members (AMM) in Saint John, New Brunswick last August was a success in all areas. Great comments have come in from across the country. The availability of online viewing was very much appreciated. Plans are in place already for Saskatoon in 2024!

The new theme, which will come into effect in January 2024, is *Here I am Lord; send me*. I was thrilled with the kind comments and acceptance of the theme and graphic that was presented at the AMM. I encourage councils to embrace the theme and discuss ways they are being called to serve, with a project or special focus.

League members are called to serve, speaking and advocating for those who cannot speak for themselves, and active in the areas of service and social justice, fortified by faith, in keeping with the League's three core values.

As councils at all levels transition into the new model, I am pleased to see the eager acceptance of the League's forward mission. The work councils do, must do and will do, is streamlined and every bit as important, dedicated and diverse. The national executive/board listened to members across the country through the Unity Outreach initiative begun by then National President Fran Lucas and task forces have been put into place to plan for the future.

These are exciting times for the League and for all members. I encourage you to reach out and share this excitement with all women in our parishes and community.

*Here I am Lord; send me.* †

## WELCOME TO NEW & REACTIVATED COUNCILS

St. Charles Borromeo

Sacred Heart Church of the First People Parish Council

St. Columbanus Parish Council Elgin

# From the National Spiritual Advisor



**Most Rev. Wayne Lobsinger, Auxiliary Bishop of Hamilton**  
National Spiritual Advisor

Let me introduce myself to you. I am Most Rev. Wayne Lobsinger, Auxiliary Bishop of Hamilton, and the new national spiritual advisor for The Catholic Women's League of Canada. I was born and raised in the Waterloo, Ontario region, within the Diocese of Hamilton. I was ordained a priest for the diocese on May 7, 1994, and served in four parishes as associate pastor and four parishes as pastor. On November 21, 2020, Pope Francis named me as titular bishop of Gemellae in Numidia and auxiliary bishop of Hamilton. Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, my episcopal ordination date was changed three times. I was finally ordained on April 18, 2021. I feel honoured to have been asked to serve the League and look forward to journeying with you.

I wish to begin by thanking former National Spiritual Advisor Most Rev. Stephen Jenson (Prince George) for his five years of dedicated service and the many invaluable pieces of advice that he has given me. May the Lord bless His Excellency and continue to guide him in his apostolic ministry. "Well done, good and faithful servant of the Lord" (Mt. 25-23).

When one enters a new role, it is hoped that the first days are smooth and free of any great struggles. For the most part, this has been the case, but on my first day as national spiritual advisor, I was asked by the national executive/board for my thoughts on how members have been seeking God's blessings on one another. Currently, members extend and raise their hand in a sign of blessing and sing, "May the blessing of the Lord be upon you..." So, at my first executive meeting, I was asked what I thought about this practice. (Welcome to the League.) Extending the

hand with palm(s) down is a very liturgical gesture the clergy use to call down the Holy Spirit, impart God's blessing, consecrate the sacred Eucharist and absolve the sinner. The Acts of the Apostles clearly show the imposition of hands to confer priestly authority. Being such a profound priestly gesture, the question comes, is it proper for members to use the same motion when asking God to send His blessing upon another?

This does not deny in any way the power of the laity to seek God's blessings upon another. Parents rightly bless their children. Christians say, "God bless you," when someone sneezes. But are these the same blessing that a priest imparts in his role as *Alter Christus*—another Christ?

To avoid confusion, I would suggest the following change to the League's current practice. Instead of seeking God's blessing by raising and extending one's hands with palms down, I would like to suggest that members simply extend their hands straight out with palms up as a sign of requesting God's blessing on the other, rather than of imparting a blessing as done by the clergy. As human beings, members feel a need to accompany their prayers with actions. Hopefully, this new action will fulfill the desire for members to use their bodies in prayer and also help members as the people of God to recognize the different types of blessings that exist.

I look forward to serving all members and supporting

the League's National President Shari Guinta and her team.

May the blessing of God be upon all members as they serve "For God and Canada." †





# Welcome New and Returning National Executive!



*Back row, left to right:*

**B.C. & Yukon Provincial President** Catherine L'Heureux  
**Alberta Mackenzie Provincial President** Mary Hunt  
**Prince Edward Island Provincial President** Karen Rossiter  
**Manitoba Provincial Vice-President** Lucille Rossington  
**Military Ordinariate Provincial President** Theresa Schopf  
**New Brunswick Provincial President** Madonna Clark  
**National Chairperson of Social Justice** Glenda Carson

*Middle row, left to right:*

**National Chairperson of Service** Joline Belliveau  
**National Chairperson of Faith** Rolande Chernichan  
**Nova Scotia Provincial President** Jessie Parkinson  
**Saskatchewan Provincial President** Connie Crichton

**Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial President**

Linda Corbett

**Ontario Provincial President** Linda Squarzolo

**Quebec Provincial President** Alice Noble

*Front row, left to right:*

**National Secretary-Treasurer** Dorothy Johansen

**National Past President** Fran Lucas

**National President** Shari Guinta

**National Vice-President** Betty Colaneri

**National Spiritual Advisor** Most Rev Wayne Lobsinger  
(Hamilton)

*Missing:*

**Manitoba Provincial President** Crystal Reiter

# Highlights from the 103<sup>rd</sup> National Annual Meetings of Members



**Fran Hickmott**  
Guest Journalist

Delegates were welcomed at the Saint John Trade and Convention Centre in Saint John, New Brunswick for the 103<sup>rd</sup> National Annual Meeting of Members (AMM) of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, August 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>.

Sunday morning offered a trolley tour of the City of Saint John, the oldest incorporated city in Canada. Participants enjoyed a few of the many historic landmarks—Queen Square Farmer's Market, Fort Howe National Historic Site, Fort La Tour National Historic Site and Carleton Martello Tower National Historic Site.

Sunday afternoon featured the resolutions dialogue where members were allowed to preview and discuss the proposed resolution. Questions from the floor were also encouraged.

The official opening of the meeting, the Eucharistic celebration and a reception were held at Holy Redeemer Church. After the pageantry of the flag procession Mistress of Ceremonies and New Brunswick Past Provincial President June Brown welcomed attendees and introduced dignitaries who brought messages of welcome including New Brunswick Provincial Spiritual Advisor Fr. David Fulton;

New Brunswick Provincial President Madonna Clark; National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Stephen Jensen (Prince George); Mayor of Saint John Donna Reardon; Member of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick The Hon. Trevor Holder; and Past State Deputy of the Knights of Columbus Gilles Pelletier. National President Fran Lucas officially opened the AMM and welcomed all attendees.

Bishop Christian Riesbeck (Saint John) was the celebrant of the opening mass. Following the mass, attendees were treated to a wonderful wine and cheese reception prepared by the women of the parish and the Knights of Columbus.

Monday morning, the first day of business sessions, began with the League prayer and the reading of the land acknowledgement Madonna Clark. The meeting was then called back to order by Fran Lucas who spoke about the AMM and the need for reduced numbers since the COVID pandemic had interrupted the natural flow of national conventions. She quoted the words of Blessed Marie Leonie Paradis, "Let us work my daughters, we will rest in Heaven". Bishop Jensen also greeted the delegates.



Fran Lucas introduced the national executive, and the honorary life members. National Secretary-Treasurer Janet McLean read the notice calling the meeting. Planning committee member Marilyn Smith read the credentials report. National Past President Anne-Marie Gorman read the standing rules, which were adopted by the delegates. The agenda and the minutes of 2022 were both approved. The convention committee was introduced, and correspondence were read.

The provincial presidents' reports were the last item of business on the agenda before the half hour health break. These reports were so encouraging as attendees listened to how the theme *Catholic and Living It!* played out across Canada. While exercising caution, parish councils continued their work and succeeded in making their members feel comfortable attending meetings. The Unity Outreach initiative was another highlight of the reports with many councils already putting it into action.

The morning moved along as scheduled and at 11:00 a.m. Auxiliary Bishop Wayne Lobsinger (Hamilton) began the Eucharistic celebration. The morning session concluded with Bishop Jensen leading the attendees in the Angelus and grace.

The meeting reconvened at 1:30 p.m. with "The Synodality Prayer", adapted from the World Union of Catholic Women's Organization's (WUCWO) prayer service "Living Synodality - Enlarge the Space of your Tent".

The business session began with the oral reports from national officers. In her report Fran Lucas spoke about how well respected the League is throughout Canada. At the end her report members showed their appreciation of her outstanding leadership with a standing ovation.

Janet McLean was then introduced and thanked for stepping up to take over the position when former National Secretary-Treasurer Marie Rackley resigned her position because of health issues.

The last report came from National Chairperson of Community Life Faith Anderson who introduced National Chairperson of Resolutions Rolande Chernichan. One resolution "was presented for consideration. The discussion proceeded with amendments, amendments to amendments, and finally Resolution 2023.01 Combating

Textile Waste in Canada was adopted as amended by national council.

The final item on the agenda for Monday was the Commissioning Service for New Life Members. Such a beautiful ceremony to witness as the new life members walked through the traditional arch of blessing formed by the hands of honorary life members and having their hands blessed by Bishop Jensen.

Monday's activities continued into the evening with a meal of fish and chips followed by a night of fun called Little Country & Little Rock'n Roll with local musicians Debbie Harrity and Del Worden. Members kicked up their heels in their country and rock n' roll attire while others relaxed and enjoyed the music after a full day of business.

Tuesday saw members ready to start the final day of business at 8:30 a.m. An adaptation of morning prayer for the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was led by National Chairperson of Spiritual Development Cathy Bouchard. A blessing from Bishop Jensen concluded the morning prayer.

The League of the Future: Year 5, a presentation from the committee struck to implement the strategic plan was made. (The plan to revitalize the League had its beginning in Prince Edward Island at an annual national convention in 2017.) A daunting task for sure! Delegates listened in awe as each committee member described their role in bringing the project to a conclusion. A short question period followed then Fran Lucas asked all committee members to stand and be acknowledged for their hard work and dedication.

After a short health break business continued with the credentials report and more reports of national officers. The instructed vote on the proposed amendment to the *Constitution & Bylaws* was conducted by Anne-Marie Gorman. The proposal was adopted unanimously.

The last item on the morning agenda was the ceremony to archive resolutions and position papers. Anne-Marie Gorman placed the book with the resolutions to be archived on the table as the resolution titles were read in turn by Rolande Chernichan and National Chairperson of Legislation Glenda Carson.



Life members enjoyed a luncheon with special guest speaker Sr. Mary Beth McCurdy. Her advice to the life members was to “keep going, keep growing”. Sr. McCurdy quoted Pope Francis, “This is not an era of change but a change of era”, and suggested reading *Let Us Dream*, a book written by Pope Francis.

The memorial service for deceased members and spiritual advisors started the afternoon proceedings. Each provincial president carried a red rose and placed it in a vase on the table in front of the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Fran Lucas carried a white rose to represent the spiritual advisors.

The afternoon session began with the 2024 convention committee presentation from Saskatoon Diocesan Council. The subtheme *Praise on the Prairies* was introduced as they invited members to join them for the 104<sup>th</sup> annual national convention August 11-14, 2024 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Following Bishop Jensen’s oral report, Fran Lucas announced the new national spiritual advisor, Bishop Lobsinger. Shari Guinta announced the new theme for 2024/25 as *Here I am Lord, send me*. Shari shared how she chose the theme, how she had been thinking about it for some time, and after discussions with Bishop Lobsinger, she knew it was the right choice.

Marilyn Smith presented the final registration report which totaled 152 voting and accredited delegates, hierarchy, spiritual advisors, resource persons and guests.

The final business of the day was the election of the new national officers—National President Shari Guinta; National Vice-President Betty Colaneri; National Secretary-Treasurer Dorothy Johansen; and the national chairpersons of standing committees (faith, service and social justice) Joline Belliveau, Rolande Chernichan and Glenda Carson.

The closing Eucharistic celebration and the installation of the new national officers and spiritual advisor was celebrated at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

The gala banquet was the final official event of the AMM. The ceremonial procession to the gala led by a local bagpiper into a room of clapping welcomed the national executive, dignitaries and invited guests. Co-chairpersons June Brown and Mary Donovan welcomed everyone, and Fran Lucas thanked New Brunswick for a job well done.

During the dinner Betty Colaneri along with several of national officers roasted outgoing president Fran Lucas with a skit called “Frantastic”. It was great entertainment and enjoyed by all.

The reduced numbers didn’t appear to affect the air of fellowship throughout the two days. Members walked about enjoying the architecture and talked about the fact that Saint John is the oldest incorporated city in Canada. The Saint John River and the scenery did not go unnoticed. The trolley tour of the city was definitely a highlight of the days spent in Saint John. †





# Oral Reports

## NATIONAL PRESIDENT

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**Fran Lucas**  
Edmonton, Alberta

What a difference one year makes! It feels like a near-180° turnaround! And here we are at our first-ever in-person national annual meeting of members (AMM)!

The types of activities and events that occurred in councils across Canada that

I'm reporting for the past year as compared with those I reported on the previous year are certainly different, with these being much more encouraging, well received by members and with a much-needed personal and in-person touch.

