



The Canadian League



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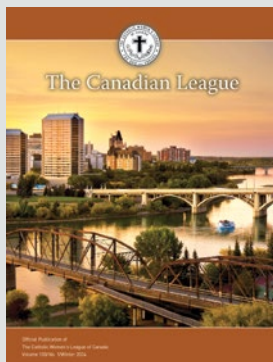
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Images courtesy of Tourism Saskatoon 2009.

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National President's Message

Shari Guinta
National President



"Here I am Lord, send me..." (Isaiah 6:8).

A national president's theme is personal yet must be shared with all League members—a little stressful! One hopes the theme will be received with enthusiasm and acceptance, and I am very pleased and humbled to witness it being received with both.

The theme I chose came suddenly to me, although I had thought long and hard about what my theme would be. When I came across *Here I am Lord, send me*, I thought, "That's it, that is the League!"

The graphic shows a woman with her arms uplifted toward the dove, representing the Holy Spirit. The olive branch symbolizes the world's struggle for peace. The woman is barefoot; she is aware that the road of social justice and service can be uncomfortable, but she is okay with that. The eagle feather represents the League's outreach to Indigenous men and women.

At a brainstorming session with the national executive/board at its meeting in November 2023, **mental health** was chosen for the theme's focus. The social and economic impacts of mental health are

prevalent in all communities, including homelessness, violence, spousal abuse, job loss, and so much more. It touches all areas and levels of society.

League members work in parishes and communities to help, to make things better, to serve and to offer a voice to those who have no voice. They are there through League resolutions, letter writing and volunteering in many areas. Because they are spiritual women, members want to help. They feel called.

I hope members will embrace the theme and focus for the next two years and look for ways to serve their sisters and brothers who struggle with mental health issues. Speakers from the Canadian Mental Health Association, as well as police services, may be a start.

The League's Mission Statement reads, "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." *Here I am Lord, send me.* †



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.

From the National Spiritual Advisor

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



As the church begins this new season of Ordinary Time, members also begin a new national theme and focus for the League. The previous theme, *Catholic and Living It!*, served the League well for the past two years. Members thank National Past President Fran Lucas for her wisdom that reminded them to be proud of their Catholic faith and for showing them wonderful ways to live their faith in their daily lives. It has been a “Frantastic” theme, but now the League is ready for the wisdom of National President Shari Guinta, who has given members the new theme of *Here I am Lord, send me*—an excellent follow-up to *Catholic and Living It!*

Through baptism, each member is called to be the presence of the Lord in her own time and place. As a Catholic woman living out her faith, accepting the call to be sent is a necessity of Christian life. Each member is called by God and then invited by the loving Lord to go forth as His disciple. So, what is your answer to this

invitation from God? Each of you is invited to say, “*Here I am Lord, send me.*”

Here I am Lord, send me—send me to do what? Send me to...bring joy to all I meet? ...to support those in need? ...to change structures that keep people down? Send me to....? Each provincial council, diocesan council, parish council and member will need to decide how to take the guidance the national executive will provide and apply it to its/her own situation.

How blest are we to be called by our loving God and to have the privilege to be invited by the Lord to share in His saving and merciful love, to be His presence in Canada and the world today, to bring His mercy and love to all we meet. There is no other response to such an amazing calling other than *Here I am Lord, send me.*

I wish you and your families God’s continued and greatest blessings and Our Lady of Good Counsel’s wisdom and protection. †

2025 ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION TORONTO, ONTARIO



APRON FUNDRAISER

This handy apron, available in blue, is imprinted with the League crest. It is a one size fits most with a neck strap and waist ties to keep the apron in place. There are two spacious front bottom pockets to hold pens, paper pads, cell phones and other essentials. Great for those League functions.

**Price: \$20.00 each +
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In Memoriam

Jean M.M. Mahoney

HONORARY LIFE MEMBER



The League has lost a great friend! Honorary Life Member Jean Mahoney died peacefully at her residence at Trinity Manor in Regina, Saskatchewan, on Tuesday, December 12th, at the age of 94. Her husband of 43 years, John, died in February 1995, followed by her brother-in-law, Most Rev. James Mahoney, who died one month later. Also deceased are her parents, sisters Joan and Maureen, and sisters-in-law.

Jean is survived by her four children, Ron (Joan) Mahoney, Ross (Traci) Mahoney, Jim (Susan) Mahoney and Maureen (Dan)

Stinnen, eight grandchildren, two great-grandsons and one sister.

Jean was a Saskatchewan girl born in Gravelbourg. She graduated from St. Paul's Hospital School of Nursing and, after graduating, completed a fellowship at The Hospital for Sick Children (Toronto, Ontario). She returned to Saskatoon, married and moved to Regina, where she remained.

Jean served the League as diocesan president, provincial president and national president. During her term as national president (1982-1984), she encouraged members to write letters of support to the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, a human rights group in Argentina searching for their missing grandchildren during the military dictatorship. Jean travelled to Argentina to meet with local women and offer moral support as a member-observer of the Joint Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. She never missed a diocesan, provincial or national

convention, with very rare exceptions due to health issues.

Jean was the recipient of two papal awards: the Cross *Pro-Ecclesia et Pontifice* in 2008 and a papal knighthood in 2010, the Dame Commander of Saint Gregory the Great.

Family was paramount to Jean, and she took great pride in her children, grandchildren and great-grandsons. She was famous for her Sunday suppers that brought everyone together.

Members will miss her kind and gentle demeanour. She was generous, always encouraging and put others ahead of herself. Members across Canada loved her, admired her and respected her. She was a mentor to many—a shining example to us all. Her legacy lives on as members strive to live as she did, dedicating her time and talents for the betterment of society, for the League, and "For God and Canada." She will be remembered as a caring, gracious lady. May she rest in peace! †



Are You The "1"?

Betty Colaneri

National Vice-President



There comes a time in each person's life when they encounter the "1"—a teacher, coach, priest, mentor or someone you looked up to who guided you on the right path for your journey. Chances are that the person may not have been aware of the impact their kind words would have on you. When you fondly reflect on that moment, you realize it was exactly what you needed to hear. As a League member, it may have been the encouragement of another member that became the very reason you joined this wonderful sisterhood. That member's faith, service and leadership may have inspired your spirit to fulfill your ministry. The League's history speaks of these incredible women who persevered against all odds with faith and leadership, bettering their communities, parishes and country.

Looking at the League's decreasing membership, I find it hard to believe that all women parishioners haven't joined this incredible organization that has been of service "For God and Canada" for more than 100 years. It is up to every member to take steps to do what she can to protect the legacy of the League's founding sisters for future generations.

To remind members of the power of "1" and to promote membership, The "1" Campaign has been introduced. The purpose of the campaign is to:

- **Recruit:** Invite women in the parishes and communities to join the League.
- **Retain:** Show gratitude and appreciation to current members.
- **Regain:** Welcome members or councils back to the sisterhood.

Campaign Logo: We are the "1" called by name and chosen by God.



Green symbolizes growth, rebirth and sustainability. The bible mentions the colour green often to symbolize life, beginnings, a new phase of life, renewal and resurrection. Green is a combination of yellow and blue. Yellow represents glory and energy, and blue relates to God and the heavens. It is the green light that tells us to **go!**

In the bible, white symbolizes purity, righteousness, holiness, divinity and peace. The white cross reminds members of His salvation that shines in the darkness.

He sends us forth yet never leaves us. Members reflect His light in all that they do.

Each month, the provincial presidents and vice-presidents will receive a message with a catchphrase they can use as a marketing tool in their province. The message will also be posted on the national website and social media.

