



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



PRESIDENT

Communiqué #5

DATE: August 3, 2020

TO: Diocesan Presidents of Alberta and NWT
CC: Provincial Executive (for information)
CC: National President (for information)
FROM: Judy Look Provincial President

Faith

Service

Social Justice

Three Cups of Tea

It's been a while since we shared a cup of tea and I think you may need two or three cups before you finish this. I have been trying to compose this communiqué for several weeks. I began around June 8th, the time for our Alberta Mackenzie convention in Lac La Biche but it would not come together. At that time, I was going to mention our collective grieving for that weekend. All the plans and hard work of our League sisters from the Diocese of St. Paul in preparation for the convention were not going to come to fruition. The weekend was going to focus on "Care for Our Common Home... Building Relationships and Effecting Change". The presence of our special guest, Ann Marie Gorman, National President, would have reminded us that our organization operates on so many levels including the world stage. We would have grown in our relationships with our God and sisters through the different presentations by our speakers. Bishop Paul Terrio, Bishop of St. Paul Diocese, would have helped us examine our relationship with God and how that relationship makes a difference in our community. Speakers from the Catholic Health and Education communities, Joanne Malloy from Covenant Health Care and Bonnie Annicchiarico from GrAce (Grateful Advocates of Catholic Education a gift to us from the ACSTA and the Bishops of Alberta) would have invited us to develop connections with the other players of the catholic community in our province. The Sanctity of Life presentation would have reminded us of the many tentacles of the culture of death and the importance of working for life. Sr. Jean Davidson, SSND would have gifted us with strategies to build relationships with our indigenous sisters and Rita Gladue, an elder of the Beaver Lake Cree Nation, would have shared some of her traditions with us. Our Honorary and Life members were to play a part by sharing their wisdom and expertise over lunch and we would have remembered our deceased sisters in a beautiful memorable service. We would have shared the body, blood, soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ as we would have celebrated two masses together and our provincial executive would have reconfirmed their commitment to you and the Catholic Women's League before God. Our banquet would have celebrated those councils who worked hard growing their membership and we would have celebrated Elsie Yanik. We would have been energized for another year reminding us that laughter, joy and fun is truly the mark of a Catholic Women's League member.

But the weekend and its joy was not to be, so the question becomes what is to be? Our councils have been working hard to stay connected and it is becoming more difficult as COVID – 19 fatigue sets in. I hear things like: Enough already; I don't think I can take much more of this; What do you mean a new normal; My hands are drying out from all this sanitizing and washing; My bubble needs to expand; What does "my cohort" mean and I Just Need a Hug. We are in constant flux as we listen to the roller coaster reporting of numbers determining what we can and cannot do. Then I received a nudge.

The nudge said that in all this flux there is one thing that has not changed and will not change and that is the reality that "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it". No matter what happens out there our reality does not change because our reality is rooted in God and God does not change nor the joy and peace that is available to us through our faith. Stop asking why is this happening **To** you and replace it with why is it happening **For** you.

WOW! Immediately questions popped into my mind! Why was this happening "for" the Catholic Women's League? How was shutting down our busyness a good thing? If our relationships with our sisters in our councils was important, how can we grow them if we can't get together?

"Pray!" hollered at me – individual prayer for courage and group prayer for support. As Alberta Mackenzie Prays the Rosary Wednesday nights it struck me that it is an opportunity for support. It gives our sisters from across the province the opportunity to get together each week by "ZOOM"-ing in. Yes, we are praying for the end of the pandemic, but it is much more than that. Each week averages 33 smiling faces greeting one another. We come to pray but also to celebrate each other. Since we began we have celebrated a book launch, several milestone birthdays, celebrated Canada Day with a heart rendering performance of O Canada (no we aren't going on tour), prayed for our sisters who have recently lost spouses, brought a beverage to toast ourselves, heard the pain of those who send in weekly petitions and rejoiced when others joined us like husbands, grandchildren and children. We light a candle every week as a reminder of the presence of Christ and we put our petitions into a "Mary "bag so that we continue to pray for the previous intentions as well as our new ones.

We are doing something concrete to rid the world of COVID- 19; we are praying together. Then I began to think of Our Lady of Good Counsel. Why was she chosen to be our patroness? Who gives her much thought from one April 26 to another? Checking out her prayer I read , "intercede with your Son for us that we may be faithful to our baptism, fervent in prayer, and generous in the service we give to our sisters and brothers," and I thought what a difference we could make if we prayed that prayer along with our League prayer everyday. We wouldn't have time for COVID-19 fatigue. Then I thought, along with all the gifts The Catholic Women's League gives to us, the encouragement to leave our self-centeredness behind and move to selflessness where the "other" becomes more important than "I" is its greatest gift. The League reminds us that we are servant leaders and serve each other in a multitude of ways. Right now we are called to serve through prayer so that the Holy Spirit and his spouse the Blessed Mother can work through us. The more we immerse ourselves in the word of God the more action will happen but it will be God-driven action and not me-driven action. Yes, maybe we are at home with some things on hold but that does not preclude God given action through letter writing to MP's and MLA's on life issues such as euthanasia, abortion, human trafficking and ethical behavior. It does not stop us from responding to God's nudges through studying the word of God everyday to make

strong our foundation of faith; it does not allow much time for whining or complaining about what should be happening but more thinking about what can I do to make a difference. Yes, ask yourself why is this happening for me and God will surprise you with a new beginning.

Action:

- Pray daily the League Prayer, the prayer to Our Lady of Good Counsel, and the Prayer for The Unborn Child by Archbishop Fulton Sheen.
- Please read the communiqués posted by our committee chairs referring to personal directives, St. Vincent de Paul, human trafficking, education and legislative issues and ask Our Lady of Good Counsel for guidance for your actions.
- On our website you will find two letters written to our provincial government. Please read them and compose a letter to your MLA supporting our position. <http://www.cwl.ab.ca>
- Go to page 14 and 15 of the National Policies and Procedures manual and find the essence of what it means to be a League member. <https://cwl.ca/resources/600-series-manuals/>
- Write a letter congratulating Barb Dowding, past national president, on her new position as Chancellor for the Diocese of Vancouver. <https://bccatholic.ca/news/catholic-van/archdiocese-s-first-lay-chancellor-breaks-two-traditions-at-once>
- Send a note to your Diocesan Bishop thanking him for his leadership in this difficult time.
- Send a letter of support to your parish priest as he works at keeping your parish alive and well in this time of pandemic.
- Register for the National Council webinars August 10-14. <https://cwl.ca/summer-speaker-series-registration/>

I am presuming you had at least two cups of tea so I will conclude with this gift of gratitude. The Alberta Bishops and Bishop Jon Hanson of the North West Territories wanted me to thank all of you for your support for your local parish as you help your parish priest open up for Masses.

Remember “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” as it’s the only day we have so lets bring the spirit of the Catholic Women’s League to everything we do so we can build relationships, effect change and be major players as we Care for Our Common Home.

Judy