Attending 11 conventions at the provincial and diocesan level, plus numerous council events, has demonstrated to me that councils and members are on the move again, and there's no stopping them now. There has always been a thankfulness exhibited when members come together, but at events this year, it was more pronounced and, in many cases, emotional. The numbers at the various conventions were not necessarily the same as in pre-pandemic conventions, but the quality and attention to detail were enjoyed by all. My personal opportunity to meet hundreds of women and their spiritual advisors and bishops was an opportunity to build relationships that I benefited from immediately and continue to do so. From meeting a member who proudly spoke of being a third-generation council president to hearing speakers who motivated and encouraged members to hearing reports of amazing accomplishments that are often never heard outside of that audience was gratifying. "Sharing" was one word I repeatedly heard as something we need to be better at. For instance, anything online offered to an individual council could be opened to all councils to participate in. Or, when a standing committee chairperson creates a workshop for her diocese, why couldn't it be shared with all provinces?

The national theme, *Catholic and Living It!*, took on a life of its own in councils in very creative ways. Lively presentations and events were augmented with small, large and very large signage emphasizing the meaning of that particular council's initiative.

Individual councils at different levels contributed financially and by volunteering in many ways to support the *Walking Together* visits for Truth and Reconciliation. I was fortunate to be on a committee of Archbishop Richard Smith's (Edmonton), helping with Pope Francis' visit and then attending the mass. From attending mass in tiny churches in remote areas to large cathedrals to the cathedral of all cathedrals, Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome, I was honoured to represent The Catholic Women's League of Canada. Being part of an audience with Pope Francis—being within feet of Pope Francis twice in less than a year—was indeed unbelievable.

Online meetings were effective but not a replacement for the benefits of meeting in person, as I heard echoed at every visit. To continue meeting and building relationships when at conventions, I challenged members to hold a small tea party where at least one attendee who was not well known by the others was invited. The one I held was affirmation that this was a meaningful and fun way to get to know others with favourable results. Many such events resulted in new members. Photographs of these parties were posted on the League's various social media platforms.

In February, National President-Elect and Chairperson of Organization Shari Guinta, National Chairperson of Resolutions Rolande Chernichan and I went to Ottawa and National Chairperson of Legislation Glenda Carson joined us virtually. The meetings with various offices of ministers at the federal level were rewarding and continue to bear fruit through the relationships built during and after the visits. Lunch with Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič (Apostolic Nuncio to Canada) at his residence and a meeting at the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops office rounded out the trip.

The delegation found the League is recognized and respected in many places throughout Canada. It was not a surprise but an affirmation of the impact of members' work when an organization such as Novalis approached the League when it was honouring Catholic women who made a significant contribution to the Canadian Catholic world and asked the League for information on one such member.

I was delighted and honoured to be able to represent the League at the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations in Assisi, Italy, in May, along with six other Canadian members and three Ukrainian Catholic Women's League members.

On several occasions, I was made aware that information in the parish mailings sent to councils is not always getting to the individual members of the executive. These memos are a direct link from the national executive to the parish with vital information that needs to be shared. Even if a particular executive position is not filled, I encourage you to find a creative way to ensure all parish mailing information is made available to the entire executive and a summarized version is shared with members.

To see the League's membership numbers at an all-time low has the potential of being very discouraging. Yet, hearing the many successes of recruiting new members is so joyful and encouraging that there is true hope that we will see a steady increase in the months and years ahead. Many councils have had 12, 15 and 20 new members join! How has your council grown? The work of the implementation committee and the many resources available to make members and, therefore, councils stronger is truly helping in that regard. The Unity Outreach initiative can only add to the success based on the comments I have heard during my visits across Canada. Members and executive councils are thankful for the opportunity to express their needs and to know a plan is in place to help wherever possible. That plan that is excitedly being worked on is to strike three task forces to help the board to better serve the provincial executives and, by extension, councils at other levels. Each provincial executive will plan for its dioceses and each diocese for its parishes based on the reports they received. All of us need to be part of the outreach and do things that ensure unity at and of all levels.

Identifying time for education was always valuable. Here is some very basic League information I shared while reporting during my travels:

- There are 60,000 members, 333 life members and 15 current honorary life members, and in a couple of days, I will be number 16!
- There are 33 diocesan councils with 1,097 parishes in the 11 provincial councils.
- There were 10 board committees and five *ad hoc* committees these past two years. The five *ad hoc* committees include life member, briefs and petitions, deepening relationships with Indigenous League members, convention/AMM guideline updates and website redesign.

Feeling the need to keep members aware of the places I visited and the events where I represented them, I set a two-year goal of submitting monthly "President Outings" messages to be posted on the national website and social media. From anniversaries to Christmas receptions, the National Council of Catholic Women conference, Ukrainian ribbon-making, to a group praying the rosary in a beautiful green space—all events were shared with members.

Having taped a video message for Christmas Day 2022, I attempted to do a better job with my Easter message in 2023. In these ways and by the visits in person and sometimes virtually, I continually strived to be visible to and engage with members. When a unique request came in from an Ontario diocesan president for the national officers to tape a message of appreciation by naming each council and president in their message, which would be used at their diocesan convention, the officers embraced that request.

Over my term, I've been given many beautiful books that councils created in celebration of various milestones, including that of the League's national 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. These are wonderful testimonies to the love of the League and a desire to maintain that history for those who follow. I've enjoyed reading them all. There were also banquets, dinners, luncheons and breakfasts to celebrate many of those milestones, bringing together members, friends and members of the parish community. Again, a real privilege for me to attend and participate in.

My two years, 24 months, 104 weeks, 730 days as your national president have been a gift. To experience what I have experienced would likely have similarities for all the previous national presidents. There would also be a smattering of differences because of the growth in the League, changes to the world and opportunities that arose. For every one of them, I am grateful. I am confident that with the friends I have made, I will never be concerned if I ever find myself in need in any part of Canada. I know there is a member I could reach out to, and without hesitation, they would be there for me.

We are all familiar with the disciples' hearts burning within when Jesus revealed himself as the risen Christ. Having said yes to the opportunities we have been afforded through membership in the League, we continue to have hearts burning within as we do the work of the League in service "For God and Canada."

My life has been enriched by being a member, and especially by my time as your national president. †

## NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ADVISOR



**Bishop Stephen Jensen**

Prince George,  
British Columbia

Almost 70 years ago, a German theologian spoke at a conference on the state of the church and her future. At that time, the church seemed to be flourishing, but the theologian could recognize the growing trend

of secularization in society and what he said probably shocked his audience.

He predicted that in the coming years, the church would lose much of her influence and power in Europe, maybe its material wealth, too. The future church would be numerically smaller but more intentional, as Bishop Lobsinger spoke about at mass yesterday, and countercultural, committed to the mission of announcing the gospel to a world that has lost faith.

The theologian who spoke such prophetic words long ago was Joseph Ratzinger, better known to us as Pope Benedict XVI. What he foresaw is a pattern repeated over the centuries of the church's life. We can all recognize the effects of secularization and the loss of faith, and perhaps the disruption of normal life caused by the pandemic accelerated the trend for some people. But, as ever in history, God's grace is at work. We've heard in the reports at this annual meeting of members evidence of that. Let me mention a few signs of hope.

The lockdowns helped us remember the marginalized, those members of the League who are isolated and unable to be connected by technology. I heard the phrase "leave no one behind," a positive development that we might not be thinking of without this public health crisis.

The last two years have also forced us to adopt new technologies that connect members more easily and give them the potential to work more efficiently and effectively.

Now that the pandemic has receded, the League is transitioning to focusing its work on the three pillars adopted through the strategic planning process. As members and councils become familiar with thinking in terms of faith, service and social justice, a new era is dawning for the League.

Much has changed since Joseph Ratzinger offered his prediction about the state of the future church, but God is the Lord of history and works to bring good out of every negative trend in human affairs. With confidence in His grace and the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel, we go forward in faith, hope and charity. †

## **NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER**



**Janet McLean**  
Dorval, Quebec

Since assuming the position of national secretary-treasurer on November 1, 2022, it has been my pleasure to work with the very competent staff at national office. The day-to-day secretarial functions were performed efficiently

by Executive Secretary Amanda McCormick, and the

accounting duties were completed by Senior Accounting Clerk Valroy Anderson, all overseen by Executive Director Kim Scammell. I have personally answered letters, telephone calls and emails from members across Canada. Monthly bank and investment statements were checked, and questions were raised when necessary. I studied the monthly financial statements, questioning revenue and expenditures and comparing them to the budget. I conducted a thorough review of the December 2022 audit papers and audited financial statements. The 2022 audited statements were presented to the national executive/board at its March 2023 meeting, questions were answered, and the statements were approved by the board.

Revenue was below budget due to several factors—a continued decline in membership, lower than anticipated product sales (although sales did increase substantially from 2021) and lower than projected registration for the 2022 national convention. Expenditures were lower than budgeted, but the League was left with a difference of -\$381,786 between revenues and expenditures. The investment market fluctuated in 2022, but at December 31<sup>st</sup>, the League had an unrealized loss on investments of \$137,750, which left the organization with a net investment loss of \$22,323. It is important to note the actual cash income from investments was \$133,498, and the good news is that investments have rebounded in 2023.

Regarding the six-month statement of revenue and expenditures from January 1 to June 30, 2023, revenue to date is \$1,551,199, which reflects the payment of 56,459 memberships, 55,432 of which are for 2023. By mid-June, 77 parish councils had not yet submitted per capita fees for this year. Expenditures to the end of June are \$751,748, which leaves net revenue at the end of June of \$799,451. The revenue and expenditures to December 31<sup>st</sup> is estimated to reflect a net revenue from operations at \$9,775, in other words, a break-even. The projected net income from investments is \$186,000; however, this depends entirely on the market value of the League's investments. It is estimated that the League will not have any unrealized losses on investments as of December 31<sup>st</sup>. It should be noted that the actual return on investments since switching investment firms has been 6.9% per annum. Given the volatility in the market since 2020 due to the pandemic and then the war between Ukraine and Russia, members can be pleased with the results.

As of writing this, there is sufficient cash on hand to meet the expected expenditures to the end of the year. This is the first time in several years the League will not be required to cash in some of its investments to meet its cash needs, which is a direct result of the per capita fee increase. It is estimated that expenditures at December 31<sup>st</sup> will be below budget. League Development is estimated below budget as one planned program was not implemented, and councils have not accessed the funds available for development days. In addition, the

estimated costs of the strategic plan have been reduced as it enters its fifth and final year.

Questions have been raised about payment for members to attend the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) General Assembly in Italy this past May. These are expenses under international relations. As per League policy, only the national president and national president-elect have their expenses paid to attend the assembly, which takes place every four years. In addition, when the League has a representative on the WUCWO board, her expenses are paid for her four-year term. This year, Honorary Life Member Barbara Dowding was elected to the WUCWO board as the Canadian representative and North American regional vice-president. Her expenses to attend the general assembly in May were also paid.

In 2022 councils generously contributed \$10,000 more than in 2021 to the national voluntary funds. This is fantastic and all parish councils that contributed should be congratulated. In these difficult financial times, it is a credit to all members that they have been able to raise funds to help those in need.

I would like to assure all members that their concerns about the per capita fee increase are taken very seriously. The board has the interests of members at heart and works to ensure the funds of the League are used so that The Catholic Women's League of Canada is run efficiently and effectively. †

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Kim Scammell**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

In the words of Pope Francis, “Every man, every woman who has to take up the service of government, must ask themselves two questions: ‘Do I love my people in order to serve them better? Am I humble and do I listen to everybody, to diverse opinions

in order to choose the best path.’ If you don’t ask those questions, your governance will not be good.” A remarkable observation that impacts large organizations, including non-profits like the League.

The national executive/board has modelled these words in the past number of months by committing to a nationwide listening process, which we are calling Unity Outreach.

Unity Outreach began about 18 months ago in a board workshop where members were asked to define the word “crisis” and identify what crisis would look like in the League. Board members identified the pandemic as being

a breaking point for many councils that were experiencing several issues for some time—such as member apathy, lack of interest, lack of connection between councils at the same and at other levels, and the sense of being overwhelmed and undervalued.

The board brainstormed five different strategies to address the issues that had been identified. Twelve months ago, the board chose the one strategy it felt would have the most impact—to rebuild relationships and the connections between members and councils. This reflection was the board fulfilling the first of three responsibilities they have to you—to set strategy and goals.

The board’s second responsibility is to ensure there are adequate resources available to see these strategies and goals through. At the fall 2022 meeting, the board reviewed a bold and courageous operational plan for 2023 to support Unity Outreach and its related budget and adopted each. It was at this time that the board completed its second responsibility to members.

With the plan in place and the budget approved, each national officer visited a provincial executive to roll out the plan—to listen to the members of provincial executives. The provincial officers were then encouraged to do the same and spend time actively listening to the members they serve at the diocesan level about how the provincial executive could best serve them. And diocesan officers were encouraged, too, to go forth and listen to what members of parish councils had to share.

With the information that was received and compiled from the provincial executives, the board just a few days ago chose three priorities to focus on for the next two to three years, ones that every provincial executive mentioned as being roadblocks for them—communications, training and priority-setting, including consultation and collaboration between levels. Task forces have been struck to study and remove these barriers between and among members and councils.

The third responsibility of the board is to provide oversight and monitor improvements. After listening, planning and now acting, you may be assured of the board’s commitment to addressing what ails the League. The national board is being responsive to the needs of the provincial executives and, through them, the needs of the members they represent.

How is this a report of national office, you might ask? We at the office support the board in its governance efforts. In addition to data processing and administrative and secretarial support, we help the board, volunteers with unique backgrounds, gifts and experiences, to govern one of the most incredible organizations in this country—The Catholic Women’s League of Canada.