Mother Mary with her profound "yes" was the "1". Our Lord Jesus was the "1" that changed the world. By baptism, you were chosen to be the "1" in this ministry. When we think that the task must be grand to be of importance, the words of Saint Mother Teresa reassure us. "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

Join us in participating in The "1" Campaign! All it takes is "1" step in the right direction and "1" member to make a difference. Extend a personal invitation to the women in your parish or communities and welcome their talents. Extend your arms to the member who didn't renew her membership and welcome her back with an embrace.

As Dr. Seuss says, "To the world, you may be one person, but to one person, you may be the world." You can be **that "1"!** †



Magazine Deadlines

Spring issue – February 15, 2024

Fall issue – July 15, 2024

Winter issue – November 15, 2024

What To Do? What To Do!

Fran Lucas

National Past President



As past presidents, we may be challenged with determining our role—where do we need to focus, what do we really want to do, what do we find most rewarding? We may even feel there isn't much for us to do. *Au contraire!*

One critical area that I see and hear where past presidents at every level can make a huge difference is in being accessible to the current president. We know that in many instances, current council presidents are very new to the League or have little experience at the executive level. Be ready to jump in and help if your president reaches out to you. If she doesn't, offer your assistance. If it's not accepted the first time, try again, perhaps offering to help in some small or significant way on a particular item, initiative or project.

Many of us are very proud and feel we can "do it all" on our own. And very likely, we can, but it can become overwhelming or frustrating in the process. This need not be the case when there is help available from past presidents and even past past presidents if that is a better fit. Encourage current presidents to reach out for help to anyone they feel comfortable with.

Then there's the role of the past president that the position is most often identified with—archiving. As I

view the wonderful events and initiatives posted on the various media platforms, I wonder if they are being well-documented and added to the councils' histories.

At a recent virtual meeting of the national archives committee, it was noted that archival material needs to be captured in multiple formats in today's rapidly changing technological world. For example, photographs should be printed *and* kept on a USB (universal serial bus). Ensure that photographs and other materials are high quality so that future printing or reproduction is also of the best quality.

We love the League, so let's ensure that it is easy for future members to readily find the materials they need when creating history books, celebrating anniversaries or preparing them for other purposes. What seems to be a rather insignificant event today can become a much larger

project for which we wish we had collected important details. With winter upon us, I suggest setting aside a specific day or two per month to work on your council's archival material. Invite a couple of members to join you, offering an opportunity to build relationships and fulfil the adage "many hands make light work"! †



Joan Carr Catholic Elementary/Junior High School was named in memory of Joan Carr, a League member and former superintendent of schools.

National Council Regretfully Advises the Passing of Life Members:



Joan Bell
Cayuga, Ontario

Pearl Bridgwater
Candiac, Quebec

Rita Dion
White Rock,
British Columbia

Barbara Jarvis
Chilliwack,
British Columbia

Jean M.M. Mahoney
Honorary Life Member
Regina, Saskatchewan

Sheila Quinn
Victoria,
British Columbia

Sylvia Smith
Renfrew, Ontario

Connie Zimbalatte
Sarsfield, Ontario

11 Promises of Service

Implementation Committee

The implementation committee has been hard at work since fall 2018 and is entering the last year of its mandate. All committee members are mindful that their time together is almost done. They have grown their faith and learned more about the League than they ever thought possible. In this last year, two working groups finished their work. Five working groups received approval for their action plans in July and jumped right into their work.

Goal 1: Christa Grillmair, Lead

The **effective communications** working group members Marilyn Blew, Lisa Fillingham, Anita Kreutzwiser, Sr. Susan Scott and Maria Tejero developed the *Guide to Effective Communications* and accompanying workshop to facilitate sharing information with councils. They also presented the national executive with recommendations to help improve, streamline and expedite internal and external communications. Many of the recommendations were implemented, including establishing a designated day of the week to send communications from national level to council presidents and secretaries at all levels. Now, that information is communicated directly to the level for which it is intended. This new process has eliminated the need for the fall parish council mailing, significantly reducing costs.

The members of the **training and development using technology** working group, Mary Capobianco, Gail Kopp, Lynette Mendes and Anne Tremblay, prepared a comprehensive organizational training assessment document to identify training needs. They created a *Train the Trainer Guide* to help facilitate training. They evaluated existing workshops and guides and created five training modules on leadership based on the *Joy of Leadership*. Based on existing workshops, they developed *Mentoring* and *Conflict Resolutions—Reaching a Win-Win Solution* into training modules so that they can be presented in person or online.

Members of the **evaluating spiritual programs** working group, Marie-Claire Arseneau, Belinda Halbach and Diane Lemay, have developed a protocol form to evaluate spiritual programs for relevance and are creating a guide on how to apply the protocol.

Members of the **recruit parish leaders** working group have identified the target audience by identifying existing leadership positions within parishes. They are reviewing internal and external recruitment practices and are developing a guide to help attract leaders to the League.

Goal 2 and Goal 4: Sr. Susan Scott, Lead

In the fall of 2022, the **faith organizations** working group members, Lolit Doucette, Marissa Mendoza, Theresa Murphy and Lawina Notario, began to develop a

video on “Ecumenical and Interfaith Collaboration.” This resource was originally expected to be a three-minute video for use by members across the country. It quickly became obvious that there were too many stories to tell and too much information to share! Some personal stories about ecumenical collaboration were received as they reached out to councils nationwide. Two of these stories have been included in the video and highlight connections with other Christian churches.

As the principle of synodality echoes around the globe, the priority of working ecumenically and with other faiths has reinforced what members identified over five years ago when the strategic plan and its strategies were being written. The educational video reminds members that their baptismal call is to journey together. The working document used for the synod in Rome states, “‘The path of synodality, which the Catholic Church is on, is and must be ecumenical, just as the ecumenical path is synodal.’ Synodality is a common challenge that concerns all believers in Christ, just as ecumenism is first and foremost a common path (*syn-odos*) travelled together with other Christians. ... All the Final Documents of the Continental Assemblies highlight the close relationship between synodality and ecumenism, and some devote entire chapters to it. Indeed, both synodality and ecumenism are rooted in the baptismal dignity of the entire People of God” (*Instrumentum Laboris*). This outstanding video is available on the national website under the Inform tab, then Videos. Use it, show it, share it, enjoy it!

The **software collaboration** working group’s strategy is to “research software to facilitate collaboration and ease the burden among teams.” Cheryl Boom and Felicia Onateh developed the survey distributed in the fall and helped them gather information to assist them in completing their action plan. They have developed scorecards, which they will use to evaluate software programs identified in three areas: document sharing, project management and meeting software. They will use their research to shortlist programs and invite women to form a focus group to test these programs. Their final deliverable will be submitted by the end of June.

Goal 3: Jacqueline Nogier, Lead

The **redesign criteria and eligibility** working group has been tasked with evaluating and possibly redesigning the eligibility to run for office at higher levels—this is no small task. Annette Chaplain, Jean Culliton, Margot de la Gorgendiere, Linda Marie O’Hagan, Laurel Phyll, Rebecca McCarrell and Francine Tournier have learned what has historically been done in the League. They have

researched subject matter experts and looked into other organizations to see the makeup of their boards. A survey has been sent to life members and current and immediate past national, provincial and diocesan executives to see what they think. The working group will make a final recommendation to the national board in June.

As with any road trip, a plan was made, and a route was planned. There were stops along the way to reflect and plan how to move forward. There were a few unplanned

side trips, but they helped create fabulous resources. The resources created by the working groups over the years are a part of the overall strategy to ensure the League remains relevant for the next 100 years. They are gifted to every member and are available on the national website. And just like any gift, they are presented in the hope that when they are opened, they will benefit the recipient. Please pray for these last five working groups and that all the resources created help a more vibrant League. †

The Tragedy of Child Soldiers

Shelley De-Serres, Military Ordinarate

National Social Justice Subcommittee Member



“Man has created the ultimate cheap, expendable, yet sophisticated human weapon at the expense of humanity’s own future: its children” (Romeo Dallaire).

