

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada  
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council**

**COMMUNICATIONS**

**February 2018**

**Inspired by the Spirit, Women Respond to God's Call**



<b>TO:</b>	<b>Diocesan Chairpersons of Communications</b>
<b>CC:</b>	<b>Provincial Executive (for information)</b>
<b>CC:</b>	<b>National Chairperson of Communications (for information)</b>
<b>CC:</b>	<b>Webmaster (for information)</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>Annette deBoer, ABMK Provincial Chairperson of Communications</b>

"The truth will set you free" (Jn 8:32).

**Thus began Pope Francis's message for World Communications Day on January 24, 2018.**

Pope Francis reminds us that *"We are able to describe our own experiences and the world around us, and thus to create historical memory and the understanding of events. But when we yield to our own pride and selfishness, we can also distort the way we use our ability to communicate...when we are faithful to God's plan, communication becomes an effective expression of our responsible search for truth and our pursuit of goodness. In today's fast-changing world of communications and digital systems, we are witnessing the spread of what has come to be known as "fake news". This calls for reflection, which is why I [Pope Francis] have decided to return in this World Communications Day Message to the issue of truth, which was raised time and time again by my predecessors, beginning with Pope Paul VI, whose 1972 Message took as its theme: "Social Communications at the Service of Truth". In this way, I would like to contribute to our shared commitment to stemming the spread of fake news and to rediscovering the dignity of journalism and the personal responsibility of journalists to communicate the truth.*

The rest of Pope Francis's message can be found at the link below:

[https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco\\_20180124\\_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20180124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html)

In order to express only the truth as much as we can, we need to do our part to stop the spread of fake news, and any other hurtful or discriminatory social media posts we see. While not totally fail proof, we can check out <https://www.snopes.com/> **Snopes.com** is known as *"the definitive fact-checking and Internet reference source for urban legends, folklore, myths, rumors, and misinformation."* Even if something is true, take the time to ask yourself if the world will be a better place for having the information spread about or will you just be promoting sensationalism or alarm. Having the means to share information does not always mean we should – remember the saying "God gave us two ears and one mouth, so we would listen twice as much as we speak"!

In the October 2017, the government announced its response to the **Report on the Public Health Effects of the Ease of Access and Viewing of Online Violent and Degrading Sexually Explicit Material on Children, Women, and Men.** The Link Below takes you to the complete document.

[http://www.ourcommons.ca/content/Committee/421/HESA/GovResponse/RP9148083/421\\_HESA\\_Rpt11\\_GR/421\\_HESA\\_Rpt11\\_GR-e.pdf](http://www.ourcommons.ca/content/Committee/421/HESA/GovResponse/RP9148083/421_HESA_Rpt11_GR/421_HESA_Rpt11_GR-e.pdf)

The government response includes

- † Updating the Guidelines for Sexual Health Education
- † Producing public awareness resources on how to stay safe on the internet

- † Support for **Cypertip.ca** (<https://www.cybertip.ca/app/en/>) a hotline for reporting online sexual exploitation of children
- † Support for **Kids in the Know** (<https://www.kidsintheknow.ca/app/en/>) the Canadian Centre for Child Protection’s national safety education program
- † The government will continue to work with providers (tech companies, electronic, software, and browser developers) to assist parents with protecting their children online and
- † The government will continue to support efforts to block Canadians from foreign based internet addresses associated with images or videos of child sexual abuse.

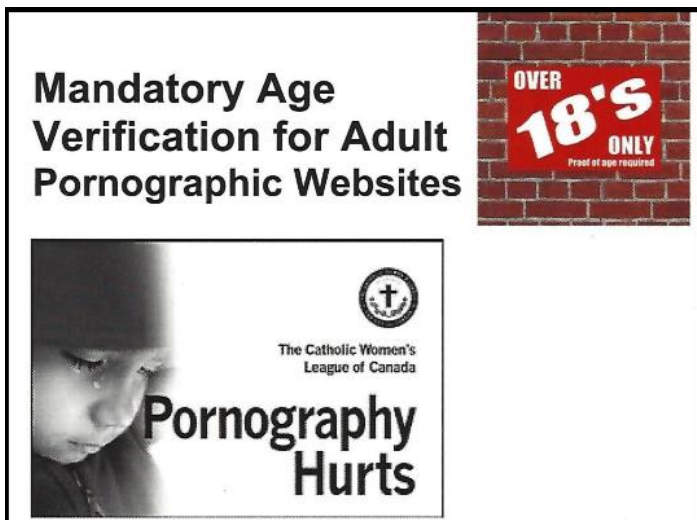
While this is all well and good, it still does nothing to limit access to adult pornographic sites to those over 18 years of age. The web blog created by *Hope for the Sold* has a very good analysis of the government’s response (and other good social justice topics) and can be found at [hopeforthesold.com](http://hopeforthesold.com) (Link below)

<http://hopeforthesold.com/5-things-you-should-know-about-the-health-ministers-response-to-pornography/>

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council is continuing work on the National CWL Resolution **2017.02 Mandatory Age Verification Mechanisms for Adult Pornographic Websites**. The Council has purchased 10 viewings of **Over 18 - A Documentary About Pornography**. Your Diocesan Council will be discussing how to best present this documentary in your areas, to reach the most people.