But they can’t do it alone. I appeal to provincial and diocesan councils to join in these efforts. Read the reports of your outreach efforts. Reflect, pray and act on what you have heard. Determine what you can do to help the members you serve. †

## PAST PRESIDENT

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**Anne-Marie Gorman**  
Fredericton, New Brunswick

The year 2023 to date has seen much activity. Updates to the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* were adopted at the 2023 mid-year board meeting in March. Following this meeting, I attended the mid-year executive meeting of the B.C.

& Yukon Provincial Council to facilitate the discussion for the Unity Outreach initiative. The information gleaned from the members was submitted to national office, where it was collated with all other provinces and the Military Ordinariate. Follow up with the B.C. & Yukon provincial executive will occur in the fall as per the terms of the Unity Outreach terms of reference.

I met with my provincial counterparts as many completed their terms, to ascertain progress on the initiative regarding parish council policy manuals. This is a work in progress, but I am pleased to say that many councils that have not had a manual previously have developed one. Of course, many councils already had a manual, so they were of help to other provinces that needed assistance. The guidelines on the national website are sufficient, but some councils have developed workshops on the “why and how” regarding manuals of policy and procedure and are happy to share them with others.

The proposed amendment to Part XIV, Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the *Constitution & Bylaws* was circulated and the resulting voting forms have been returned. [The vote of voting delegates was unanimously in favour of the amendments to allow for virtual meetings where circumstances preclude meeting in person.]

One of the main duties of my position was to update the archives. After much delay, I was able to meet in person with the national archives committee—Honorary Life Member Margaret Ann Jacobs, professional archivist Life Member Blanca Stead and myself, and the office liaison casual staff of Deborah Woodbeck and Monique Sass. I cannot emphasize enough the amount of work conducted by Blanca and Margaret Ann and the preparatory work done by Deborah so that we could follow guidelines and leave the archival materials as updated as possible for the time we spent at the office between June 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Besides sorting out duplicate copies of magazines, annual meeting/ convention programs, liturgy books, and report books, we did likewise with annual minutes of executive meetings and conventions. This is an ongoing need. The days and early evenings were full, but for the short time we were there, we accomplished all we could.

We learned that all motions must be kept for three years, only coated paper clips should be used to secure papers, and all staples must be removed from materials before recycling. These may seem like small things, but it is important to know for future work. All histories of councils that were received by the office are in the “Publications” box, so provinces hopefully will have shared or will share a copy of their history with the office for use by future provincial and national archivists.

Several recommendations were made by the committee, some of which will be evident in proposed revisions to the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*.

Finally, an initiative by Novalis to publish a book on Catholic women and their contributions to the church is ongoing. The League was invited to submit a chapter to the yet unpublished book, *The Call of the Heart: Reflections on Women of Faith, Courage and Vision*. After reaching out to the honorary life members for input, Honorary Life Member Irene Lefort offered to draft some material to initiate the League’s chapter. As this is a work in progress, information will be forthcoming as it becomes available. †

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

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**Cathy Bouchard**  
Red Deer, Alberta

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 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 2023 World Day of Prayer under the theme *I have heard about your faith* was shared by the national executive at its winter meeting.

The opportunity to pray a Rosary for Reconciliation in June was shared in communiques. A Lenten retreat was offered along with many other parish, diocesan and provincially organized retreats.

## ORGANIZATION

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**Shari Guinta**  
Waterloo, Ontario

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

The incentive to connect and engage spiritual advisors was continued. Advisors are a gift, offering counsel and, in the case of ordained advisors, offering the sacraments. Spiritual advisors who wished to submit short articles to *The Canadian League* were encouraged to do so. This was intended assist other advisors who may be shy or unsure of how to share their gifts with members. At all levels, building relationships with advisors needs to continue.

The Synod on Synodality will be a lasting gift at all the council levels if members 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 League members, we must develop a charism of dialogue.

Various resources for the faith standing committee are on the national website. *The Toolkit for Faith* 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” that could be opened to the parish. The “Workshop - Our Lady of Good Counsel” is a flexible tool for 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 *Ceremonies Booklet*, *Handbook for Spiritual Advisors* and *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.

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.

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.” The Mission Statement is, “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 puritanism. ... because each of us has the power to make present the living God” (Ilia Delio). We must use our gifts for our sisters and our families, “For God and Canada.” †

It was encouraging to hear from councils across the country that had re-started activities after the pandemic restrictions.

Provincial and diocesan councils have been organizing, visiting councils and offering workshops and presentations

in leadership training as well as membership recruitment and faith programs. The resources from the working groups organized through the implementation committee have been utilized, and it was encouraging to hear about the positive feedback. Much more presentations are needed however, as well as encouragement.

The League has continued a decline in membership, which in some ways was anticipated due to the pandemic, death of older members and demographics, and even a decline in church attendance in general. Several parish councils have decided to become inactive or close altogether, which was hard to accept. Councils were encouraged to think twice before becoming inactive or closing, and diocesan councils worked hard to help them survive. There were some success stories as well. Resources have been designed to help with membership recruitment and retention.

The Unity Outreach initiative began in fall 2022 and has been rolled out across the country. Visits have been made to all provincial and diocesan executives, and parish councils visits are in process. Feedback is being obtained across Canada in the hopes of improving communication and collaboration and realizing the needs of councils. Follow-up has begun and data has been collected for further action. Reports back have been very positive.

I want to promote the *Joy in Leadership* program that is offered as a resource developed through strategic planning initiatives. Leadership development is so important; councils are encouraged to take advantage of the League Development Fund for workshops and presentations. Meetings with provincial chairpersons of organization were held throughout the year, and this helped create a relationship whereby I could learn about initiatives and problems and facilitate information sharing. Other levels are encouraged to do this. The meetings were virtual and cost-effective.

The national website, other websites and *The Canadian League* magazine were the most used resources. The national website has changed and become more user-friendly for members to find resources and information they are looking for. Councils are encouraged to use the resources—no need “to reinvent the wheel”!

The online annual report/surveys were received with thanks. The surveys were modified from last year and will be again this year, taking into consideration the feedback received. Information from these reports comes into national office, is summarized, and one annual report is written to encompass the national organization. This is a more streamlined way of reporting and eliminates the individual reporting from national officers. Reports and particularly reviews of work done, activities and presentations are important and wise planning for future activities within all levels of the League.

The recommendations from an *ad hoc* committee that suggested changes to the criteria for life membership were adopted and put into place last year. Thirteen life members were nominated and were accepted by the national board. These women will help in work done by the League across the country.

Letters will be sent to life members every other year as well, asking them of their willingness to serve and their current interests in areas of service to the League. Councils nominating women should check the criteria to ensure everything is sent in that is needed to process the nomination. †

## CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE



**Dorothy Johansen**  
Edmonton, Alberta

“Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not stay neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one

another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb 10:23-25).

It has been over 60 years that The League has been vocal about members’ opposition to abortion, and after the law against limited cases of abortion was struck down in 1988, Canada allows abortions at any time during pregnancy. As abortion is considered a provincially-supplied medical procedure, it requires each member in her province/territory to advocate for limitations on abortion and increased support for women who decide to choose life. Members also need to continue to support families in raising their children, as the first few years of life can be the most difficult.

In some provinces, an increase in spending for palliative care was recorded, but it was discovered that the medical care code for medical assistance in dying (MAiD) was the same code used for palliative care in several provinces.

Check in your province—are the codes different, one for palliative care and one for MAiD? The codes I’m referring to are the ones doctors use to collect funding from the province.

Of the 10 countries in the world that allow MAiD, Canada has the most progressive regime. While the offering of MAiD to people with mental illness has been granted a short reprieve for implementation, members need to continue to advocate for providing good palliative care and less MAiD to everyone and for palliative care facilities to be allowed to abstain from providing this procedure. Members also need to inform governments that funeral homes and long-term care facilities are not appropriate locations for MAiD.

Euthanasia Prevention Coalition (EPC) is no longer a temporary voluntary fund under national council. This does not mean councils no longer support EPC—it means that members know enough about it to send money directly. Please consider supporting EPC or organizations that provide training, education or advocacy for palliative care and for ending MAiD. As well, consider which palliative care facilities are nearest to you and determine how your council can best support their efforts.

The Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life was established by Pope Francis on August 15, 2016. “The Dicastery has responsibility in the areas that fall within the competence of the [Holy] See for the development of the life and apostolate of the lay faithful, for the pastoral care of young people and the family and its mission according to God’s plan, and for the protection and support of human life. The Dicastery supports and organises international conferences and other initiatives related to these themes that take into account both the ecclesial and broader spheres of society.” A Google search for “Laity Family Life” ([laityfamilylife.va/](http://laityfamilylife.va/)) will reveal many events and resources on the topics of family life, youth and the elderly.

There is now a very good resource with information from the National Association of Vocation and Formation Directors, an association of Canadian catholic leaders committed to helping other members of Christ’s body to discover and live their vocations. The site, [vocations.ca](http://vocations.ca), is one of the tools. It contains resources for discernment of being called, information about the types of vocations, including marriage, and lay organizations and links to information to the communities in Canada. †

### 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.

## COMMUNITY LIFE

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**Faith Anderson**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Thank you to parish councils for completing the annual survey. These reports only reflect in part what councils across Canada accomplish in the standing committee of community life. Councils and members have recovered from the pandemic, have “rolled up their sleeves” and have once again immersed themselves in what they do best—be supportive and take action.

My term as chairperson of community life has been an opportunity to work with some amazing provincial chairpersons of community life and subcommittee members. Through monthly meetings, we have been able to share information, plan activities and be sounding boards for one another. We learned together! I now have a face to put to the names because of the monthly virtual meetings.

A webinar on domestic violence was held on February 11, 2023, with Pam Hadder as keynote speaker. Pam is a community coordinator and leadership team member for Willow Place Inc., Manitoba’s largest and most accessed family violence shelter provider. Following the webinar, Pam shared several initiatives that councils could participate in or do to address the domestic violence issue.

In one of the meetings with the provincial chairpersons, I warned them that I am a “project” person. Thank heavens they embraced my vision and supported the Kindness Rock Project. The vision was to have a project that would bring members together in a fun activity and share some kindness with their community. The photographs received reflect the spirit of the project. There are many beautiful artworks that hopefully will bring a smile to many.

A joint project with the national chairperson of spiritual development resulted in the Rosary of Reconciliation, which was held on June 21<sup>st</sup>, National Indigenous Peoples Day. For generations, many Indigenous groups and communities have celebrated their culture and heritage during the summer solstice. This was a time to pray and reflect on reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Provincial chairpersons and subcommittee members participated in the rosary.

Congratulations to councils and members for their continued support of two national voluntary funds—Development and Peace and Catholic Near East Welfare Association’s fund (formerly Velma’s Dream). Along with these funds, I am sure many members supported these organizations personally. In the May 14<sup>th</sup> issue of

*The Catholic Register*, Honorary Life Member Velma Harasen, founder of Velma’s Dream, stated, “... Despite the hardships she witnessed [in the Holy Land], she was nevertheless encouraged by the spirit of hope among the Christians she encountered.” Both voluntary funds provide hope for the people in developing countries and the Holy Land.

A resolution was received from Manitoba Provincial Council on the topic of fast fashion. This resolution is being forwarded to the national chairperson of social justice for education and awareness, according to the request in the resolved clause. Another resolution was received from the Military Ordinariate Provincial Council on the topic of child soldiers. The education component of this resolution is also being forwarded to the national chairperson of social justice for education and awareness of members. †

## EDUCATION AND HEALTH

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**Margaret Schwab**  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Members continue to support and pray for access to good palliative care throughout Canada very actively. Through the media, there are so-called success stories about medical assistance in dying, but where are the success stories about good palliative care? Catholics must speak louder and pray harder.

*The Horizons of Hope: A Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care* is a good place to start. Many councils have made use of this to educate their members and parishioners.

Once again, members were invited to take advantage of the national webinar on palliative care. The presentation, “At the Foot of the Cross,” was given by Ana Gheysen, a spiritual care practitioner working at Hospice at Glengarda in Saskatoon. Ana’s presentation has been described by attendees as practical, helpful, reassuring and passionate. It is available for viewing on the national website.

In June, the national bursary committee met to review applications from 12 candidates. Awards totalling \$8,700 were given to assist in the areas of personal spiritual growth, evangelization and leadership. Every year, the committee sees funding requests for new and different types of programs. Members are extending themselves in an effort to actively live out their faith. There are many opportunities out there.

The National Bursary Fund has been supported by the membership through donations of \$2,988 from January 1<sup>st</sup>



to June 30<sup>th</sup> of this year. Donations from parish councils and their members are instrumental in keeping this fund viable.

With the assistance of League members across the country, Coady International Institute continues to provide programs that help others make a positive difference in their own communities. Information on these programs can be found at [coady.stfx.ca](http://coady.stfx.ca).

The partnership between Canadian Blood Services and the League currently has 258 participants. Since January 2023, these members have made 170 donations, which is a great start to the 200 that we commit to each year. Remember, friends and family can sign up as partners with us as well.

Members continue to strongly support Catholic education, be it through Catholic school divisions or through parish programs. At a time when it is perhaps difficult to stand up and be counted as Catholic, we recognize the value in raising children who will grow to be people of faith carrying on the theme, *Catholic and Living It!* †

## COMMUNICATIONS

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**Betty Colaneri**  
Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario

Communications Officer's  
Log Stardate 2023.08.