When the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces train to be peacekeepers and fulfil humanitarian needs, they conduct themselves according to the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council. They respect and ensure that the human rights of all individuals within their jurisdiction are protected without any discrimination. It is devastating, therefore, to have children confront them with guns and who, without hesitation, would pull the trigger. Not all countries adhere to the UN Human Rights Council.

According to The Global Partnership and Fund to End Violence Against Children, “Tens of thousands of children are at risk of being recruited into armed conflict each year, including by force and manipulation. They are deprived of rights and liberty and are faced with extreme threats of violence and abuse, including sexual violence, killing and maiming, and abduction.” It further states that, despite international commitment to the UN’s *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict* to stop children under the age of 18 from participating in armed conflict, “the recruitment and use of children... remains one of the highest verified violations against children.” The *Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to the UN General Assembly* indicates that more than 6,310 children (5,707 boys, 603 girls) were recruited and used in conflict in 2021. This number is expected to climb in the face of escalating and new crises.

Lieutenant-General The Hon. Romeo Dallaire is

a celebrated Canadian advocate for human rights, a respected government and UN advisor and a former Canadian senator. His experience in Rwanda resulted in him becoming an influential advocate for the end of and the prevention of the use of children in armed conflicts and violence. He was the force commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda during the 1994 genocide, which took more than 800,000 lives in less than 100 days. Gen. Dallaire brought national and international attention to the atrocities Canadian peacekeepers face with the use of child soldiers and has devoted the rest of his life to seeking innovative ways to end the use of children in war.

The international community marks February 12th as Red Hand Day, a special effort to raise awareness about children recruited for armed conflict. After visiting Gen. Dallaire on January 17, 2019, Pope Francis referred to the use of child soldiers as a scandal, stating, “Whoever you are, if you are moved as I am, I ask you to join me in this prayer intention: that the scandal of child-soldiers may be eliminated the world over.”

Members are known for their strong voices of advocacy. It is therefore important to be informed about the tragedy of child soldiers. For those seeking greater understanding, the following book written by Gen. Dallaire is an excellent resource: *They Fight Like Soldiers, They Die Like Children: The Global Quest to Eradicate the Use of Child Soldiers* introduces how children are used as weapons of war and what can be done to stop it. †

Fast Facts About Fast Fashion

Glenda Carson

National Chairperson of Social Justice



Nancy Boucher

National Social Justice Subcommittee

"...Purchasing is always a moral—and not simply economic—act" (Pope Benedict XVI).

Do you remember your mother or grandmother darning socks and mending clothes until they were no longer wearable? How many members have worn hand-me-downs from older siblings? This is not the typical situation today. Canadians are throwing away nearly 500 million kilograms of textiles yearly. A significant contribution to this waste is commonly known as “fast fashion” or cheaply manufactured, mass-produced and mass-marketed clothing products. Historically, the fashion industry created clothes for the year’s four seasons. Today, fast fashion brands produce about 52 “micro-seasons” annually or one new collection a week, leading to massive amounts of consumption and waste, contributing to adverse environmental, social and health impacts.

The fast fashion high-speed production, low-cost items and frequent turnover of styles have led to increased resource consumption, excessive waste and pollution. The textile industry uses 93 billion cubic meters of water annually, using 3,781 litres of water to make one pair of jeans. According to Climate Change Resources, of all the wastewater in the world, 20% is from textile dyeing. Many countries where fast fashion clothes are created have reduced or no regulations for wastewater disposal. An estimated 70% of China’s lakes and rivers are contaminated by more than 2.5 billion gallons of waste from the textile industry (*EcoWatch*). Fashion generally has a large carbon footprint, emitting over 10% of global carbon emissions. Lydia Noyes (*EcoWatch*) reports that polyester production, common to fast fashion clothing, alone “emits more than 700 million tons of greenhouse gases each year, and some estimate the 2030 annual levels will be as high as 1.5 billion tons.”

Most fast fashion clothing is made from inexpensive synthetic materials to keep costs low. Unfortunately,

these materials do not break down in landfills and pollute water resources. Synthetic fabrics like polyester comprise 35% of all non-biodegradable microplastics in water (International Union for Conservation of Nature). According to an Earth.org article, microplastic fibres used in clothing enter the ocean, amounting to approximately 500,000 tons—the equivalent of 50 billion plastic bottles. This contaminated water increases the ocean’s plastic concentration and enters the food chain.

There are health and humanitarian concerns for individuals as well. For the consumer, a *Marketplace* investigation found that one in five items have elevated levels of lead, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances and phthalates. Thousands of children and women work extreme hours for poor wages, often in dangerous conditions, including exposure to harmful chemicals used in the process of producing and dyeing the clothing. Ms. Noyes notes that there are an estimated 168 million underage workers in the garment industry, with many of them children.

Women experience gender pay gaps and sexual harassment and are discriminated against when they get pregnant, being forbidden to take maternity leave even if the laws of their country prohibit such acts.

On a more positive note, there is a call from the United Nations Alliance for Sustainable Fashion for the fashion industry to change the negative environmental and social impacts. Some clothing companies are responding to consumer demand for more resilient garments from a sustainable industry. However, the price tag for clothing from these producers can be expensive. Fast fashion has captured the pocketbook of the young and those for whom the purchase of clothing competes with their ability to pay for basics such as food and shelter. Fast fashion allows for purchasing modern and trendy clothing comparable

Resolution 2023.01 Combating Textile Waste in Canada

to higher-priced items often purchased by more well-off peers. A return to borrowing and swapping clothes and fixing and upcycling (transforming old and discarded clothing into new, fashionable and wearable items) may help answer some of the needs filled by fast fashion garments.

The fast fashion industry's rapid production and consumption contribute to environmental waste and pollution and present health and human rights concerns. Part of the answer to this challenge is for more effective waste reduction and management strategies at all levels

of government, such as subsidies to combat textile waste as urged by the national resolution 2023.01 Combating Textile Waste in Canada. But an essential part of the answer is the need for consumer action. By becoming aware of what happens to discarded clothes, consumers can support sustainable and ethical fashion choices to mitigate these issues. Every member is urged to inform herself, her family, friends and acquaintances about this serious threat and take action to help reduce the impact clothing makes on the world. †

Know Your Clothing Fabrics

Dorothy Johansen

National Secretary-Treasurer



When looking at fabrics or yarns to buy or use for clothing or home décor, it would be good to know how these are manufactured so that members can make an informed choice on what they are using to understand their impact on the environment.

There are two types of fibres—natural and manmade. Natural fibres are generally cellulose-based or protein-based.

Common cellulose-based fibres are from bast or leaves such as flax, hemp, jute, abaca, sisal and ramie. These fibres are removed from the unneeded parts of the plant by retting and striping.

Seed cellulose-based fibres are cotton and kapok, made by harvesting the bolls (puffs) from the plants. The cotton bolls are processed to remove unwanted plant material (ginning) and then scoured with sodium hydroxide to remove natural waxes from the cotton. They are then dried, combed and spun into yarns for making fabric or thread. Kapok is harvested directly from trees and generally used for stuffing as it is unsuitable for spinning into yarn.

Protein-based fibres are classified as filament (silk) or staple (animal hair).

Silk fibres are made by harvesting cocoons made by silkworms and using the filaments. The filaments are held together by sericin, a gummy substance removed using soap and hot water. The filaments are twisted together to make strands large enough to be woven into fabric. Broken strands of silk can be spun together to form yarn.

Staple fibres are made from animal hairs such as sheep, goats, llamas, alpacas, rabbits, camels, bison, yak and vicuna. The hairs are cleaned, carded and spun into fibres. The finer hairs are made into clothing, while the coarse hairs are made into rugs.