In addition, a member of Provincial Council has designed a postcard to facilitate action by the CWL and by members of the general public to request the government to enact legislation that requires age verification for all adult pornographic websites. These postcards are available now, for a price of \$7.50 per package of 250 (\$30 for 1000 postcards) plus shipping costs. Postcards can be purchased by contacting Sister Susan Scott at [abmkprovcomlife@gmail.com](mailto:abmkprovcomlife@gmail.com) or 780-968-5543 (leave a message if there is no answer). Preferred payment method is by cheque made out to Alberta Mackenzie Provincial CWL.

These postcards are designed with space for a personal message, and can be sent to any member of the federal government. While there are differing opinions as to whether postcards are worthwhile, it is known that a handwritten personal message included makes them more effective; it does not have to be a long message. And if we send, and continue to send, then it is to be hoped that the government will eventually get our message. It is our plan that postcards will also be available for sale at Diocesan and Provincial CWL conventions being held this spring and summer. It might be good to remind the government that mandatory age verification for websites is already being used for online gambling sites – so we know the technology is available and they just need to put the laws in place to take a huge step towards protecting our children.



*Return Address:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

No postage required

House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

We urgently request that our government enact laws requiring mandatory age verification mechanisms for adult pornographic websites.

\_\_\_\_\_

*Signature*

While we continue to pressure the government for action parents also need to be proactive about speaking to their children about the dangers of the internet and about pornography. Not an easy subject at any time, there is a book available which may help called **Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids**. It's a read-aloud book that introduces an awkward topic in a comfortable way, written by Kristen Jenson, who is also the founder of **Protect Young Minds**, a website dedicated to helping parents empower their kids to reject pornography  
<https://protectyoungminds.org/>

Another site that provides a huge amount of information for parents and teachers is **Media Smarts** -  
<http://mediasmarts.ca/>

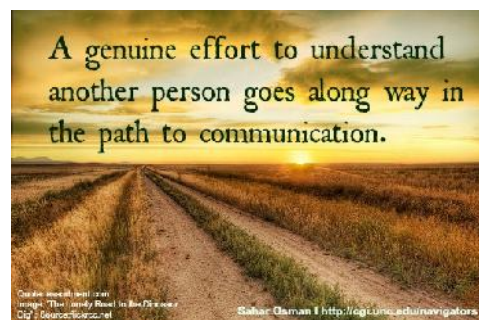
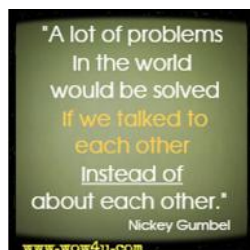
It may seem that the focus of this standing committee is on electronic media, and that is true because it is the communication tool that has taken over much of the heart and minds of especially our young people, and like so many new innovations, it is growing much faster than our ability to know how it will affect our lives and our communities. On February 1, 2018 Bell Canada used text messages, mobile and long distance calling, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat to raise almost seven million dollars to help support mental health initiatives. Part of their discussion was on how social media has shaped the lives of the first generation to grow up with access to all that technology, and how many new mental health concerns, physical health concerns and social community health concerns have developed over the last 20 years related to the use of "personal devices".

A communique released by the National Chairperson of Communications, Shari Guinta, at the end of January talks about an article in the *Toronto Star* that reports that the federal privacy commissioner says Canadians need better tools to protect their online reputations. The article goes on to say that Canadians should have the right to "easily delete information they've posted about themselves on social media and have the right to challenge information that's illegal, inaccurate, incomplete or out of date." All members are encouraged express their views to the privacy commissioner on personal privacy and freedom of information.

Please remember and encourage your family, friends, and CWL sisters – the best protection for each of us, and our reputations, is to practice internet etiquette and never post anything that we may not want to be viewed by the whole world, and to use the internet safety tools that are available to us (many are free) to protect yourselves while online.

#### Other online resources to assist in the efforts to combat pornography:

- † Covenant Eyes <http://www.covenanteyes.com> – internet accountability software and helpful e-books for download.
- † Defend Dignity <https://defenddignity.ca/> fights against commercial sexual exploitation
- † Fight the New Drug <https://fightthenewdrug.org/> articles and videos detailing the effects of pornography in many areas.
- † Integrity Restored <http://integrityrestored.com/> helps the recovery of those affected by pornography
- † Strength to Fight <https://strengthtofight.ca/> a Canadian website that fights for a porn free Canada.



## Pope Francis' Prayer for Countering "Fake News"

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Help us to recognize the evil latent in a communication that does not build communion.

Help us to remove the venom from our judgments.

Help us to speak about others as our brothers and sisters.

You are faithful and trustworthy; may our words be seeds of goodness for the world:

Where there is **shouting**, let us **practice listening**;

Where there is **confusion**, let us **inspire harmony**;

Where there is **ambiguity**, let us **bring clarity**;

Where there is **exclusion**, let us **offer solidarity**;

Where there is **sensationalism**, let us **use sobriety**;

Where there is **superficiality**, let us **raise real questions**;

Where there is **prejudice**, let us **awaken trust**;

Where there is **hostility**, let us **bring respect**;

Where there is **falsehood**, let us **bring truth**.

Amen.

– Pope Francis, message for World Communications Day 2018