I had set out to seek new ways to communicate and boldly go where I had not gone before. What began as a mission in a strange new world of technology has truly broadened my knowledge

and use of it. Resistance was futile. Though the challenge continues, the most important conclusion is that communication, in all forms, is essential and critical to existence.

The League is an enterprise of sisterhood with coordinates of ministry set on a common vision of seeking knowledge, seeking out new members and new ways to reinvigorate councils.

It is that prime directive that gives us the opportunity to engage with resources and discover new methods to improve our involvement with the League and our communities. As individual members, we each play a vital part in the mission of the League. Strengthened by God's Spirit, we must effectively communicate the information and the many resources that are available to be distributed or shared with members to ensure the success and growth of councils. All the amazing work being done by members must be communicated back to the enterprise to ensure that information is collated and logged for

future reference. Proper channels are to be used so that all members across Canada are aware of what is happening in other parishes, communities and society. It is imperative to keep those channels of communication open and clear of interference for the ongoing mission of the League.

Through sharing and listening, there is the ability to receive information, share questions and doubts, journey side by side and put abilities and gifts to work through service for the needs of the many.

At the helm of the communications department is *The Canadian League* magazine, the primary method to promote and spread the word to all members. The magazine is a link to the past and a promotion for the present, to be a reference for the future.

Communiqués, newsletters, emails, letters, handwritten notes, text messages and even telephone calls are all channels to choose from to connect with members. And though we can materialize for in-person meetings, Zoom and GoToMeeting are encouraged and have continued to be used to keep in touch on a regular basis.

With my tricorder set on social media management, I communicated with the social media assistant to post to the website, social media, Instagram, Facebook and Spotlight on the national website. I also was the emissary between the website design/hosting company and the national board.

Scanners that were monitoring phase two of the engagement hub—uniting Catholic women have shown it has been completed. It continues to deliver marketing content to prospective and current members.

On Stardate 2023.7, the mission of having the national website revamped to be a more user-friendly tool for members was achieved. Added to that mission was to have the same company responsible for the revamp also host it so it can be properly monitored and maintained.

With technology constantly changing, it is essential to update the website and social media on a regular basis to keep it functioning effectively.

It needs to be enhanced with contributions from members featuring activities or work being done in their communities. New methods of connection, such as webinars and blogs, will keep the site from becoming stagnant.

The Internet is a wonderful and powerful tool to create and distribute information, but it also requires a great deal of responsibility. Part of that responsibility is continuing to deal with predators in the fight against pornography with the Pornography Hurts campaign. In a world that is telling us what we should do or how to be, we must be careful to avoid being hit by phasers set on stun to desensitize us.

During my mission, I was able to join members of an away team and participate in the taping of the DailyTV mass sponsored by the League. It was later televised right on the feast day of the League's patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel.

On Stardate 2023.05, though not in an official capacity, I was able to take a shuttlecraft to the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations conference in Assisi. I felt like a photojournalist capturing the special moments with other League members. At warp speed, I was able to send the information for posting on social media to share with other members at home!

Though we have made advancements in technology that allow new ways to interact, we must still be mindful of how essential it is to have the human element. A combination of personal connection and technology is the best way to keep good communication on course.

When the circuits are not working, or the connection is lost, we can find ourselves in a neutral zone, a nebula or a black hole. No one wants to be lost in space or disbanded. We may need to adjust our satellite or energize our engines occasionally to revitalize the mission, but if we keep communication as the driving force of our warp core, the League can and will live long and prosper. Let's make it so! †

## RESOLUTIONS



**Rolande Chernichan**  
Ile des Chênes East, Manitoba

I am happy for this opportunity to supplement the annual report, to bring news of happenings in 2023, to highlight accomplishments, projects undertaken and to report on proposed challenges for the future.

Immediately following last year's convention, a resolutions brief was compiled and mailed to federal cabinet ministers, the prime minister and 37 bishops where there exists a League council. Before the end of the year, letters had been mailed to ministers' offices who were best suited to discuss the subject of the resolutions being presented.

The first six weeks of 2023 focused on coordinating meetings with federal government officials. As time permitted, meetings were added to include the office of a senator, the office of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), the papal nuncio and an interview with a reporter from *The Catholic Register*. While meeting schedules were being finalized, the national delegation was busy researching each resolution to be presented to be current about the topic being discussed and to have questions ready to initiate dialogue.

The three-day visit in Ottawa, February 13-15, was consumed with 13 meetings, which involved a lot of walking to offices surrounding Parliament Hill because

Centre Block was under renovation. Meetings were held across the Ottawa River in Gatineau, where government offices are also located, to the office of CCCB and to the embassy of the Vatican. The delegation included a meeting with a representative from an opposition party as well as a member of parliament representing the constituency of a member of the team.

The delegation was well received, and the League was affirmed and respected for its advocacy. Meetings with policy advisors of government ministers were not rushed. The delegation was told that the League's voice needs to be heard, not only through resolutions but in submissions through government consultations regarding initiatives posted on departmental websites throughout the year.

After returning home, requests from ministers' offices for meetings continued to be received, so the delegation added three more meetings, which took place virtually. The article in *The Canadian League* magazine titled "*Catholic and Living It! Through Advocacy*" provided members with a summary of the meetings. Having benefitted from the experience, a *Guide for Meeting with Government re. League Resolutions* was prepared as a resource for the planning of future government meetings.

The month of March was closed out with me facilitating the Unity Outreach workshop for Quebec Provincial Council.

The spring season brought fresh energy as I continued the collaborative work I had undertaken with the national chairperson of legislation to bring to completion the *Resolutions Workshop PowerPoint, the Resolutions Workshop Presentation Guidelines and Speaker Notes*, and Resolutions Guide. Together, the national chairperson of legislation and I worked on a position paper project, doing the review and editing of nine position papers that had been submitted by the writing teams of national chairpersons.

The review of 24 current resolutions for consideration to archive was initiated. I issued communiqués and a memo for the spring parish mailing, participated on the *ad hoc* committee for deepening Indigenous relationships and submit an article for the spring issue of *The Canadian League* magazine titled "Setting Sail in Hope." I also held a virtual meeting with provincial chairpersons to discuss transitioning to three standing committees.

More recently, preparations were made to facilitate the national resolutions committee meeting, which was held in Winnipeg, July 15-16. I also oversaw the review by the committee of resolutions to be archived, with 11 resolutions being formally prepared to be retired within a prayer service at this year's national annual meeting. These resolutions will be archived for a variety of reasons, some because their references have become outdated. Members may want to look at archived resolutions as the basis for developing a new resolution. Planning for a workshop within the resolutions dialogue of the annual meeting was ongoing.

The challenges regarding resolutions as the League transitions to three standing committees have been conveyed through my various communications. I was thrilled that the annual parish survey yielded several names of members interested in resolutions. By offering training, workshops and webinars, connecting members and creating teams, and using virtual meeting technology, the League will be well-positioned to continue its advocacy into the future. †

## LEGISLATION

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**Glenda Carson**  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

The new year started with significant activity involving two major projects due for completion. For the first project, I was in a collaborative, supportive role for the national chairperson of resolutions and her task to revise resolutions resource documents. The second project was completing the League position paper review project, which is addressed later in this report.

From a government legislation perspective, 2023 continued to see much concern and controversy regarding Bill C-7, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)* and was monitored from a national legislation standing committee perspective. I have been participating in the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) medical assistance in dying subcommittee. The discussion by this diverse group is always enlightening. It supports the importance of a grassroots response to the significant concerns arising from euthanasia legislation and the slippery slope experience in Canada. Important points of discussion include the consideration of emancipated minors as part of the legislative criteria for euthanasia. Other significant discussion points have been the inclusion of Canadians living with disabilities in the euthanasia criteria and the inadequate access to quality palliative care as an alternative to medical assistance in dying. The Canadian Disabilities Association has been a consistently strong voice regarding the concerning use of euthanasia in response to inadequate community social service and the social bias by some health professions that those living with disabilities must have a poor quality of life, thereby meeting the criteria for euthanasia. This is otherwise known as medical ableism. While Canada is considered a leading nation in broadening euthanasia legislation, palliative care remains a struggle for many Canadians to access appropriately. There is also

concern that many do not understand palliative care and hospice services, thereby defaulting to medical assistance in dying to alleviate their suffering. In March 2023, in response to the ongoing concerns regarding Bill C-7, I had the privilege of writing a joint communiqué with the national chairperson of Christian family life regarding the significance of this legislation for vulnerable Canadians and the need for more government support for palliative care. Resources for members were also provided in the communiqué.

On the more positive side, much good legislation is occurring through parliamentarians. This is evident through my ongoing monitoring of legislation at the federal level and my online participation as a member of the delegation to Ottawa to discuss matters about some of the League resolutions. For example, Bill C-22, an *Act to reduce poverty and support the financial security of persons with disabilities*, has created the Canada Disability Benefit. Human trafficking also took on a major focus this year through the consultations held by the federal government's standing committee on the Status of Women. Members have responded to some of these topics through communiqués, letter writing, petitions and the presentation of briefs.

In response to members' requests, information on what it means for the League to be a non-partisan organization and the deciphering of federal and provincial legislation accountabilities were made available through articles published in *The Canadian League's* winter and spring issues. The latter article was written by national legislation subcommittee members Life Member Elizabeth Doyle and Betsy Fletcher and contained information vital to developing resolutions on legislation topics.

The position paper review project concluded with the executive meeting that precedes this annual meeting of members. This project was developed in response to the need to update the number of outdated position statements published on the national website at the start of my term. A position paper is a formal statement defining the League's position or stance on a topic or issue. It gives readers a summary of the dimensions of the topic or issue from the League's perspective and can be used both for information for members and for informing the public. Position papers may be developed in response to one or more national League resolutions as well as positions presented through correspondence by the national president, a response by the League to a position or plan of action put forward by another organization, such as the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and in response to current or pending national or international legislation. Because of the significant workload involved in reviewing and revising the League position papers, a two-year, two-phase project was proposed and adopted by the national executive/board in October 2021.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



**Fran Lucas**  
Edmonton, Alberta

Phase 1 of the project involved most provincial chairpersons of legislation and resolutions reviewing the published position papers for relevancy and the need for revision. The national chairpersons, with the leadership of the national chairperson of resolutions, also reflected on the need for position papers as they reviewed the resolutions that came under their committee for archiving. Criteria for critiquing the potential position paper topics were developed to guide their work. The result of the first phase of the project was the adoption by the national executive of 10 recommendations for position paper topics for revision or development and six papers for archiving. In addition to the position paper research, a League policy and procedure was adopted and published in the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* in April 2023.

During the winter and spring months of 2023, the national chairpersons of community life, Christian family life, education and health, and international relations, together with honorary life and life member volunteers, drafted the position papers recommended for revision or development. These position papers were presented to the national executive for consideration. Nine position paper topics were adopted and will be posted on the national website.

The following position papers were adopted:

- Abortion (new)
- Euthanasia and Medical Assistance in Dying (revised)
- Health Research (new)
- Matrimony and Same-Sex Unions (revised)
- Reproductive and Genetic Technologies (revised)
- The Use of Stem Cells for Research Purposes (revised)
- Truth and Reconciliation (new)
- Waste Management (revised)
- Water (revised)

The following position papers have been archived:

- 1986. Euthanasia and Living Wills
- 1992. Euthanasia
- 1994. Euthanasia
- 1988. Childcare
- 2004. Youth Violence and Youth Criminal Justice Act
- 2006. Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

As stated in my spring parish council memo, many councils and members are wonderful in their dedication to monitoring and responding in action to legislative matters in this country. However, many have expressed a struggle, lack of interest, or inclination to actively monitor and respond to legislation. Please do whatever you can to ignite interest in this important work of the organization. The vibrant history of the League as a social justice advocate needs to continue if there is to be a robust and consistent voice in democracy for those most vulnerable and marginalized in society, for the protection and respect for the sanctity and dignity of life, for the protection of the environment, the support and protection of the church and the freedom to practice our faith—to be indeed *Catholic and Living It!* †

One of the roles of the national president is that of liaison with the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) and its international programs.

I have been urging members to take a subscription to *Women's Voice*, the official magazine of WUCWO, to increase awareness of current and planned WUCWO projects. Another valuable feature of the magazine is the update on what individual regions/countries are doing.

A major project of WUCWO has been the World Women's Observatory (WWO), which was created in 2021 in response to the call for synodal conversion. The objective of the WWO is to give visibility to women, especially those most vulnerable, who seem invisible both in terms of their suffering and their potential, to inspire and generate pastoral strategies by the church, synergies by civil society, national governmental organizations, public policy by states, and contributions to the international agenda that favour the integral human development of women and that of their families, communities and people. WWO's tagline is "Listening to transform lives."

Attending the WUCWO General Assembly in Assisi, Italy, from May 14-19, was a true highlight for me as the audience with Pope Francis is something I cannot imagine having the pleasure of doing again. The audience was followed by mass at St. Peter's Basilica, which really did add to the specialness of the trip.

At the North American regional meeting, I reported on Canadian activities over the past two years. At the request of the WUCWO board, The League submitted Resolution 2022.01 Enact Federal Legislation to Reduce Food Loss and Waste and were pleased to see it incorporated into the WUCWO global food crisis resolution.

It was an honour to be present at this assembly where Honorary Life Member Barbara Dowding was elected North America regional vice-president for the next four years.