Manmade fibres include natural or synthetic polymer-based fibres, using spinnerets to extrude a solution or melted polymer to form fibres. Streams of natural or synthetic melted polymer leave the spinneret and harden in open air or in a liquid to cause them to form fibres.

Natural polymer-based manmade fibres require mechanical processing to break the plants into pieces. The pieces are then mixed with chemicals. Firstly, they are steeped in sodium hydroxide to form alkali cellulose. Then, the cellulose is pressed to drain the sodium hydroxide and shredded to make the cellulose easier to process. Carbon disulphide is added to convert the cellulose into cellulose xanthate. Sodium hydroxide is then added to dissolve the xanthate. The solution is extruded through a spinneret into dilute sulphuric acid to create fibres. The common fibres made using this process are rayon (viscose), bamboo, acetate, triacetate, lyocell (Tencel™), modal and polylactic acid (PLA).

Synthetic polymer-based fibres are made from petroleum products that are polymerized and melted and include acrylic, nitril, lastrile, nylon, polyester, spandex, polyurethane, polypropylene and vinyl. †

Giving Praise on the Prairies Join Us for the 104th Annual National Convention of The Catholic Women's League of Canada

August 11-14, 2024, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Welcome to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the “Paris of the Prairies”! This city is beautiful and its friendly people are excited to offer you a memorable prairie experience! Saskatoon is the largest city in the province and occupies a bend on the South Saskatchewan River. It is also known as the “City of Bridges,” as nine bridges connect the city’s different areas. The city is named after the saskatoon berry—*misaskwatomina* in Cree. The berries flourish along the banks of the South Saskatchewan River.

Located on Treaty 6 land and the Homeland of the Métis, Saskatoon has a significant Indigenous population. Archeological excavations revealed that Indigenous peoples have lived in the Saskatoon region for more than 6,000 years! Plains Cree were the most common, but other First Nations cultures include the Saulteaux, Dakota and the Nakoda of Assiniboine.

Interestingly, the city’s roots have a connection to Eastern Canada, when in 1882, Chief Whitecap, a Dakota Chief, counselled John Lake, a Methodist preacher and commissioner of the Temperance Colonization Society of Toronto, on the location of the site for a new temperance colony in Saskatchewan. In June 1882, 3,100 colonists from Ontario, led by John Lake, settled the banks of the South Saskatchewan River and founded the city of Saskatoon.

The convention planning committee has organized some delightful events for your enjoyment.

Saturday, August 10: The convention activities will begin in the evening with a **Fiesta Filipino!** Saskatoon’s large Catholic Filipino community invites guests to gather at St. Patrick’s Church for a traditional, delicious meal which includes a whole roast pig! The opening dinner at 6:00 p.m. will be followed by an evening of entertainment hosted by the Filipino Heritage School. It will be fun unlimited! Buses will depart from TCU Place (convention centre) at 4:45 p.m. Buses will return to the convention centre at 9:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 11: Guests will be bused to a UNESCO World Heritage site just north of Saskatoon in the morning. **Wanuskewin Heritage Park** has been the site of Indigenous activities for more than 5,000 years. There, you will enjoy a delicious brunch and wander at your leisure, exploring ancient camping sites and a buffalo jump. You will be treated to First Nation’s entertainment and have access to all the galleries. There is also a gift

shop full of Indigenous creations if you are searching for a souvenir. Buses will leave TCU Place beginning at 9:00 a.m. Brunch will be served at 10:30 a.m., and the return transportation from Wanuskewin will leave at 1:00 p.m.—in time for you to attend the Resolutions Dialogue at 2:00 p.m. at the convention centre.

The opening **Eucharistic celebration** is at 6:00 p.m. at the beautiful Cathedral of the Holy Family. A wine and cheese reception will follow it in Bishop LeGatt Hall. Buses will begin leaving the convention site at 5:00 p.m. and provide return transportation to the convention centre immediately after the reception.

Monday, August 12: The beautiful Saskatchewan River flows through the heart of Saskatoon and, believe it or not, pirates were plying the waters, robbing traders and settlers as they ventured on the river. To celebrate this heritage, we will host an evening of **Pirates on the Saskatchewan River**. Guests are encouraged to come dressed as a pirate. Canadian recording artists The Johner Brothers with the Johner Boys, renowned for their version of “The Last Saskatchewan Pirate,” will present lively music for your dancing feet. The evening will be held at the convention centre starting at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, August 14: The **closing mass** will be at 5:00 p.m. at Holy Spirit Church. Buses will begin leaving the convention centre starting at 4:00 p.m. and return to the convention centre immediately following mass. This will give you ample time to prepare for the **Gala Banquet** in the Grand Salon at TCU Place at 7:00 p.m. The banquet is a time to reminisce with old and new friends and to say farewell until you meet again in 2025!

Thursday, August 15: Have you ever visited a berry orchard? Now is your chance! The Berry Barn is situated in the middle of the Saskatoon Berry Orchard on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River. Tour the orchard by taking a little train if you wish or stroll the beautiful flower gardens and orchard pathways and become one with nature! Buses will begin leaving the convention centre at 9:15 a.m. and get you there for **Breakfast at The Berry Farm** at 10:00 a.m. Of course, there is a shop filled with all sorts of saskatoon berry treats that you can purchase to take home. It will be a fun morning! Buses are planned to have guests back at TCU Place by 12:30 p.m. in time to catch an afternoon or evening flight. †

104th Annual National Convention

August 11-14, 2024

Convention Centre: TCU Place • 35 22nd St. East • Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 0C8
 • Registration limited to 900 people

PLEASE COMPLETE ONE FORM PER PERSON. PLEASE COMPLETE BOTH SIDES.

Registration Deadline for Special Events: July 12, 2024. Refunds are not guaranteed after July 12, 2024.

Name (please print) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____ Diocese: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Telephone: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Reg. #:	
Chq. #:	
Paid \$:	

I am attending this convention as a: (Please check ONE item in this section)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> National officer
<input type="checkbox"/> Voting delegate
<input type="checkbox"/> Provincial accredited delegate
<input type="checkbox"/> Diocesan accredited delegate
<input type="checkbox"/> Honorary life member
<input type="checkbox"/> Life member
<input type="checkbox"/> CWL member
<input type="checkbox"/> Military Ordinariate member | <input type="checkbox"/> Member of the hierarchy
<input type="checkbox"/> National spiritual advisor
<input type="checkbox"/> Provincial spiritual advisor
<input type="checkbox"/> Diocesan spiritual advisor
<input type="checkbox"/> Parish spiritual advisor
<input type="checkbox"/> Resource person – guest speaker, staff
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhibitor
<input type="checkbox"/> Guest at special event(s), no registration |
|---|--|

Other:

This is my first national convention: Yes No

I am attending the provincial dinner: Yes No

Dietary Needs:

Dairy-free Diabetic Gluten-free

Vegan Vegetarian

Other (specify) _____

Accessibility or Mobility Issues (please describe):

Registration fees for business sessions

	<u>Price</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday, August 12	\$ 75.00	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday, August 13	\$ 75.00	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday, August 14 OR	\$ 75.00	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> All Three Days*	\$ 175.00	_____

Registration Subtotal: (carry subtotal over to next page) \$ _____



Coupon Code for WestJet: 6G9Y9DF

Promotion Code: YBH32

Website: westjet.com/conventions

2%, 5% or 10% off selected fare classes

Travel from August 3-22, 2024

Questions? Feel free to email skcwl.convention@gmail.com.

