

CWL National Convention 2017
Charlottetown Prince Edward Island
August 7-11
Judy Look
President -Elect

Change is coming dear sisters! Change is coming! What a wonderful 4 days! 938 registrants participated in days filled with joy, study, tears, laughter, sunshine, rain and wind all rooted in the love we have for our God, our sisters and our community. 38 of the 938 came from Alberta Mackenzie.

The **resolution dialogue** the afternoon of Sunday August 6th introduced the four resolutions approved for presentation on the convention floor

- **2017.01 Community Life:** Full Implementation of the Supreme Court Decision in R.v. Gladue for Indigenous Offenders;
- **2017.02 Communications:** Mandatory Age Verification Mechanisms for Adult Pornographic Websites;
- **2017.03 Legislation:** Zero-Rated Status Under the Goods and Services Tax Provisions of the *Excise Tax Act* for Child Safety Products;
- **2017.04 Legislation:** Protection from Coercion of Conscience for Healthcare Professionals.

Following the resolutions dialogue we scampered off to St. Dunstan's Cathedral for the celebration of the **Eucharist and Opening Ceremonies** with more than 1000 people present as the local parishioners were there for their regular Sunday Mass. Something happens when you watch the procession of flags followed by the bishops and priests. You begin to see a picture of sea to sea to sea and you are filled with pride and awe knowing you are part of it.

Monday was **workshop day**. It began with a Eucharistic Celebration and followed by the first workshop *'Gift of Gratitude'* presented by Ken Yasinski. "Attitude of Gratitude" was his focus. He mentioned that complaining is self focused and kills gratitude; gratitude is a **choice** and not an emotion; gratitude promotes better memories, relationships, less depression and a longer life. Our Eucharistic prayers are prayers of gratitude.

Five things we can do to grow in gratitude:

- Get ride of our blame list,
- start a gratitude journal – each day write 5 things you are thankful for
- have visual reminders along with self talk
- express your thanksgiving recall times in your life when God has worked perfectly

The second workshop **"A Catholic Identity Crisis"** was also presented by Ken Yasinski. His focus was the need to know who we are as Catholics. We need to look to the Church, scriptures and the Catechism of the Catholic Church to get a clear

picture of our identity. **Article 767** in the Catechism states that “the church in her very nature is missionary, sent by Christ to all the nations to make disciples of them”, therefore we are to be evangelizers. He mentioned that we are catechized but not evangelized. We need to get out of our comfort zones and start talking about Jesus to others. When people are in pain instead of saying I will pray for you, begin the process **right there and pray with them** asking God to bless them and heal them. We must stop being afraid to become who we are : messengers of God’s love through his son Jesus.

Monday afternoon began with **The Memorial Service** followed by the business session with the usual call to order, etc. The provincial presidents began their reports finishing up with the national presidents report. Bishop McGrattan reminded us that on July 1, 2017 the Bishops of Canada consecrated Canada to our Blessed Mother and suggested we keep her in mind each day as we pray. Our luncheon on Monday was a gathering of delegates who held the same position at parish, diocesan, provincial and national. There was an opportunity to ask questions and share ideas.

Tuesday began with a Eucharistic celebration followed by Dr. Reginald Bibby’s *Canada’s Catholic*. His presentation focused on statistics which indicated that Christianity and the Catholic Church in Canada were alive and well.. He mentioned, supported by his research data, that people join organizations that they find significant and that there has been a major cultural shift as we have moved from obligation to gratification. Followed by his statistics presentation he focused on CWL and our crisis of membership with the following observations:

- Solution does not lie merely with recruitment
- Women pressed for time and money need to find their involvement worthwhile
- The heart of the solution is conscious, complementary ministry

He concluded with a slide that said: **What if first and foremost when people thought of the CWL they thought of women in the Catholic Church who care about each other and try to enrich lives; Catholic women who care for God, for Canada for Canadians.**

The second workshop in the morning was Donna Dunn’s *Building the Foundation, the League of the Future* where we all took part in the country wide Town Hall Meeting. To watch the technology work was mind boggling as answers were coming in from all over the country. Three questions were asked:

- What would you like to see the League do differently?
- What is one thing you would like to see the League stop doing?
- What does the League of the future look like to you?

There was a sense of great anticipation as we all recognized that the League needs an over haul.

Before breaking for lunch there was a very moving ceremony as the new life members were welcomed into Life Membership. The afternoon began with the business session. The national chairpersons gave their reports mentioning objectives and challenges. These reports will be on the national website. The resolutions were presented following the individual chair reports.

Wednesday opened with a **prayer service** as the Eucharist was being celebrated at the closing mass at St. Dunstan's Cathedral . The steering committee from *Building on Foundation, the League of the Future* presented the results of the Town Hall Meeting from the Tuesday session. . This was an interactive presentation with delegate participation. It was followed by a report that gave an overview of the process to date. The "strategic plan "or "planning strategically" will cover 5 years. We need to get it right ladies.

Rita James, the Chair of the Leadership Foundation gave a brief history as well as a year to date report. It is accepting applications for the program which begins May 2018. It will be a yearly program operating from St. Paul's University, Ottawa. The course will include a 5 days residency, 11 months on line study and 4 days on campus. There is the potential of 14 candidates a year.

We listened to Dr. June Webber present on Coady International giving us their history and their present day story.

Back to business as the resolutions continued to be presented. Much discussion took place about each resolution with suggested amendments, etc. In the end when the president called for the question the floor voted positively on each one.

Bishop McGrattan reported that the Bishops had a town hall meeting of their own. He mentioned that the Bishops hope that CWL does not lose sight of its identity in the new strategic planning process. We are to hold on to our values both spiritual and faith based. CWL is a community within the community of the parish and we should not be in competition with other groups. What we do as CWL and as human beings should always be an encounter with God.

The closing Mass was again at the Cathedral followed by the retirement of the flags.

At the banquet we said our good byes to our sisters and all were looking forward to Convention 2018 in Winnipeg.

It was an exciting 4 days and it was a privilege to represent you. For a more detailed report the national website will be your resource.