After the assembly, three of us made a trip to Genazzano outside of Rome to see the original fresco of Our Lady of Good Counsel. The image first appeared in 1467 at that very location, and the church itself is called Our Lady of Good Counsel. This was yet another highlight of the trip. †

## ALBERTA MACKENZIE

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**Mary Hunt**  
Edmonton, Alberta

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 the provincial council as members continued to close the door on the COVID-19 pandemic.

The provincial council celebrated 110 years of service in Edmonton Diocesan Council and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Patrick Parish Council (Medicine Hat). We noted with sadness and gratitude the 205 members who passed away in 2022.

I had the privilege and joy of attending conventions throughout the province. 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 the COVID pandemic has amplified in communities. All diocesan councils talked about the increased challenge of attracting leadership and members after the pandemic, as there is a significant number who have not renewed their memberships. They spoke about needing to make sure that no member is left behind.

The focus of the provincial council is to educate through faith, service and social justice. Some 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 concerns and recommendations including 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, and the need for good palliative care.

Members and the communities they live in were informed about the insidious devastation of pornography. Opposition to pornography was expressed and the passing of Bill S-210 to prevent children from accessing pornographic content online was supported. Pride was shared in the national postcard campaign mounted in the province for many years. Concerns were mentioned about human trafficking. Members were informed about efforts to support and educate others about sanctity of life issues such as medical assistance

in dying, euthanasia and abortion. The killing of the most vulnerable is not considered to be health care. Members actively participated in the Alberta March for Life Association with three provincial officers serving on the board, and as provincial president, I accepted an invitation to speak at the rally, which attracted over 1,000 attendees. Motivation was found 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."

The belief was shared that the League must be a 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, and the terminally ill—all who become invisible because they place demands on the system.

The 76<sup>th</sup> annual provincial convention attracted almost 200 members, which included 47 women who had never previously attended one. As one of the goals of the provincial council is to develop relationships with Indigenous brothers and sisters, participants celebrated 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 participants to look at the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, choose an action that speaks to them and do something about the action.

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

Members continued their efforts to support and resettle families escaping the war in Ukraine through prayers and fundraising efforts. In recent months, many 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 prayers and support.

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

## B.C. & YUKON

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**Catherine L'Heureux**  
Vernon, British Columbia

Members in B.C. & Yukon Provincial Council have continued to persevere with their good works “For God and Canada.” Councils are meeting in person and are very glad to be reconnecting with their sisters in the League.

I am very proud to report on a very successful year in recruiting many new members.

National Past President and Chairperson of Laws Anne-Marie Gorman presented the Unity Outreach at the spring mid-term meeting with lively input from executive members, and spiritual advisor Fr. David John gave a beautiful reflection on the Gospel of John.

In May, the provincial Christian family life chairperson attended the March for Life at the legislature in Victoria, with many members accompanying her.

Four of the six diocesan councils celebrated conventions and one diocesan council held an annual meeting of members (AMM). The Unity Outreach was presented at each diocesan executive meeting before their convention. A highlight for our now-past president was to present the Unity Outreach to the Whitehorse Diocesan Council—it was very successful as members welcomed the project. Presentations were also given at the diocesan conventions.

The diocesan executive then proceeded to present the Unity Outreach to all parish councils in their diocese, and can you imagine some have completed the visits to all their parish councils already?

It was a slow start to organize the provincial convention in Prince George, but it turned out to be very successful. As we all know, God provides, and we ended up gaining new and younger members who worked really hard, learned much and loved the convention. The 117 members in attendance can attest to having experienced “faith, fun and fulfillment.” Participants had the pleasure of having National President Fran Lucas attend and present a workshop on leadership, which led to many discussions around the table. During this convention, two members received their life membership, and the provincial executive is so excited to have five members from B.C. & Yukon receive life membership this year. The Molly Boucher Bursary was awarded to a student from Our Lady of Lourdes in West Kelowna.

Provincial executive members were sad to say goodbye to spiritual advisor Fr. David John, but excited to have Fr. John Garden from the Diocese of Prince George installed as the new spiritual advisor along with the

installation of the new provincial executive at the closing mass.

The national bursary was awarded to two members in the province—one from Langley and the other from New Westminster. That was a blessing for them.

Moving forward, members are excited about what will happen next with the Unity Outreach, as well as the new transition to the three standing chairpersons of faith, service and social justice.

The next part of this journey will be challenging but rewarding. The need to educate members and collaborate with the three standing chairpersons will be encouraged.

The members in B.C. & Yukon are ready and willing to move the League forward with enthusiasm. †

## MANITOBA

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**Crystal Reiter**  
Riverton, Manitoba

*Read by Manitoba  
Provincial Vice-President  
Lucille Rossington*

League sisters in Manitoba are regrouping in a big way as they dig out from under all the restrictions of the COVID pandemic. Like elsewhere, councils are suffering from a decline in membership due to increased fees and increasing ages of members.

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, the provincial executive held its Annual Day of Celebration. Organizers were anxious for members to remember Coady International Institute and why the League supports it. I was lucky to have a personal contact with Emilie Chaisson one of the employees at St. Francis Xavier who together with Lynn O'Donnell, who manages the League relationships across Canada, put together a great presentation to remind participants of what Coady is and what it does. A small blip in the agenda was required because of the Violence Against Women Webinar was scheduled for the same day! But the organizers managed and participants were able to take in the presentation by Pam Hadder from Willow Place as part of the day. After lunch participants continued to learn about League supported charities when National Secretary-Treasurer Janet McLean spoke very passionately about Catholic Near East Welfare Association and her love for the Holy Land!

Right away that same week the executive was finally able, after five years of requests, to speak with the provincial government. The delegation felt nervous going in, but past president Janet Brunger did a tremendous job getting a book of current provincial resolutions ready and several of the members of provincial executive spoke on a couple of resolutions each. The delegation was joined

## MILITARY ORDINARIATE

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by the diocesan presidents and representatives from the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada and the Military Ordinariate Provincial Council. The following week when the provincial budget came out, the delegation was happy to hear one of the matters from the resolutions addressed, provincial Resolution 2016.01 Extending Coverage of Insulin Pumps and Supplies to Manitobans of All Ages. It sounds like coverage will now be for everyone! In May, the provincial executive received a letter from the minister of the environment and climate which addressed several more of resolutions. While disappointed with the length of time given to the group, the response has not been terrible, and the provincial council will be able to archive a few resolutions for sure!

The Unity Outreach initiative started to travel through the dioceses. I gave a couple of presentations, and one diocesan council is almost finished visiting its parish councils. Plans are in place to continue in the fall.

Winnipeg Diocesan Council's annual meeting of members (AMM) was held on Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. It had to be held virtually because of a lovely spring storm—there were even some closed highways! The council did a seamless move from in person to virtual and the meeting was able to go ahead.

St. Boniface Diocesan Council's AMM was held in-person on Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. It was a very successful event—my first time to attend a St. Boniface Diocesan convention. It was held in a beautiful church with an interior covered with artwork, such that permission was granted by the archbishop to go ahead and gaze around!

Keewatin-The Pas Diocesan Council's AMM was held on May 6 and 7<sup>th</sup>—such a wonderful place to visit. I was unable to attend but the members of the provincial council who attended were struck by how wonderful and supportive the priests were and how excited they were to be involved with the League. The diocesan executive was newly elected, but like the rest of us, many members are recycled! Bernadette Benson began her second term as president.

Manitoba Provincial Council's AMM was an in-person event held on Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. The council was fortunate to have had the event hosted by the ladies from Notre Dame de Lorette Parish Council who are very experienced and helped/guided the provincial council through a tremendously successful event. The council is excited to have forwarded two resolutions to the national resolutions committee: Creating Awareness Surrounding Fast Fashion and Combating Textile Waste in Canada. It was not an election year but recruiting members who might be willing to assume positions on provincial council in the future continued. It must be a continuous process.

Fall events are being planned in all three dioceses. No pauses in the agenda this year! Unity Outreach is working its way through the councils and second visits will follow. †



**Theresa Schopf**  
Nepean, Ontario

I am very proud to bring you this report from the Military Ordinariate Provincial Council. It is the smallest provincial council with respect to the number of members and councils but the largest geographically.

There are 13 active councils in six provinces—Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia, with members also living in Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, within Canada, and Florida and Vietnam, outside of Canada.

Due to the small numbers, the executive piloted the new council structure over the past two years. It ended up with a bit of a hybrid scenario, as the roles and responsibilities were not quite confirmed when the pilot project began, but it worked very well. Two webinars were held this year concentrating on the new structure and how to incorporate it within the council. Webinars will continue as required for individual councils, and they are open to all.

For the second year in a row, the provincial convention was organized by the provincial executive. It is a great team-building exercise, I must say. Base councils would usually host a convention, minimizing costs by using military quarters for accommodation and military rooms for meetings. Since the COVID pandemic, however, it's been more of a challenge for councils to host conventions at a base due to a number of factors. Over the next year, the executive will be revisiting different pathways/options for hosting a convention. In the meantime, it looks like the executive may be hosting again in Ottawa. It will again be a great team-building exercise since there are a few new members on the executive this year.

As I mentioned, there are some geographical challenges with councils. Years ago, 25 or so, the provincial president would strive to visit every council, and there were a lot more of them. At that time, the provincial council had access to military transportation if the schedules were flexible, but that hasn't happened in quite some time. So, I am beyond excited that there is an opportunity to visit every base council through the Unity Outreach initiative. The provincial executive received the presentation from national during the convention at the end of May, so members are in the process of setting up schedules for the fall. We are so excited about this amazing opportunity!

I would like to explain a little bit about the Military Ordinariate and the chaplaincy within the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). The Military Ordinariate is like a

diocese, however it is not defined by jurisdiction but by a specific need. It has a bishop, Bishop Scott McCaig, C.C., who was appointed by Pope Francis in 2016. Bishop McCaig may be referred to as the bishop of the Military Ordinariate or also as the military ordinary of Canada.

In the CAF, the chaplaincy is called the Royal Canadian Chaplain Service (RCChS) and is led by the chaplain general, who may or may not be Catholic. RCChS supports the moral and spiritual well-being of military personnel and their families—domestically and internationally.

Chaplains can be of another Christian religion, Jewish, Muslim or another belief. They have dual accountability to faith tradition and military authorities. As faith tradition leaders, chaplains come under the jurisdiction of their faith/denominational groups—in our case, it's the Military Ordinariate. As commissioned officers, they are subject to the Code of Service Discipline and are responsible to their military superiors. As well they have a duty to care for all soldiers regardless of faith.

The Catholic chaplains can be priests, religious, deacons or lay pastoral associates, women or men. The chapels belong to the CAF, not the Military Ordinariate. They can be interdenominational—for example, in Ottawa, the chapel is shared with other Christian faiths. The senior chaplain can be of any faith.

I am mentioning all of this for a couple of reasons. Firstly, to tell you a little more about the environment that we have within Military Ordinariate councils, which is very different than civilian parishes, and to also ask you for prayers for Catholic chaplains in the CAF, chapel communities, and League members. I am not sure if you are aware of *The Minister of Defence's Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination* published in 2022. It does not support hiring chaplains from religious groups whose values are not aligned with those of the Defence Team (Recommendation 6.1), so we, as Catholics and, I think, all Christian religions, may have a bit of a bumpy road ahead. I ask you to pray for the Catholic chaplains so we can remain Catholic and Living It! within the CAF. †

## NEW BRUNSWICK



**Madonna Clark**  
Fredericton, New Brunswick

To date, 2023 has been a year of few accomplishments but wonderful results. This year the New Brunswick Provincial Council celebrated, in a big way, its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This was also the first major meeting to take place since the COVID

pandemic, and the members were anxious to celebrate.

The presence of National President Fran Lucas was the icing on the cake for us all.

The planning and implementation of this annual meeting of members (AMM) has been a major project for members. Originally, the council was to have hosted a full convention, but plans were altered. When the national executive/board asked if the council would host a scaled-down meeting, all parish councils stepped up to the plate and here we are!

In 2022, a resolution entitled Enhanced Homeschooling Guidelines was adopted at the provincial level. After several attempts at arranging a meeting, this spring a group met with representatives of the minister of education and early childhood development to discuss the issues and the need for change in legislation. The next step was a letter campaign. Letters were developed and distributed to all councils at the provincial AMM, encouraging members to sign and send to the minister. A petition is currently being constructed, which will be circulated this fall for later presentation to the provincial legislature.

The first phase of the Unity Outreach initiative is underway, with one-third of the parish councils having received a first visit. Members are pleased to have the opportunity to share their thoughts in a one-on-one environment. They are also pleased that they are once again having their voices heard at the provincial level.

Although not a project per se, members have been actively supporting the right to life by speaking at rallies, attending the Focus for Life Summit and signing onto the No Options, No Choice website. Several members attended an ordination in Saint John at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception of two priests, something that has not taken place for nine years.

Expected challenges for the future include increasing membership, filling executive positions through election, not appointment and modernizing the approach to new members to entice younger women.

Goals/plans for the two-year term are to create excitement in the province that will motivate members to continue their support and service to the League, with a new enthusiasm that will be contagious and will spread throughout the province, and also to provide opportunities for leadership training and education.

Members in the province were saddened by the recent, sudden death of Life Member Gertrude Nowlan.

Members, *Catholic[s] and Living It!*, gathered here in Saint John, embark on a faith journey with friends who nourish their souls and help them to continue League work "For God and Canada." †





## NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

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**Linda Corbett**  
Colliers, Newfoundland  
and Labrador

I commenced my term as provincial president in Newfoundland and Labrador, effective May 28<sup>th</sup>. The report of my predecessor, Judy Hodge, came to an end effective May 27<sup>th</sup> and the following represents her comments.