104th Annual National Convention

August 11-14, 2024

Convention Centre: TCU Place • 35 22nd St. East • Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 0C8

• Registration limited to 900 people

Date	Time	Description	Price	Total
Saturday, August 10	4:45 p.m.	Fiesta Filipino An evening hosted by the local Catholic Filipino community. Dinner, entertainment and transportation included.	\$ 65.00	
Sunday, August 11	9:00 a.m.	Wanuskewin Heritage Park A sacred site of the Northern Plains Indigenous peoples. Brunch, Indigenous entertainment and transportation included.	\$ 65.00	
	5:00 p.m.	Transportation to Opening Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Family (15 minute bus ride)	\$ 13.00	
Monday, August 12	6:30 p.m.	Pirates on the Saskatchewan River Banquet Local food, live music, fun and dancing.	\$ 85.00	
Tuesday, August 13	Noon	Life Members' Luncheon (for life members only)	\$ 55.00	
	Noon	Spiritual Advisors' Luncheon (for spiritual advisors and bishops only)	\$ 55.00	
	1:45–2:45 p.m.	Breakout Session 1 (Registration required) <input type="checkbox"/> Membership <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Promotion	\$ 0.00	
	3:00–4:00 p.m.	Breakout Session 2 (Registration required) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Walk with Him</i> (Faith) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Depression/Anxieties in Women</i> (Service) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Be Not Afraid: An Interactive Workshop on Crafting Resolutions</i> (Social Justice)	\$ 0.00	
Wednesday, August 14	4:00 p.m.	Transportation to Closing Mass at Holy Spirit Parish (15 minute bus ride)	\$ 13.00	
	7:00 p.m.	Gala Banquet	\$ 85.00	
Thursday, August 15	9:15 a.m.	Breakfast at The Berry Barn Visit the Saskatoon berry orchards. Breakfast and transportation included. Return to TCU Place by 12:30 p.m.	\$ 55.00	

Total Special Events Fees: \$ _____

Registration Subtotal (from front): \$ _____

Total Fees Enclosed: \$ _____

Register online at cwl.ca or complete form and mail to:
National Office • C-702 Scotland Ave
Winnipeg, MB R3M 1X5

Please make cheques payable to:
The Catholic Women's League of Canada.
The cancelled cheque will be your receipt.

You are responsible for your own transportation to TCU Place.
The convention is a scent-free environment.

NOTE REGARDING CONVENTION HOTEL

The Hilton Garden Inn (convention hotel) is fully booked. The planning committee has reserved a block of rooms at an alternate hotel:



HOLIDAY INN DOWNTOWN

101 Pacific Avenue
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Reservations: (306) 986-5000

The hotel is a one-minute walk to the convention venue.

Please mention “CWL Delegates” when reserving a room.

Why Engage in Catholic Service?

Joline Belliveau

National Chairperson of Service

Subcommittee Members: Faith Anderson, Janet Brunger and Margaret Schwab



Catholic service is intertwined with the corporal works of mercy—feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, tending the sick, visiting the imprisoned and welcoming the stranger. It is members’ Catholic calling to follow these acts of mercy or acts of service. Pope Francis added another act of mercy—taking care of the planet.

Jesus sees every one of us—from the very poor to the very rich—and His way is not the same as the way of the world. Do you see Jesus in others? Acts of mercy (service) matter—whether you donate a blanket to a shelter or donate \$1,000. Have you ever needed support? If so, you will understand how, at times, even the smallest gestures mean much. Lately, there has been a tendency to downplay the ordinary ways of helping one another, such as knitting or crocheting goods and providing toothpaste, shampoo, etc., to those in need. Everyone can give in their own way and time—Canadians are capable of amazing deeds.

Members are aware of the areas of service provided by their parish councils. They can be seen helping in soup kitchens, knitting mittens, providing blankets for the homeless and providing toiletries to teen shelters. The corporal acts of mercy are part of the League’s fabric. Many parish councils help with projects to help the less fortunate. Wonderful examples of acts of compassion include providing Sunday lunch, delivering quilts for hospice care, driving the elderly or a person

with mental illness to church, helping to plant and take care of a small community garden and pushing a non-motorized wheelchair uphill to church!

Under the new structure, the service standing committee includes topics from the former Christian family life (sanctity of marriage, the family), community life (Development and Peace, Catholic Near East Welfare Association) and education and health (environment, genetics) standing committees. There are many topics from which to develop a project. Some may take a few hours and others may take a full year. For example, longer-term projects could include teaching a newcomer English or working in palliative care.

There are a vast number of topics/projects that can and should be expanded. In the following months, articles will develop some of these topics/projects with the hope that councils can develop an interest. These endeavours should be positive, joyful learning experiences for all members, sharing each other’s knowledge and talents.

Service should come from the heart. I hope this is the aim of all service—that it is done with love and compassion. If toxicity takes over a project, please quit—do not stick with it; move on to another. The ideas in this article are meant to give direction on areas of service—they are not cut in stone. I encourage councils to develop their own short- and long-term projects. I would love to hear councils’ ideas and, if permitted, share them with others in future communiqués. †

Here I am Lord, send me... To Be Your Voice

Glenda Carson

National Chairperson of Social Justice



The mental health focus for the 2024-2026 national theme, *Here I am Lord, send me*, lends itself to the dimensions of Catholic social teaching that members and Catholic women are called to embrace. Mental health and social justice are connected issues in Canada. Efforts to address mental health disparities often involve considering social justice factors, such as access to healthcare, economic opportunities and systemic inequalities.

While mental health and mental illness are often used as similar terms, there is a difference between the two. Mental health is one's state of well-being and usually refers to emotions, feelings of connectedness to others and how well the highs and lows of daily life are managed. Community-based programs and services often support mental health needs. Mental illnesses usually involve changes in behaviour, mood or thinking, as seen in medical diagnoses such as major clinical depression, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders and addiction. Care is more likely to require professional support, hospital admissions and clinic services. While there often is a crossover in some services and interventions for mental health and illness needs, there is a difference in accountability from the perspective of municipal, provincial and federal jurisdictions.

When reflecting on mental health and illness through the lens of social justice, thoughts easily go to medical assistance in dying (MAiD) and *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)*, which includes individuals whose sole medical diagnosis is mental illness as meeting the criteria for euthanasia. While this is a vitally important concern in society, other aspects of mental health and illness also need advocacy. Barriers exist for Canadians in accessing interventions and services, especially for youth, seniors, Indigenous people, men and women in federal correctional institutions and others living in isolated and rural areas. The International Mental Health Collaborating Network reports that stigma around mental illness prevents some individuals from seeking help, and those suffering systemic discrimination, such as immigrants and racial minorities, may experience mental health and well-being challenges. Some individuals are let go from their work, limited in their career progression or not hired because of a mental illness or a need for counselling because there is a lack of protection against discrimination. New mothers may suffer from a lack of

support when experiencing postpartum depression, which affects not only their health but also that of their babies. *The Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health* reports that more and more, Canadians hear of the plight of those who are homeless because of system barriers and lack of adequate support for their mental illness and addiction needs.

While the above scenarios do not describe all the mental health and illness challenges being faced in Canada, they do highlight the importance of addressing systemic issues to create more equitable and supportive environments. Pope Francis noted at the Italian National Conference on Mental Health in June 2021 the importance "to overcome the stigma with which mental illness has often been branded, and in general, to ensure that the culture of community prevails over the mentality of rejection, according to which greater care and attention is given to those who bring productive advantages to society, forgetting that those who suffer allow the irrepressible beauty of human dignity to shine forth in their wounded lives."

I invite members to reflect on the new national theme and take up the call to be informed advocates for change for those suffering mental health and illness challenges in their lives. There is no preferred initiative; actions are only guided by what members and councils determine should be their focus. Collectively, members can make a powerful contribution to a more just and mentally healthy society. †

CONGRATULATIONS!

