



The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council
Community Life Oral Report
Provincial Convention 2019 Grande Prairie, AB



Madame President:

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord, and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord (Isaiah 11:1-4a, 7, 9)

What an inspiring image of what God hopes for each of us, and all of Creation. How appropriate this passage is for this standing committee, for it speaks to our hearts of God's longing for justice, dignity and peace, not just for humanity, but for everything created by God. Hence our ongoing commitment as women of our League, to God's call for justice and righteousness, to further God's reign on earth beginning each new day. The next five years will see our passion for this vision highlighted as we implement the Strategic Plan which brings into sharper focus our core values of faith, justice and service. Clearly the topics of the Community Life committee: dignity and rights of persons, social and economic justice, refugees, support for our Indigenous sisters, and the work of Development and Peace, come together and are interconnected with the three core values of the League. I take great comfort and hope as I become increasingly aware of the great work that our women are doing throughout our province, and across the country, to bring to fruition Jesus' vision of God's kingdom here on earth, today!

In the encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis clearly prioritizes the concept of "*Integral Ecology*." *We are not faced with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.*" (LS) Pope Francis also calls for a "social ecology" that recognizes that "*the health of a society's institutions has consequences for the environment and the quality of human life.*" (LS) In the words of Thomas Reese, "This includes the primary social group, the family, as well as wider local, national, and international communities. When these institutions are weakened, the result is injustice, violence, a loss of freedom, and a lack of respect for law -- all of which have consequences for the environment. This interconnectedness means that "*environmental exploitation and degradation not only exhaust the resources which provide local communities with their livelihood, but also undo the social structures which, for a long time, shaped cultural identity and their sense of the meaning of life and community.*" (LS) In various parts of the world, our Pope notes, indigenous communities are being pressured "to abandon their homelands to make room for agricultural or mining projects which are undertaken without regard for the degradation of nature and culture." (NCR 9, 27, 2015)

Ladies, I urge you to take the moral challenge of *Laudato Si* to heart, and accept the challenge of Pope Francis to not only learn about *Integral Ecology*, but to live it and help to further the work of Christ who began his mission with the words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18,19)

I encourage you to collect funds for the Development and Peace 1% project and only forward them after receiving approval from National office. Finally, I draw your attention to a handout at my display with information for you to symbolically walk with refugees. The sheet provides information for you to record distances that you walk, either alone or with a group, as a personal action of solidarity with so many helpless people around the world who have no choice but to walk to save their lives and hope for a better future for themselves and their families. This concludes my report.

Sr. Susan Scott CAF