“My main focus from January to May was preparing and planning Unity Outreach sessions across the province and planning for the provincial convention, which took place May 26-28.

“In February, National President Fran Lucas came to St. John’s and attended the winter executive meeting. She presented the Unity Outreach program to the provincial executive, and we, in turn, took it around the province. It was very well received, and all councils that have had the presentation provided feedback, which has been sent to national office and will eventually or has already filtered its way back to the provincial council. We are hoping that with some of the valuable information that comes back, we will be able to move forward with it as it relates to Unity Outreach. Ten out of 12 councils have now received the presentation, and the two outstanding councils will be done in the fall.

“From May 26-28, we held the provincial convention—the first full weekend convention since 2019. We were delighted to get together, albeit in smaller numbers. We started Friday evening with our officers’ meeting and ended Sunday morning with our post-meeting of new officers. The number of members registered for the convention was certainly down from pre-COVID days. But it was an enjoyable weekend and we received lots of good positive remarks in the evaluation sheets. I am hopeful for brighter days in Newfoundland and Labrador. I have now passed the reins over to Linda Corbett and I look forward to serving my two years as past president with Linda at the helm.

“On June 21<sup>st</sup>, we held an executive meeting via Zoom with Fran Lucas to meet the newly elected members and to have a follow-up on the Unity Outreach project. Fran presented the Executive Orientation slideshow, which was very beneficial for the newest members of the executive. Unity Outreach will continue into the fall for Newfoundland and Labrador as there are still two more councils to present to.”

For my part, there has been little activity since I commenced my term as president due to the summer timing. A post-meeting of the executive at the end of the provincial convention was held and some immediate business was discussed which will commence in September—namely,

the revision of the provincial handbook. At that time, the executive will also work on recruiting a new president-elect, as that post is currently vacant and determines direction and subsequent strategies for both the short-term and long-term.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere hope that I can work with my other provincial counterparts and my own executive to successfully fulfil the role of president. †

## NOVA SCOTIA

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**Jessie Parkinson**  
New Glasgow, Nova Scotia

This is my first report as provincial president, representing the wonderful women of the League in Nova Scotia.

Despite issues facing many councils, members remain committed to service “For God and Canada.” Many councils report a new awakening following the enforced confinement of the COVID pandemic. Parishioners are supportive of their activities, buying tickets, attending events and expressing thanks to the councils for the work that they do. There is a new energy to help, and the League must capitalize on this. As never before in memory, external pressures are challenging the League: lack of attendance in churches, inability to attract younger women who try to balance work, family and life, economic pressures that stretch the ability to give and finally, an ageing population tired of being the ones who always volunteer. Many women are saying, “I have done my time. Now I want to spend more of my time with my husband and grandchildren.” To address this issue, the executive will be focusing on leadership over the next two years. Utilizing the many resources available and with some of our own creative ideas, we will provide tools to councils to develop leaders from within. I believe that there is a hidden leader in every group of women. The task is to find, nourish and promote her.

In their annual reports, many parish councils expressed that they felt a disconnect between the national council, the provincial council and their own parish councils. They reported that their relationship with their diocesan councils was strong. To answer this challenge, the national executive developed the Unity Outreach initiative. The PowerPoint was introduced to the provincial by National President-Elect and Chairperson of Organization Shari Guinta at the spring meeting in March. It was well received. The plan is to present the project to the diocesan councils in the early fall so that their presentations to the parish councils can be completed before Christmas.

The balance of 2023 and the first part of 2024 is going to be a busy time. A provincial retreat has been set for

September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> with a jam-packed agenda. The focus will be on leadership and membership. The opening session will include a presentation by Chelsey MacNeil, B.A. B.Ed, MBA, president of Common Good Solutions, a social enterprise resource company based in Halifax. Ms. MacNeil is also a part-time lecturer at Memorial University in Newfoundland. Her experiences as a young Catholic woman in leadership roles in the community will be an invaluable resource in discussing ways to develop council leaders. The agenda will also include presentations on projects to implement service and social justice in councils, as well as a presentation on creating a budget and sticking to it.

The executive does not intend to overlook the importance of faith and the need for prayer and dialogue. I have tasked the chairperson of faith to create a booklet of appropriate opening and closing prayers for meetings for distribution to councils. In addition, the executive will be looking at the *Prayer Service Planning Workshop* (#628) in the fall as a tool for engaging chairpersons of faith in creating their own prayers and services. In all of this, many resources on the national website have been utilized, including *The Joy of Leadership* (#630), *Toolkit for Service* (#637), *Intergenerational Activity Program* (#634), *Actively Engaging New Members and Homebound Members* (#635) and *Toolkit for Social Justice* (#639). The executive is excited about reviewing these wonderful resources created by the national executive and its various working groups, and we are very grateful. I have asked the executive to be “on the move,” both literally and figuratively.

A first in-person convention was held in June, co-hosted by four councils in one area. Participants were delighted to welcome National President Fran Lucas as the guest speaker. A new format was trialled that is designed to make provincial conventions more affordable and attractive to members to attend while not neglecting the need for a social aspect. Attendance was good, so the executive will continue to refine this.

Women have a special responsibility today. During this time in the church, when many clergy have been discredited because of the abuse scandals, it is more important than ever for women to be heard. One way of doing this is by sharing faith, commitment to service and stories with League sisters and beyond. †

## ONTARIO



**Linda Squarzolo**  
Sudbury, Ontario

Over the past year, the 30,000 members of the League in Ontario made every effort to live out its Objects.

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 provincial 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 labours, but because she labours 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 winter executive 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 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 initiative has been successfully launched in Ontario. Some diocesan councils have visited all of their parish councils. However, three diocesan councils have more than 90 parish 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 the 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 amalgamated. 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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 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 30<sup>th</sup>, 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 12<sup>th</sup>, with over 100 participants at each event. Provincial spiritual advisor Bishop Thomas Dowd (Sault Ste. Marie) gave a presentation at the fall executive 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.

To support the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' Indigenous Reconciliation Fund, the 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, a presentation was made to the Ontario bishops about the current state of the 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 League in Ontario continues to work "For God and Canada," facing its challenges with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel. †

## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND



**Karen Rossiter**  
St. Peters, Prince Edward  
Island

As 2023 rolled in, Prince Edward Island councils began to see the province "open up." Members were excited to meet each other in person and bring back the fellowship that is such an integral part of the League.

Regular meetings are in full swing, and events are being booked. The 29 parish councils and over 1,700 members are eager to contribute to their parishes through the ministries of faith, service and social justice.

Many councils, including provincial, continue to use video conferencing for meetings, educational sessions, workshops and prayer groups.

The provincial council would usually host area meetings in February; however, those were postponed for this year as officers were out visiting the local parishes doing Unity Outreach work, and officers and members volunteered for the Canada Winter Games that were held in Prince Edward Island from February 17<sup>th</sup> to March 6<sup>th</sup>. The provincial council felt the spring would be quite busy.

As of mid-June, the provincial executive has completed the first phase of the Unity Outreach initiative with the 29 parish councils.

March and April were busy for the provincial executive getting ready for the annual provincial convention that was held May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in Summerside. As all restrictions had been lifted, the executive was able to hold a full convention open to all members and saw 154 members registered. Several speakers spoke to the theme, *Catholic*

*and Living It!*; these included provincial spiritual advisor Fr. Danny Wilson, Sr. Libby Osgood and parish council president Dianne Gaudet.

This year's convention saw a resolution presented on Lyme disease, which was adopted. The convention ended with the installation of the new provincial executive. A chairperson of social justice was still needed, but the vacancy has recently been filled. The new officers were sworn in under the new League structure.

Five outgoing members completed their term as provincial officers. We wish them well and are grateful for their service to the League.

Members participated in many meaningful activities—12 Hours of Palliative Care Week, the Horizons of Hope Webinar and a virtual rosary. Members were encouraged to involve their parish and communities in the "Kindness Rock Project."

Members continue to send letters and emails to members of parliament and local members of the legislative assembly on such issues as euthanasia and assisted suicide, medical aid in dying, abortion and the rights of the unborn, among other issues. Parish councils are very active in prayer.

Emails, letters and communiqués continue to be sent regularly to provincial officers, local presidents and members on current initiatives, critical events and changes happening at the national and provincial level since the League is in a year of transition into the new structure. Parish councils are encouraged to reach out to provincial officers with any questions or concerns during this time as they adjust and fit into the new structure.

One provincial officer is currently involved in one of the strategic plan working groups.

The new provincial executive met on June 10<sup>th</sup>, and officers were presented with an outline of meeting and event dates for the upcoming year.

Members attended a virtual rosary of reconciliation as part of National Indigenous Peoples Day. One parish council reads some of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission at meetings; this council also made two quilts and gave them to an Indigenous sister and brother. Some councils are including one reason a week for joining their local council. Councils hosted World Day of Prayer and retreats. The provincial subsidy has seven applications for planned events.

Many parish council anniversaries are being planned. One council has celebrated its 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a mass and distribution of pins that ranged from five years up to a pioneer member who received her 65-year pin.

June 29<sup>th</sup> saw the installation of the new bishop of the Diocese of Charlottetown. Bishop Joseph Dabrowski was the auxiliary bishop of London and will be the 14<sup>th</sup> bishop of Charlottetown. More than 1,600 faithful, including many members, packed St. Dunstan's Basilica for the ceremony.

During my two-year term as provincial president, there are several things which I would like to accomplish. My wish is to bring the League in Prince Edward Island

closer together with fellowship and outreach, and I hope to continue the good work of education and leadership training via workshops, meetings and conferences.

My wish is that the League be reinvigorated and reunited in faith, service and social justice in our parishes, communities and province. The timing is right to let everyone know that the League is resilient, thriving, and open to Catholic women of all ethnicities and ages as we work “For God and Country.” †

## QUEBEC



**Alice Noble**  
Candiatic, Quebec

Quebec is rebuilding. During my first year as provincial president, my goal was to try to reach every member in the province and to help councils rebuild.

Since January 2023, all diocesan and all but two parish councils have been visited by me and at least one other member of the provincial executive. In that time together, a workshop on “Recruitment and Member Motivation” and a presentation on the impact of the recent changes arising out of the strategic plan, with an emphasis on the instructed votes from the 102<sup>nd</sup> annual national convention, were delivered; this in response to the needs expressed by presidents last summer. This time of gathering offered a time to get to know each other and to exchange further concerns and suggestions. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and many councils put into action suggestions made.

One parish council disbanded this year despite repeated efforts at trying to contact them and requests to visit the council. However, on a positive note, after I visited them, two other councils voted not to disband yet and have requested more support. The new structure should help. The provincial council also saw the disbanding of one of the last two remaining diocesan councils as it was no longer viable after trying to function for several years with only two-member parish councils and insufficient per capita fees to cover insurance costs.

The launch of the provincial newsletter, *The Quebec CWL Journey*, has been very successful. The newsletter has grown in scope this year because more councils are participating. Content includes introductions to provincial officers and to diocesan and parish presidents. Executive members summarize and provide links to communiqués highlighting special projects and events. Council presidents send in pictures and articles about their council and their special activities. Again, members have expressed they feel

more informed and connected to all levels of the League and to each other.

The 75<sup>th</sup> annual provincial convention was held in Quebec City, where the first provincial president was elected. The event began with a smudging guided by the provincial council secretary, who is Metis. In attendance was Cardinal Gérald Lacroix (Archbishop of Quebec and Primate of Canada) who presented a papal medal created by the Vatican from Pope Francis’ visit to Quebec last summer in recognition of League efforts towards truth and reconciliation. Participants also heard from a young immigrant from the Philippines who shared his thoughts on the role of youth in the church. The business meeting was filled with reports, and participants heard two guest speakers. Dr. Labrecque shared, through stories, the importance and strength of lived moments that grow faith—if we are willing to hear and witness. First Nations person Rebekah Goertzen shared a very moving and important presentation on the effects of residential schools on First Nations and Métis and the continued generational trauma that has resulted. Short information sessions were also given by members of Aid for Churches in Need and Catholic Near East Welfare Association. The meeting was followed by mass at St. Patrick’s, during which deceased members from 2022 were remembered, and provincial executive members were reaffirmed in their positions.

The provincial spiritual advisor has prepared a workshop that will be presented to all spiritual advisors in the hope that they, in turn, will deliver it to their councils. The provincial executive participated in the national Unity Outreach initiative and members are ready to deliver it to all other levels this fall.

Lastly, another personal mission of mine has been to try to find ways to respond to *Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Final Report*. The first public initiatives took place at this year’s convention, with a smudging ceremony and the guest speaker, and I plan to continue, in consultation with First Nations and Métis members in Quebec, to find ways to continue this journey.

The provincial council is rebuilding and the process is ongoing. Direct communication and personal contact between the provincial executive and parish councils has been appreciated and has built new enthusiasm for the League after a period of slumber that created apathy and a lack of motivation in many. Connection, communication and information have been the key. The next year will see continued efforts at building sisterhood, streamlining the flow of information, and increasing awareness of parish council activities in each parish.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel, the Holy Spirit, and God continue to bless the League. I ask you for your prayers for success and attempts to keep the League alive and well in Quebec. †



**Connie Crichton**  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

In 2023, Saskatchewan Provincial Council membership has somewhat diminished from pre-pandemic numbers. Several parish councils have disbanded, and others are considering doing the same, mostly due to ageing members, lack of potential for

new members to join and unwillingness to take on leadership positions. Diocesan councils also are feeling the pinch, with all three diocesan councils not having a full executive. Two of these councils as well as the provincial council, do not have a vice-president. All options for the future are being considered. Rather than seeing this as a negative, it is being looked upon as an opportunity to build a better future.