**Congratulations to councils celebrating
anniversaries!**

100 YEARS

St. Lawrence Parish Council
Mulgrave, Nova Scotia

90 YEARS

Holy Rosary Parish Council
Minto, New Brunswick
St. Vincent de Paul Parish Council
Oromocto, New Brunswick

Spotlight!



100th Anniversary: St. Lawrence Parish Council (Mulgrave, Nova Scotia) gathered on August 26th to celebrate its 100th anniversary. Mass was celebrated by Most Rev. Wayne Joseph Kirkpatrick (Antigonish), along with parish priest Fr. Allan MacPhie and past spiritual advisors Frs. Bernard MacAdam, Tom MacNeil, Bill Crispo and Deacon Berkley Guthro. Members took part in the mass, and presentations were made to two members. Joan George received a maple leaf service pin and her 40-year pin. Mary MacAskill received a certificate of merit. Mass was followed by a lovely supper for members and guests catered to by St. Joseph Parish Council (Port Hawkesbury). In celebrating this centennial milestone, the council honoured the women who have dedicated their time, talents and energy to making a difference.



100th Anniversary: Saint Peter Parish Council (New Westminster, British Columbia) celebrated its 100th anniversary on April 23rd with mass celebrated by Most Rev. J. Michael Miller (Vancouver), followed by a reception in the parish hall. Presidents from all four League levels were in attendance. One of the many highlights of the event was honouring long-serving members who, together, represent 268 years of service. Hilde Meisl, at 103 years old, has been a member since 1952! These members' dedication "to grow in faith and witness to the love of God through ministry and service" is inspiring! Each member received a scroll noting the years of service and a rose presented by the presidents.



Pinning Ceremony: Saint Bartholomew Parish Council (Levack, Ontario) celebrated a pinning ceremony on June 3rd. Many members received their pins from five years of service to 70-plus years. Sault Ste. Marie Diocesan President Lisa Henry was present. Seventy-year pin recipients included May Gray, Angie Charlebois (104 years old) and charter member Leona Dawn.

Stamps for Development and Peace: New Brunswick Chairperson of Service Diane Dube (right) presents Mary Hanson, diocesan council chairperson for the Diocese of Saint John, New Brunswick Development and Peace, stamps collected since April 2023. The fundraising project will help people in the developing world. Appreciation is extended to New Brunswick parish councils that participated.



2023 New Life Members



Jacqueline Nogier

National Life Member Liaison

Life membership is not a retirement gift for years of generous service—it is a promise members make to the League to continue to support and actively serve the national council. In 2023, 11 women were accepted as life members. These new life members have demonstrated their love for the League by participating in research, presentations, or workshops and by encouraging others. They are all willing to serve on committees, prepare briefs or facilitate workshops if asked. These life members have vast League experience on diocesan and/or provincial councils. Members welcome these women and are grateful for their willingness and desire to continue to serve the League.



Marge (Margaret) Appell

Marge lives in Regina, Saskatchewan and has been a member all her adult life. She enjoys the friendships she has developed with members at all levels of the League.

Highlights of her service include work at parish, regional, diocesan and provincial levels. She has been recycled numerous times in her home council. Marge has been the chairperson of the Regina regional council and diocesan president, and served as a standing committee chairperson on the provincial council. She was a co-chairperson for the special events committee for the national convention held in Regina in 2013. Marge believes that all these things, plus travelling to many councils in the Regina diocese, was a privilege. Meeting members, celebrating anniversaries and presenting development days have given her a great understanding of the breadth and scope of the League.

Professionally, she taught in Regina Catholic schools for nearly 30 years, then worked as a pastoral assistant in her parish for 12 years. She continues to be involved in her parish council and her parish. Marge serves as a board member of a 76-unit affordable housing complex. She has 18 children, sons-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They are a wonderful source of pride and support and afford many opportunities for gathering.



Betsy (Elizabeth) Currier

Betsy joined the League with her mother's encouragement in 1993 and has held several executive positions in her home council at St. Jerome Parish in Sault Ste. Marie. In 2011, she was appointed to the diocesan council and served in various positions.

She is currently at the diocesan table as chairperson of spiritual development.

Betsy has served on the Ontario Provincial Council as diocesan past president and chairperson of legislation and is currently chairperson of Christian family life. She was also a member of the national resolutions committee and the national position paper review committee.

Betsy has presented workshops on leadership and public speaking, "Knowing the League—A Walk Through the *Constitution & Bylaws*", "Objects of the League", "Health Care Ethics (Informed Consent, Substitute Decision Making & Privacy)", discernment, an introduction to *S'Mores*, and a workshop on the League for spiritual advisors. She was a facilitator for "*Catch the Fire!*, Find Your Voice!" and, most recently, facilitated the national Unity Outreach survey to several parish councils.



Sheila Doherty

Sheila joined the League in 1997 at Holy Family in Kamloops, British Columbia and maintains her membership there. She helped the chairperson of Christian family life for one year, then held the positions of treasurer, chairperson of education and health, president-

elect, president and past president. At the diocesan level, she was chairperson of education and health, resolutions and community life, president-elect, president and past president. In 2017, Sheila received a commemorative medallion for service from Member of Parliament Cathy McLeod, celebrating Canada's 150th birthday. Sheila was elected to the provincial council in 2018 and served as chairperson of legislation and education and health.

Sheila co-convened the 2014 provincial convention and has been on committees for every diocesan convention that her parish has hosted since joining the League. She was co-convenor for the 2023 diocesan convention.

Sheila is an early childhood educator who has worked in this field for more than 40 years. In 1989, she opened Sheila's Family Daycare and currently operates it four days per week. Sheila married Chris in 1980 and has lived in Kamloops for over 40 years. They have two sons who attended St. Ann's Academy from kindergarten to Grade 12. She was the first school council chairperson for St. Ann's Academy and served for more than five years.



Ann D'Souza

Ann moved to Canada after living in Goa, Mumbai (Bombay) and Dubai. She is married to Oswald and has two married sons and a grandson. Working in the corporate world and ongoing involvement with League activities keeps her busy. Her family has

been instrumental in helping her carry on with various activities, juggling life as a mother, wife, career woman and volunteer at various charities.

Ann joined the League when St. Francis Xavier Parish Council (Mississauga, Ontario) was newly formed in 2000. Joining the League provided her with an opportunity to meet women who have influenced her personal and spiritual life. She held various standing committee positions and served as parish council president, Peel regional chairperson, Toronto diocesan president (2017–2019) and provincial chairperson of communications (2019–2022).

Ann is part of the team of facilitators that leads a public speaking and leadership course and facilitates parish executive training. She was part of the organizing committee for the 2011 national convention, was a sub-convenor for the diocesan convention in 2012 and was convention chairperson in 2013. She was awarded the maple leaf service pin in 2012.

In 2013, Ann was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II diamond jubilee medal for her work in her community and parish. Ann also volunteers her time fundraising for charities like MaterCare International Inc., Vita Centre and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). She was a member of the MaterCare board until 2017, when she became diocesan president. Ann is currently part of the 2025 national convention planning committee.



Laura Esposito

Laura grew up in the Kootenays, in Salmo, British Columbia. Her mom was a member, and Laura remembers helping serve food at many functions. Many spring and summer gatherings were held on their lawn since they had a large outdoor space.

Laura has been a member for 30 years. She became parish president in 1999 and has been chairperson of most standing committees at either the parish, diocesan or provincial levels.

On the provincial council, Laura has held the positions of secretary, and chairperson of communications and spiritual development. She currently serves as chairperson of service. Her passion with the League lies in the areas of resolutions and legislation. She believes that when people can right some of the wrongs they see in society, they truly serve. Through these areas, members can be the eyes, ears, mouth, hands and feet of Jesus on Earth.

