

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
CWL ABMK Provincial Oral Report to National Convention (Ottawa)
Monday, August 9, 2010

Madame President:

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council membership for 2009 was at 10,057 and with the initiatives afforded by National and Diocesan councils having their own unique initiatives, including some receiving inquiries for interest in new council start-ups, we are certain that number will grow beyond our expectations!

Our five dioceses held their conventions with the theme of *Women of Peace and Hope* which was truly evident in their speaker choices, prayer services and displays. The majority of the speaker topics related to euthanasia, assisted death, dignity therapy, palliative or hospice care, and forgiveness. At the Calgary convention Bishop Henry of Calgary spoke on *Hope* and Mary Nordick, National chair of Community Life spoke on *Hope for Africa*.

I was pleased to be able to represent our provincial membership at many of these conventions and to observe the numbers of members who attend and the range of formality but always the keen desire to pass on knowledge and energize the members.

The Year for Priests was embraced and councils held various creative functions to recognize, thank and show continued support of their past and present clergy. One Diocese's initiative to get to know their priests better through a *Your Time to Shine* event had their spiritual advisor speak on his call to the priesthood. Another had a presentation *Called to Serve* where their Deacon spoke on his role and his journey of faith which began later in his life as he was not baptised until the age of 50.

Over the past year Alberta Mackenzie councils continued to work on projects locally and overseas to support the poor. Our Pennies for the Poor project which began in 2006 has generated in excess of \$35,000 being sent to Sr. Maria Goretti in Burundi.

Councils have written letters to local, provincial and federal government expressing their views on issues like euthanasia, pornography, and trafficking. Members have also been made aware of the importance of organ and tissue donation.

Leadership will be one of the main focuses in the months ahead as we continue to hear of the struggles in councils to elect an executive.

Alberta Mackenzie has seven Catholic Girls' Leagues. As I attended the Diocesan conventions I challenged each Diocese to have at least one CGL within the next 12 months. A couple have already begun to work on this.

Our dioceses have many reasons to be proud of the work their members accomplish.

- The Calgary Diocese has raised \$1.2 million for the St Mary's College CWL Chair Foundation. Their bishop has challenged all his priests who do not have a CWL in their parish to establish one.
- The Edmonton Diocese supports St. Benedict's chapel in downtown Edmonton by covering one month's operational costs. They have also been very generous in their donations to the Cornerstone of Faith campaign for the new St. Joseph's Seminary and Newman Theological

College which accommodates seminarians from across Canada.

- St. Paul Diocese had exceptionally strong support for Walk for Life and their members volunteer many hours at women's shelters and crisis centres.
- The Diocese of Grouard-McLennan works closely with their Catholic schools in fundraising and providing leadership. They are excited about a new summer camp program where Grandmothers are teaching faith to their grandchildren.
- The Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith devoted large amounts of time to presentations on human trafficking given by the RCMP, the Native Women's Association and Immigration Canada.

Our Provincial Convention was held in Fairview which involved some members travelling in excess of 1200 kilometres to attend. On Friday we recognized our CWL members in the Military Ordinariate and showed support of our troops by wearing red. It was a moving scene to look out on the delegates and see nothing but red. The solidarity with our sisters in the Mil Ord was enhanced by our speaker, Denise K., telling of her life as a CWL member married to a soldier who has had active service.

Our moving spirituals drew tears and applause while the speakers on *Promoting Peace* and *Journey into Life* did so to standing ovations.

Training workshops were given by each standing committee chair with evaluations indicating more of the same is needed. My workshop on membership included a demonstration on how to use the new online membership. Members left with a clear understanding of the need for all councils to utilize this process and the reality of the simplicity to use the online program.

This concludes my report.

Fran L.,
Alberta Mackenzie
Provincial President