The Unity Outreach initiative is getting off to a very slow start, but it is hoped that the fall will bring the opportunity to meet with many of 120 parish councils and, through their participation, will provide information to guide the provincial executive on just where it can best assist them in their desire to stay active and relevant in their parishes.

Parish councils are moving to the new structure, with many new executives being formed in the new year. With this change, there are many questions and diocesan and regional gatherings and workshops have focused on this topic. To best serve the membership, the provincial executive has transitioned to the new structure also. Newsletters have been produced in this format showing both the old and new positions. Starting with the July newsletter, only the new positions will be used in communications.

Although the parish councils in each diocese are working on many projects, time allows me to mention only a highlighted activity from each. Prince Albert Diocesan Council focused on outreach to the northern communities. Regina Diocesan Council, which celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, has honoured priests by promoting The Spiritual Motherhood of Priests that is now spreading throughout the province. Saskatoon Diocesan Council, for several years, has been focusing on human trafficking, with St. Anne Parish Council (Saskatoon) being successful in having the city of Saskatoon declaring February 22<sup>nd</sup> Human Trafficking Awareness Day with a flag it designed, flown at City Hall for a week.

Archbishop Donald Bolen (Regina) has a desire to have Catholic organizations work together with Catholic Health Care to ensure the needs of the Catholic community are being met. To further this initiative, members have been invited to take part in a workshop in the fall with Knights of Columbus to look at ways to advocate for increased

palliative care resources and protection of the conscience rights of healthcare professionals.

I chose last June to take the theme, *Walking Together*, for my term as president. I sent out a challenge to all councils to provide educational opportunities to their members to learn more about Indigenous history and residential schools. Some councils have participated in the challenge to date, and over \$2,500 has been raised to date for the bishops' Indigenous Reconciliation Fund.

The 75<sup>th</sup> annual provincial convention opening Eucharistic celebration incorporated Indigenous spirituality beginning with a smudge conducted by Elder Sharon Genaille. Members of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish Council, an Indigenous and Métis parish, formed the choir led by Sandy Harper. Songs and mass parts incorporated some of the Cree language. Working with the Parish Life Director Debbie Ledoux, a moving experience was created for members and Indigenous sisters felt members were truly *Walking Together* on this occasion.

The banquet guest speaker was Cristin Dorgan Lee, a Métis woman and principal of St. Michael's Community School in Saskatoon that focuses on teaching through a Métis perspective.

The convention was further enriched by the presence of National President Fran Lucas, who provided interactive presentations on "Relationships" and "Servant Leadership." The strong leadership of Regina Diocesan President Janette Rieger was recognized by her diocesan council and a service pin was presented to her by Fran. The provincial council also welcomed two new members to life membership—Marge Appell and Helen Kayfish. Sadly, it also reported the passing of former provincial president, Life Member Marge Szabo.

The convention's closing Eucharistic celebration was a time to say farewell to provincial spiritual advisor Fr. Peter Nnanga MSP. He served the provincial council with much enthusiasm and always brought a message of joy to gatherings. Fr. Nnanga established a new parish council in his parish, attended all meetings and, starting in May 2020, provided 153 weekly reflections to the provincial council Facebook page and engaged with many spiritual advisors in the province. The executive welcomed new provincial spiritual advisor Fr. Francis Hengen, who has been a very devoted League supporter and spiritual advisor over the years.

The 2024 national convention planning committee continues to work hard to bring members next year's convention in the City of Saskatoon. Plan to be there!

While I started this report on a more negative note, I am feeling very hopeful that the future holds brighter days for the League and its members in Saskatchewan. The League is an organization that puts faith first, and it guides members in all they do.

From Proverbs 16:3, "Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." †



# In Grateful Appreciation for Service to the League

With deep appreciation and gratitude, the implementation committee recognizes and thanks the members of nine working groups on the successful completion of 15 strategies. Members volunteered over 3,883 hours and produced numerous resources.

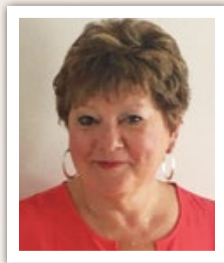
## GOAL 1

**Members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada grow in faith by sharing, witnessing, and developing leadership skills to create positive change.**

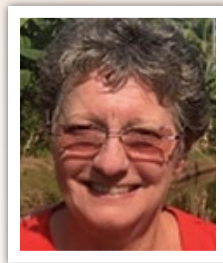
### MARKETING

Strategies covered:

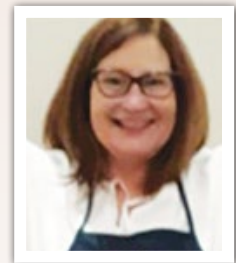
- Increase awareness about the League within the church through marketing
- Market the League as an association that showcases the strength of Catholic women grounded in faith, ready and willing to act
- Position the League as an organization for all Catholic women that encourages and supports their role and responsibility in the church and society



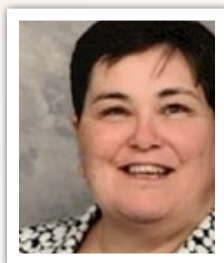
**Connie Crichton**  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan



**Kathy Dahl**  
Kamloops, British Columbia



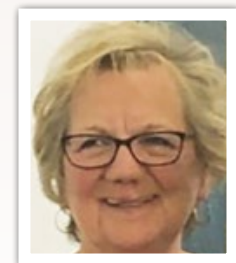
**Lisa Fillingham**  
St. Catharines, Ontario



**Cathy McKinney**  
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario



**Jessie Parkinson**  
New Glasgow, Nova Scotia



**Terry Mae Sinclair**  
Salmon Arm,  
British Columbia

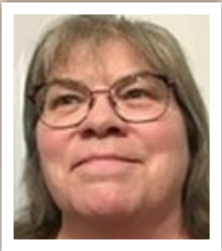
## GOAL 2

The Catholic Women's League of Canada addresses and supports Catholic social teaching through advocacy.

### COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENT

Strategies covered:

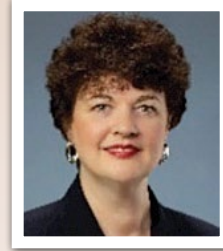
Examine and improve the process of communication and advocacy with all government levels that will allow for respectful dialogue and constructive feedback



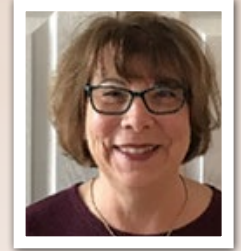
**Life Member  
Ruth Boden**  
Evansburg, Alberta



**Diane Cote**  
Saskatoon,  
Saskatchewan



**Janice Graham-Migel**  
Halifax,  
Nova Scotia



**Claudette Langdon**  
Stittsville,  
Ontario

### ADVOCACY

Strategies covered:

- Develop and deliver advocacy workshops at all levels
- Access experts from other organizations to train members in leading advocacy efforts



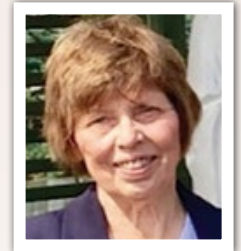
**Margot de la  
Gorgendiere**  
Edmonton, Alberta



**Sylvia Jurys**  
West Kelowna,  
British Columbia



**Life Member  
Glenda Klein**  
Lindsay, Ontario



**Life Member  
Diane Lemay**  
Longueuil, Quebec

### CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Strategies covered:

Empower members by providing educational opportunities to learn more about Catholic social teaching



**Belinda Halbach**  
Legal, Alberta



**Shelley De-Serres**  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

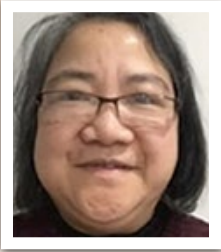


**Linda Maddaford**  
Yorkton, Saskatchewan

## COLLABORATION WITH FAITH ORGANIZATIONS

Strategies covered:

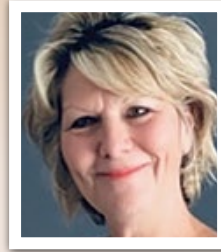
- Identify specific faith organizations with similar proposed, core values and missions
- Clarify the manner that collaborations will take place with other organizations



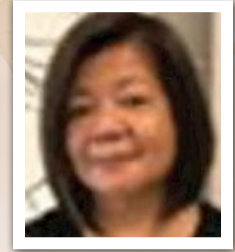
**Lolita Doucette**  
Vancouver, British Columbia



**Marissa Mendoza**  
Mississauga, Ontario



**Theresa Murphy**  
Fort Erie, Ontario



**Lawina Notario**  
Mississauga, Ontario

### GOAL 3

**Through outreach and service, members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada foster a culture where all life is valued with dignity and respect.**

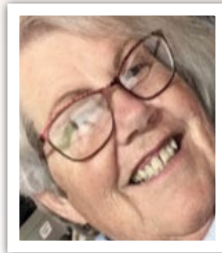
### ACTIVELY ENGAGE MEMBERS

Strategies covered:

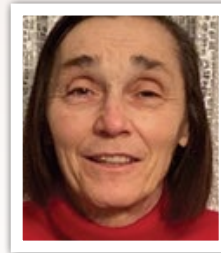
Actively engage new members and members who are homebound



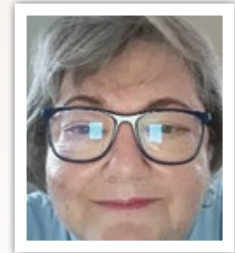
**Rosalie Boots**  
Moose Jaw,  
Saskatchewan



**Maureen Fadum**  
Surrey,  
British Columbia



**Iris McNulty**  
Whitby,  
Ontario

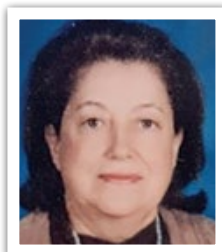


**Life Member  
Ann Myers**  
Kentville, Nova Scotia

### MENTOR MEMBERS

Strategies covered:

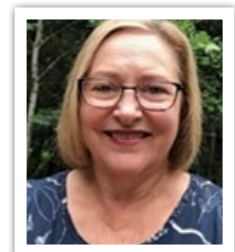
- Capitalize on the expertise of others, including engaging life members as mentors
- Focus on inter-generational skills mentorship



**Diane Lauziere**  
Toronto, Ontario



**Karen McKeown**  
Etobicoke, Ontario



**Linda Vandenberg**  
High Prairie, Alberta



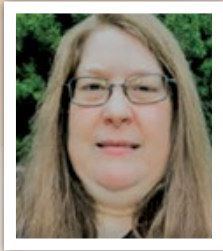
# GOAL 4

## Address Critical Issues.

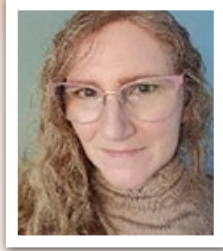
### SMARTPHONE APP

Strategies covered:

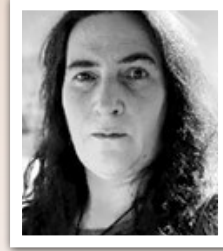
Create a smartphone app to promote the League's objectives to keep users (members and others) up to date and motivated



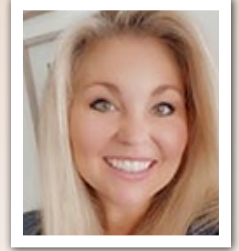
**Marilyn Blew**  
Grand Prairie, Alberta



**Susan Kaller**  
Candiac, Quebec



**Ingrid Le Fort**  
Longueuil, Quebec

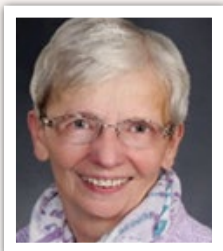


**Kari Schwab**  
Calgary, Alberta

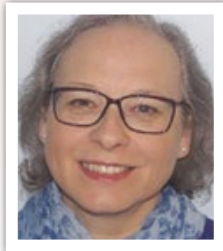
### EDUCATION ON CORE PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES

Strategies covered:

- Educate members on the core purpose of the League
- Emphasize the need for education about the priorities of the League



**Life Member  
Cecile Miller**  
N.E. Margaree, Nova Scotia



**Barbara Renaud**  
Maple Ridge,  
British Columbia



**Marjorie Robinson**  
Calgary,  
Alberta



**Life Member  
Barb Thuen**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

## 2024 Annual National Convention Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

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Back by popular demand! Showcase your League pins with pride with this beautiful ribbon.

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Margaret Schwab**

Email:  
cwl2024fundraising@gmail.com  
Telephone:  
(306) 227-8930

# Introducing



**Connie Crichton**

Saskatchewan  
Provincial President

Connie is the youngest of three girls and grew up in Watson, Saskatchewan—home of Santa Claus Day. A 20-foot Santa welcomes visitors to the town, and each year a whole weekend is dedicated to Christmas celebrations. After completing high school in Watson, she attended the University of Saskatchewan and graduated with a bachelor of commerce degree. She began employment with Revenue Canada Taxation and retired from her 35-year career with the federal government in 2012.