Laura learned the importance of volunteering and giving back to others and her community from her parents. Laura is the treasurer of the Prince Rupert Friends of the Library board and helped plan the library's 100th anniversary. She is currently a member of a community choir and enjoys singing in harmony. Laura is a lector in her parish and regularly helps make soup for the church's soup kitchen. She helps organize and schedule the many ministries within the parish.

Laura and others in her parish make scarves, mitts and toques, which are distributed to those less fortunate in the community. Laura speaks four languages (Italian, French, Spanish and English), which helps her immensely when travelling. Laura taught for 38 years in the public schools.

Laura is passionate about the League and all it stands for. Members make a very positive difference in churches, communities and the world at large. She is proud to be a member and encourages all women to join this wonderful organization.



Helen Kayfish

Helen joined the League in 1990—a few months following the birth of her youngest child. She brought him to parish meetings, much to the delight of the “grandmas” there. Both Helen's mother and mother-in-law were long-standing members. Her

mother joined while her dad was in the military. Helen and her husband Glenn have been married for 43 and live in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. They have four grown, married children and 11 grandchildren.

Helen has served three times as parish council president as well as chairperson of most standing committees. She has served as Prince Albert diocesan president twice and chairperson of several committees at the diocesan level. She is currently the diocesan past president. Helen has served as provincial chairperson of communications and Christian family life. She is currently the provincial vice-president.

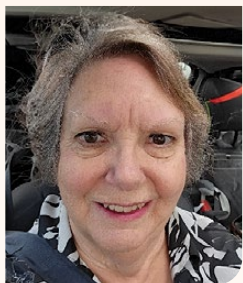


Catherine L'Heureux

Catherine was born to the late Dr. Hubert and Margaret Dumont in Vancouver, British Columbia. She is the seventh of 12 children. Catherine is married to Art, and they have five children and 16 grandchildren.

Catherine has been a member of the League for almost 30 years. During that time, she was on the executive at either the parish, diocesan or provincial level and loved every minute of it. She has held the positions of secretary, chairperson of Christian family life, legislation, resolutions and community life, president-elect, president and past president at the parish level. At the diocesan level, she was president-elect, president and past president. As diocesan past president, she organized and filed diocesan archives. At the provincial level, Catherine was chairperson of spiritual development and then president-elect. As the chairperson of spiritual development, she held a province-wide St. Joseph carving and carpentry contest. As the chairperson of organization, she organized a membership contest that brought in more than 125 new members. She received her maple leaf service pin for starting the St. James Catholic Girls' League, which is still operating.

Catherine has a bachelor of arts degree from the University of British Columbia and has her gold level in leadership and public speaking from Toastmasters International. She served 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 their oldest son with a business start-up. She describes herself as a creative, collaborative, courageous person.



Rebecca McCarrell

Rebecca was on London Diocesan Council for 18 years before becoming president in 2018. Her years as president of the largest diocese in Canada, consisting of 94 councils and approximately 10,000 members, occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rebecca is currently part of the provincial council and is the administrative assistant to Ontario Provincial President Linda Squarzolo. She is passionate about resolutions and legislation and has been a part of teams writing resolutions for over 20 years. Faith, fun and friendship are the attributes that keep her going in the League. She looks forward to spending many more years being a valuable member and mentor to the League and others.



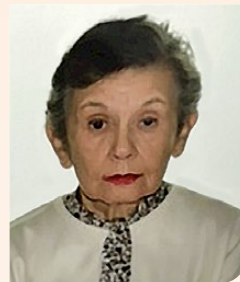
Joan Schurter

Joan was born and raised on a farm in Bruce County, Ontario (near Walkerton), where she began her teaching career. After she married Michael, they moved to Kitchener and raised three daughters.

Joan was a charter member of St. Anthony Daniel Parish Council in Kitchener and became

the secretary. She has continuously held many parish council executive positions. Joan served on the Hamilton diocesan executive, which culminated as diocesan president (2017–2019).

Joan was a member of the provincial education and health and communication subcommittees. Presently, she is a member of the implementation committee's recruit parish leaders working group.



Blanca Stead

Blanca immigrated to Canada from Chile in 1980 and now lives in Duncan, Vancouver Island. She is a retired science librarian and volunteers as a part-time archivist for the Cowichan Historical Society.

In 1989, attracted by the League's mission statement, she joined her parish council. Since then, she has served in most positions at the parish and diocesan level. She served as provincial chairperson of legislation and Christian family life. Blanca is currently a member of the national archives committee.

By her involvement in presenting workshops for the League, she acts on her beliefs that by educating members about the organization, they promote it and ensure more involvement and commitment.

In her home parish of St. Edward the Confessor, she is actively involved with liturgy, assists the pastor in the funeral ministry, and is part of the League's hospitality committee.

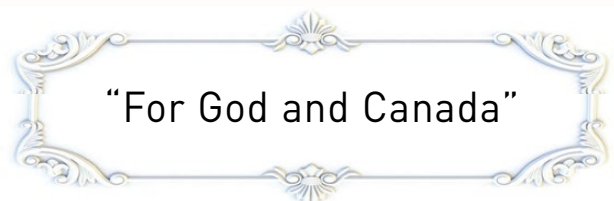


Kathy Weswick

Kathy joined the League in part in gratitude for the women of the League who made the local bazaar such a success with their work for the people of the parish and because she was impressed with the resolutions, which are part of the action of the League.

Kathy was born in the Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, as the eldest of a family of five children. She was a nurse in Calgary. Kathy spends her time volunteering for the League and for the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. Other interests are reading, gardening, travel, and visiting her young grandson. She lives in Victoria with her husband and sister-in-law.

Kathy is grateful to the League for the many experiences of participation and socialization, which have given her many gifts and friends. †



Here I Am Lord, Send Me

Rolande Chernichan

National Chairperson of Faith



The League has begun a new calendar year with new beginnings! National President Shari Guinta's spiritual theme for her presidency, unveiled at the national annual meeting of members in Saint John, New Brunswick, takes on a life of its own in guiding members for the next two years. Inspired by Isaiah 6:8 and accompanied by imagery and prayer, her theme is a bold statement and a challenge to members to listen for God's voice and to respond to God's call, *Here I am Lord, send me*.

The theme calls to mind the Old Testament account of Exodus, where God reveals himself to Moses: "I am who I am." Sacred scripture offers us a rich account of the prophet Samuel being called by God during the night, of Samuel not recognizing God's voice at first, of God's patience in calling him more than once, and of Samuel finally responding with "Here I am Lord." God, who had made himself known to Israel with the words "I am," draws us to respond to His call using the same words. The New Testament contains several more accounts of God, revealed through his Son, Jesus Christ, in terms that also begin with 'I am': "I am the bread of life" (Jn 6:35), "I am the light of the world" (8:12) and "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (14:6) to name a few.

Am I being called by God? How can I know? How will I hear God's voice? What is God's message for me? Ponder the significance of keywords in relation to your life situation. Spend time in prayer and more contemplation to help reveal a particular situation, God's call for action from

members, and where they are being sent.

In one of his homilies, Pope Francis said, "God is hidden in our life, he is always there—he is concealed in the most common and most ordinary situations in our life. He does not come in extraordinary events, but in everyday things. He manifests himself in everyday things. He is there, in our daily work, in a chance encounter, in the face of someone in need, even when we face days that seem grey and monotonous. It is right there that we find the Lord, who calls to us, speaks to us and inspires our actions." The Holy Father reminded Catholics that God's call "reaches us in a thousand ways—through others, happy or sad events." He cautioned, "Our attitude at times might be rejection. No... 'I am afraid'... Rejection because it seems to be in contrast to our aspirations; and even fear because we believe it is too demanding and uncomfortable: 'Oh no, I will never be able to do it, better not to, a calmer life is better...' Pope Francis emphasizes that "God's call is always love: we need to try to discover the love behind each call, and it should be responded to only with love."

Through this new theme and the League's core values of faith, service and social justice, members are encouraged to listen for God's voice in everyday encounters and situations and to respond to His call. Members can draw inspiration from the fiat of Mary, our patroness, whose response to Angel Gabriel, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord..." (Lk 1:38) was said with love and faith in God, "For nothing will be impossible with God" (1:37). †

The national theme is an invitation to read Isaiah 6:8 using the *Lectio Divina* method—in silence, read and meditate on keywords.

2024 Annual National Convention Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

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Introducing



Madonna Clark
New Brunswick
Provincial President

Madonna was born in Newcastle, New Brunswick. At a very young age, her family moved to Fredericton, where she resides. Madonna feels blessed to have attended St. Dunstan's

Catholic School from Grades 1 to 9. She and her husband, Robert, celebrated their 50th anniversary last year, having their marriage blessed at St. Kevin's Church in Dublin, Ireland. They have two adult children and a 16-year-old grandson.

Madonna joined St. Francis of Assisi Parish Council in 1990 as her mother, a 40-year member, transferred her membership because she needed transportation to meetings. Her late sister, Norah, also joined. Both women held parish positions. Madonna served as parish council president twice and received a maple leaf service pin for her work. She has fond memories of the convention time shared with her mother and sister. At the time, Madonna wondered how the women at the head table got there. She received a letter to apply for the diocesan level when the parish past president believed she could be of service, waited for the last eligible year to apply and then went for it. The rest, as they say, was history! Madonna's daughter Lynn, sister Norma and niece Beth are members of St. Francis of Assisi Parish Council.

One of the highlights of Madonna's faith journey includes chairing the catering at Fredericton City Hall's citizenship ceremony, which different faith communities volunteered to host. Another highlight includes hosting an Apple Cider Making Day fundraiser for Mary's Meals, an event featured in the article "Mary's Meals: A Simple Solution to World Hunger" in *The Canadian League* by the national chairperson of community life at the time. She was a national subcommittee chairperson of community life (refugees, immigration and citizenship) and interviewed parish priest Fr. Charles Udeh from Nigeria. The article "God's Call from Nigeria to New Brunswick" was also published in the League magazine.

Madonna was a facilitator for *Catch the Fire!* and the workshop, "My CWL 2022—Changing with the Times," and is now involved in the Unity Outreach. She was the chairperson of transportation during the 2014 national convention (Fredericton). Her meticulous planning and organizational skills ensured the event's success and left a lasting impact on attendees. Madonna has served as a member of the servant leadership team and represented the League as a member of a faith in diversity program. This program included women from eight different faith communities and St. Thomas University students, brought together by professor of religious studies Dr. Alexandra Bain.

Madonna was awarded life membership in 2020 and retired from the workforce after 42 years of dedicated service. She is a member of the YMCA and enjoys aqua-fit and gentle fit programs. Madonna finds it exciting to be a part of a national executive of like-minded, faith-filled women! †



Jessie Marie Parkinson
Nova Scotia
Provincial President

Jessie was born in Inverness, Cape Breton and raised in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia.

She attended Marianopolis College in Montreal, graduating in 1968 with a bachelor of arts degree with a major in music. Jessie had decided at age seven that she wanted to be a lawyer. Despite her mother's admonishment that "she would never get a husband that way," she entered Dalhousie University Law School in 1968. Upon graduation, Jessie moved to Vancouver, British Columbia. Upon her call to the bar, she practiced with the Vancouver City Prosecutor's Office and the British Columbia Crown Council Office until entering private practice in 1981. She has appeared as counsel at all levels of court, including the Supreme Court of Canada. In 2004, she received her certification in mediation from Dalhousie University Henson College.

Following a bout with breast cancer, Jessie retired from active practice and returned home to Nova Scotia in 1999. In 2008, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour hired her to establish a pilot project, the Office of the Worker Counsellor, for two years. She remained with the program until 2015.

Upon her retirement, Jessie was tapped by many volunteer organizations in her community. She is the past chairperson of the Tearmann Society for Abused Women, a guest lecturer in law at her local high school, a volunteer with Mentoring Plus (a program that matches retired people with those entering the workforce), a board member of the New Glasgow Music Festival for 19 years, and currently serves as the president of the Federation of Music Festivals of Nova Scotia. Jessie currently serves as executive secretary and chairperson of governance on the board of directors of the Catholic Women's Leadership Foundation. With her talents as a fundraiser, she is often called upon to chair local fundraising initiatives.

Jessie paddles with a breast cancer survivor dragon boat team and served as its chairperson from 2018-2022 and is the treasurer of Women Alike Breast Cancer Survivors Society. She has been inducted into the Pictou County Sports Hall of Fame with other members of her team and competed in the 2018 Breast Cancer Survivor International Dragon Boat Race in Florence, Italy.

Jessie is active in her church, St. John the Baptist. She is

a member of the parish council, has served as a lector and Eucharistic minister and directs the senior choir.

Jessie has been a member for 20 years and an executive member in one capacity or another for all of those years. She was elected chairperson of legislation at her first meeting! At the parish and diocesan council levels, she served as chairperson of organization, legislation and resolutions and as president and past president. She is currently the parish

council co-chairperson of social justice and fundraiser extraordinaire. On the provincial council, she previously served as chairperson of organization and spiritual development.

Married to David for 40 years, they have one daughter, Caitlin. Jessie resides in New Glasgow with David and their Havanese dog, Sully, where she loves decorating, reading, gardening, baking and fundraising. †

HAPPY Birthday

Congratulations to the following centenarians!

Anne Konkel

108 years old on July 14, 2023
St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish Council
Hamilton, Ontario

Martina Gutcher

106 years old on November 24, 2023
Sacred Heart Parish Council
Walkerton, Ontario

Lina Debray

104 years old on November 21, 2023
St. Bernadette Parish Council
Surrey, British Columbia

Anne Malyj

104 years old on
September 10, 2023
Our Lady of the Assumption
Parish Council
Edmonton, Alberta

Adeline Wingert

103 years old on June 2, 2023
St. Peter Parish Council
Regina, Saskatchewan

Emilia (Millie) Kuchma

102 years old on November 5, 2023
Our Lady of Good Counsel
Parish Council
Rainy River, Ontario

Rozi Zorko

102 years old on May 27, 2023
St. Gerard Parish Council
Calgary, Alberta

Nella Amaolo

101 years old on August 26, 2023
St. Ambrose Parish Council
Toronto, Ontario

Marion Rutledge

101 years old on August 15, 2023
Holy Cross Parish Council
London, Ontario

Clara Brazeau

100 years old on July 13, 2023
Sacred Heart Parish Council
Roblin, Manitoba

Patricia Cormier

100 years old on October 3, 2023
St. Bernard Parish Council
Moncton, New Brunswick

Brenda (Bronia) De Jong

100 years old on August 28, 2023
Immaculate Heart of
Mary Parish Council
Grand Bend, Ontario

Marie DeBlois

100 years old on October 25, 2023
Our Lady of Fatima Parish Council
Cochrane, Ontario

Edythe Gillis

100 years old on October 28, 2023
Our Lady of the Assumption
Parish Council
Edmonton, Alberta

Betty Gollat

100 years old on October 7, 2023
St. Andrew Parish Council
Thunder Bay, Ontario

Sophie Hamer

100 years old on October 19, 2023
St. Gerard Parish Council
Calgary, Alberta

Bernadette Lesperance

100 years old on November 12, 2023
Our Lady of the Assumption
Parish Council
Windsor, Ontario

Stella Michalski

100 years old on July 6, 2023
St. Stanislaus Kostka Parish Council
Hamilton, Ontario

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