A late joiner, the League's social justice aspects first inspired Connie to join; however, this was soon followed by the joy of sharing her Catholic faith through positions on her parish council and later provincial council as chairperson of spiritual development. During her 13 years as a member Connie has served on her parish council as president and other executive positions. She has served as treasurer on both diocesan and provincial councils, the latter since 2013. Connie has been a member of the marketing working group and has been excited by all the new resources created by the many implementation committee working groups involved with the strategic plan.

Connie has served in her parishes of St. Patrick and then St. Mary in Eucharistic, music and liturgical ministries. She has served on parish and diocesan pastoral councils, chaired the finance committee and has been on the diocesan Justice and Peace Advisory Council for the past 13 years. She also was the treasurer of her husband's CN Pensioners' Association for eight years.

Connie has devoted her retirement to volunteer work, including prison, hospital, school and care home ministries. Working with people is her greatest enjoyment. Once the snow has melted She may be found on the golf course, gardening or taking her grandchildren on an adventure. In winter, Connie will be at a rink watching her grandsons play hockey or at the pool swimming. One place it is hard to find her is at home!

Together with her husband Bill, Connie has five children and six grandchildren. Connie and Bill participate in outreach ministry at their parish of St. Mary's and the Indigenous parish, Our Lady of Guadalupe, providing weekly food hampers. The two parishes celebrate mass in the same church building, allowing parishioners of each parish to share in community. She completed a four-course certificate education program, "Indigenous Pastoral & Lay Leader Ministry," offered by the Diocese

of Saskatoon. It inspired her to devote her presidency to promoting Indigenous history awareness and encouraging members in their journey toward reconciliation.

During the pandemic, Connie administered the provincial council's virtual meeting platform enabling members to stay connected through an exceedingly difficult two years. For her efforts she was awarded the maple leaf service by the provincial council.

Connie has been inspired and supported by many wonderful members and mentors and looks forward to continuing her work with the League for many years to come. †



**Catherine L'Heureux**

B.C. & Yukon  
Provincial President

Catherine was born to the late Dr. Hubert and Margaret Dumont in Vancouver, British Columbia, the seventh of 12 children. She attended Little Flower Academy in Vancouver, run by the Sisters of St. Ann, from Grades 1 through 12. These were some of the happiest years of her life. She graduated from the University of British Columbia with a bachelor of arts degree and has her gold level in leadership and public speaking from Toastmasters International.

She is married to Art, and they have five children and 16 grandchildren. Catherine and Art live in Vernon, where they enjoy boating, hiking, swimming and being active in their parish of St. James Catholic Church.

As a member for 28 years, Catherine has always been on the executive at the parish, diocesan or provincial level and has loved every minute of it. Why? Because she gets to serve God and her League sisters in all sorts of wonderful ways, her faith has deepened immensely, and she learns something new every day while continually meeting new people.

Catherine credits the League for filling a gap for her as a young mother. Her parish council in 100 Mile House was filled with young moms, some of whom she is still friends with today.

At the parish level, Catherine has been secretary, president-elect, president and past president and the chairperson of Christian family life, legislation, resolutions and community life standing committees. She served as diocesan president-elect, president and past president. About 10 years ago, she started the St. James Catholic Girl's League. As past president, she spent 125 hours gathering, organizing and filing the diocesan archives.

At the provincial level, Catherine served as chairperson of spiritual development and as president-elect. While

chairperson of spiritual development, she held a province-wide St. Joseph carving and carpentry contest and was amazed at how talented members were. While president-elect, she organized a membership contest that brought in more than 125 new members within the province.

Catherine's experience includes two terms on the advisory planning commission for the City of Vernon. This committee advised the mayor and council on planning issues. She programmed for and worked with children for several years, worked in sales and helped her oldest son with a business start-up.

For several years, Catherine promoted a culture of life by giving pro-life talks in parishes and high schools in the north. She continues to write to politicians about "womb to tomb" pro-life issues and is a member of Vernon and Area Pro-Life Society.

Catherine is impressed with the new strategic plan resources and the Unity Outreach. She feels both are excellent ways to move the League forward and that the Unity Outreach is a great way for councils to stop and talk about the League and get feedback from other levels. She looks forward to being the new provincial president and working with her knowledgeable, supportive and hardworking executive. †



**Theresa Schopf**

Military Ordinariate  
Provincial President

Theresa is the youngest of five children and grew up in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Once she became a pharmacist, Theresa joined the Canadian Armed Forces to seek new adventures and travel, but God had His own plan. Theresa met her husband in basic training and, within a year, she left the military and was married. In 1984, pregnant with her first child, Theresa became a member of the League at St. Mary's Chapel, CFB Gagetown, following in the footsteps of her mother and grandmother.

During the next 12 years, Theresa had two more children, moved six more times, and earned a master of business administration degree. The League was a lifeline. Whether in military or civilian councils, Theresa knew there would always be a League sister nearby.

Theresa and her family have lived in Ottawa since 1999. In 2000, Theresa became the president of the newly reactivated council at the military chapel in Ottawa and, in 2003, began serving on the provincial council. Theresa left the Military Ordinariate in 2010 when her husband retired, and she became a member of the St. Martin de Porres Parish Council, Ottawa. In 2015, after a change in the eligibility criteria, Theresa rejoined the Military Ordinariate and serves on the provincial executive again. Theresa remains an active member of the St. Martin de

Porres community, serving as an usher and on the finance committee, while attending Our Lady of the Airways Base Council, CFB Ottawa, as a member of the League.

Theresa recently retired from an amazing 42-year career as a pharmacist. Moving frequently, she had fantastic opportunities working in traditional roles such as community and hospital pharmacy and non-traditional roles, including course development and teaching in a college, various positions in the federal government, and for the past nine years, managing programs and projects related to pharmacy.

Theresa is excited about the next two years, beginning with the Unity Outreach. She plans to build stronger relationships by supporting the Military Ordinariate and chaplains while focusing on growing the membership within the League. †

## Annual Disbursement of National Voluntary Funds

**The national voluntary funds constitute monies forwarded by councils to national office for disbursement annually to the appropriate agencies. Collected from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> each year, the amounts are announced at the national meeting of members. The 2022-2023 collection amounts for these funds are as follows:**

Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace	\$18,409.15
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops Palliative Care Kit (discontinued)	\$4,862.97
Catholic Missions in Canada	\$21,824.31
Catholic Near East Welfare Association	\$12,882.31
Coady International Institute	\$13,312.65
Euthanasia Prevention Coalition (discontinued)	\$250.00

# Spotlights



**Mary, Mother of the Church Parish Council (Winnipeg, MB) organized the Red Sand Project spearheaded by Social Justice Chairperson Betty-Jo Young.** Following a prayer service, Fr. Jean-Baptiste Nguyen, Spiritual Advisor led the spreading of the red sand in the cracks in front of the church to create awareness for human trafficking.



**The Visitation Parish Council (Comber, ON) planted an Evergreen tree in front of Visitation Church to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the League in Canada.** Members came out to the June Strawberry Social wearing their League pins, scarves, and shirts to commemorate the beautiful occasion!



**On April 1<sup>st</sup>, the Yorkton/ Melville Regional Council (Regina, Saskatchewan Diocese) held a *Catholic and Living It! Spring Workshop for the councils from that region.***

43 women attended the workshop including Connie Chricton, Provincial President, Janette Rieger, Regina Diocesan President, and Linda Maddaford, Regina Diocesan Vice President. Connie discussed Misconceptions of the League, Janette spoke on Going Forward with the new committees, and Linda gave a presentation about the resources available on the CWL website. Mass was celebrated by Melville's Spiritual Director, Father Dennis Remot before the workshop began.



**The St. Emile Parish Council (Legal, AB) celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary after mass on June 11<sup>th</sup>.** A Swiss Stone pine tree was planted and blessed on the church grounds and a 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Plaque was unveiled. Everyone was treated to cake! They also recognized and presented service pins at their year end potluck. Congratulations to Yolande Siebert for 25 years, and to Florence Quaghebeur for 60 years of service to their council.



**Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Council (Sherwood Park, AB) held their Service Awards on June 12, 2023.** They shared that their council is blessed with two families who have three generations of League members, and that they were honoured to have National President Fran Lucas present the pins!



**Good Shepherd Parish Council (Doaktown NB) recently presented service pins at Our Lady of The Annunciation Church.** The awarded pins included 5 years, 25 years, 35 years, 40 years and 50 years!

**On June 12<sup>th</sup>, St Michael Parish Council (Waterloo, ON) gathered in the parish hall for an annual pot luck and service pin celebration.** There was a great turn out of members who enjoyed a meal together and an evening of fellowship and recognition. They handed out pins ranging from 5 to 80 years! Shani Pregelj, President, was truly honoured when presented with the maple leaf service pin. Members came together and offered a spiritual bouquet for Shari Guinta, National President Elect, and the national executive for their installation in August and two-year term starting August 2023.



**On June 11<sup>th</sup>, the Ottawa Diocesan Council and the Alexandria-Cornwall Diocesan Council amalgamated into the new Ottawa-Cornwall Diocesan Council.** Linda Squarzolo, Ontario Provincial President presided over elections and procedures for the amalgamation. Members attending were invited to sign and become charter members of the new diocesan council. Archbishop Marcel Dampousse celebrated mass and the installation of the new executive.



# 103<sup>rd</sup> National Annual Meeting of Members Resolution

## 2023.01 Combating Textile Waste in Canada

**Resolved**, that national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in 103<sup>rd</sup> national annual meeting of members assembled, urge the federal government to establish new programs and to expand established subsidies aimed at reducing textile waste in Canada.

### Action Plan

1. Raise awareness that could include inviting speakers, offering informative videos, holding workshops and providing resources to members, parishioners and the community at large.
2. Write letters to the prime minister and minister of environment and climate change, with copies to local members of parliament, urging the federal government to expand established subsidies aimed at reducing textile waste in Canada.
3. Encourage members to participate in the annual federal Waste Reduction Week in Canada.
4. Monitor the federal government's response to the resolution.



### National Council Regretfully Advises The Passing of Life Member:

**Gertrude Nowlan**  
Oromocto, New Brunswick

# Congratulations to 2023 Bursary Recipients!

In 1988, the League received two generous donations in response to the call for lay formation in Pope John Paul II's exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*. In light of the expressed desire of the League to encourage members' service "For God and Canada," the national executive agreed by motion that these donations be used to establish a bursary fund.

The bursary fund is used to provide financial assistance to members pursuing studies, courses, seminars, workshops and diploma/degree programs that align with and promote the Objects of The Catholic Women's League of Canada.

Bursary applications are available upon request from national office or can be downloaded from [cwl.ca](http://cwl.ca).

Congratulations to the following recipients!

Pamela Benko	Spruce Grove	Alberta
Adrienne Castellon	Langley	British Columbia
Teresa DiFalco	Stoney Creek	Ontario
Amanda Difalco-Sousa	Stoney Creek	Ontario
Katrina Hamon	Combermere	Ontario
Margaret Macklem	Edmonton	Alberta
Ashanthi Munaweera	New Westminster	British Columbia
Debbie Smith	Nepean	Ontario



## Magazine Deadlines

Winter issue – November 15, 2023

Spring issue – February 15, 2024

Fall issue – July 15, 2024

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

**Congratulations to the following centenarians!**

**Kay Schell**

104 years old on May 27, 2023  
St. Michael Parish Council  
Calgary, Alberta

**Florence Susan Schreiner**

103 years old on June 4, 2023  
St. Augustine Parish Council  
Humboldt, Saskatchewan

**Ida Bandiera**

102 years old on August 12, 2023  
Holy Rosary Cathedral  
Parish Council  
Vancouver, British Columbia

**Mary Gleeson**

101 years old on April 3, 2023  
St. Alphonsus Parish Council  
Peterborough, Ontario

**Florence Bickerton**

100 years old on July 7, 2023  
St. Patrick Parish Council  
Medicine Hat, Alberta

**Ethel Bingley**

100 years old on September 3, 2023  
St. Columban Parish Council  
Cornwall, Ontario

**Elsie Corrigan**

100 years old on June 11, 2023  
Our Lady of Mercy Parish Council  
Sarnia, Ontario

**Laurianne Gaucher**

100 years old on May 31, 2023  
St. Joseph Parish Council  
Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

**Lucy Gordon**

100 years old on January 20, 2023  
Ste. Anne Parish Council  
Tecumseh, Ontario

**Hattie Misiuda**

100 years old on March 13, 2023  
St. Pius X Parish Council  
Brantford, Ontario

**Maureen Moran**

100 years old on May 22, 2023  
St. Joseph's Basilica  
Parish Council  
Edmonton, Alberta

**Margaret Podilsky**

100 years old on April 26, 2023  
St. Anne Parish Council  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

**Geraldine Rock**

100 years old on April 23, 2023  
Ste. Anne Parish Council  
Tecumseh, Ontario

**Barbara Roy**

100 years old on July 26, 2023  
St. Charles Garnier Parish Council  
Kelowna, British Columbia

**Frances Shantz**

100 years old on August 4, 2023  
St. Joseph Parish Council  
Stratford, Ontario

**Marjorie Sicard**

100 years old on August 22, 2023  
St. Joseph Parish Council  
Grimsby, Ontario

**Irene Simpson**

100 years old on June 6, 2023  
Our Lady of Hope Parish Council  
Sudbury, Ontario

**Florence Surgenor**

100 years old on May 2, 2023  
St. Mary Parish Council  
Red Deer, Alberta

**Mary Ann Waslen**

100 years old on August 9, 2023  
Holy Rosary Cathedral  
Parish Council  
Vancouver, British Columbia



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