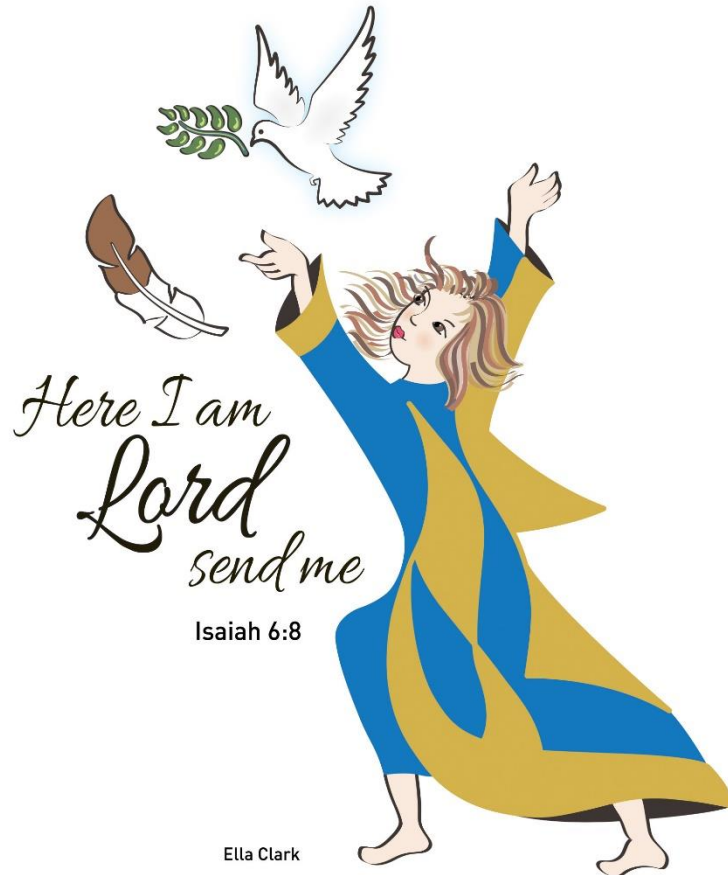


The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council
78th Annual Convention



Convention Program
2024 Annual Reports
Spiritual Booklet

June 6 – 7, 2025

St. Joseph's Parish, Grande Prairie, Alberta





Our Mission

The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.

League Promise

For the glory of God and the good of God's people,
I promise as a Catholic woman to honour, invoke and imitate our patroness,
Our Lady of Good Counsel.

I promise to be a loyal member of The Catholic Women's League of Canada
and to promote its interest and growth in every way.

I promise to cooperate with officers in all programs under their direction
and to conform to the best of my ability to the bylaws of the organization
in all League activities.

Amen

League Prayer

We humbly pray you, O God our Father, to bless
The Catholic Women's League of Canada.

Bless our beloved country, our homes and families.

Send your Holy Spirit upon us to give light to our minds and strength to our wills
that we may know and fulfill your great law of charity.

Teach us to share with others at home and abroad the good things you have given us.

This we ask through our Lord Jesus Christ

And the intercession of our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel

Amen

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Acknowledgement of Treaty Lands

The Alberta Mackenzie Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada
thank God for all of creation.

We acknowledge that we are on Treaty Lands.

We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit
whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries
and whose respectful stewardship have enabled us all
to enjoy the riches of the Creator's blessings.

We are all treaty people, and we thank God for this great land
and pray that we may care for Mother Earth
in a more loving thoughtful way



Schedule

78th Annual Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Convention St. Joseph's Parish, Grande Prairie June 6 – 7, 2025

Friday, June 6, 2025 Pre-Convention Gathering

8:00 a.m. Registration Opens, Hospitality Available, Exhibits Open

9:00 am Welcome

12:00 Noon – 1:00 pm Lunch (Prepaid Ticket Holders Only)
Spiritual Advisors Lunch

4:45 pm – Dinner at St. Joseph's (Prepaid Ticket Holders Only)

6:30 pm – Official Opening Ceremonies

7:00 pm – Eucharistic Celebration
Wine & Cheese Reception

Saturday, June 7, 2025 78th Annual Convention Meeting

8:00 am Registration Opens, Hospitality Available, Exhibits Open

8:30 am Memorial Service for Deceased Members
Call to Order

12:00 Noon – 1:00 pm Lunch (Prepaid Ticket Holders Only)
Honorary/Life Member Lunch

5:00 pm Eucharistic Celebration/Reaffirmation of Officers

6:30 pm Convention Banquet

**Message from Alberta Mackenzie Spiritual Advisor,
The Most Rev. Gary Franken, Bishop of St. Paul**

Diocese of St. Paul – Villa Maria – Pastoral Centre



March 13, 2025

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

I wish to extend my greetings to all the CWL members who are gathering for your annual convention this year in Grande Prairie, Alberta.

I have always enjoyed the joyful energy and camaraderie at CWL gatherings. Your faith and dedication make for a powerful get together.

*As you continue in this year of "Here I am, send me", I pray that you and all those you attract by the good you do will experience the beauty of our faith. In this year of the **Jubilee of Mercy**, may the grace of our Lord move mightily among you, overflowing to all those you come in contact with.*

With prayerful wishes for a blessed convention,

*†Gary Franken
Bishop of Diocese of St. Paul in Alberta*



*4609 50 Avenue
St. Paul, AB T0A 3A3
(780) 645-3277 / bishopoffice@dostp.ca / www.dostp.ca*

Message from National CWL President Shari Guinta



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

My Dear Sisters in the League,

Here I am Lord, send me! This has been the theme for The Catholic Women's League of Canada for two years—2024 and 2025. It has been gratifying to see the theme not only used and highlighted but put into action.

I have to congratulate you on the work done this past year in your province. It is obvious that you took the theme to heart. As you meet in convention, you can celebrate that work, your accomplishments and new projects.

The last several years have been years of change and development. I thank you for embracing that change.

We have entered into a Jubilee Year, the *year of hope*. As women of the Catholic Women's League, hope is a fundamental part of our faith and Catholic roots. We hope for good things in the future and for positive change, that the work we do will help those who need us to speak up for them and to effect reasonable governance in our communities, provinces/territories and country.

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, said, "Since we are justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing in the glory of God... Hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom 5:1-2-5).

So, my dear sisters, as you gather in convention, please celebrate your good works, your accomplishments and your plans for the future with hope. You will not be disappointed.

"The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service." That mission statement is us; it is you, every member of the League in Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council.

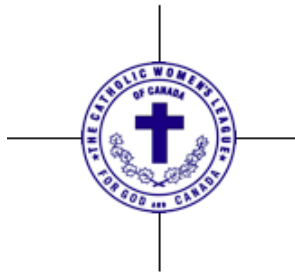
Thank you for all that you do "For God and Canada" and for saying, *Here I am Lord, send me*.

Your sister in the League,

Shari Guinta
National President

C - 702 Scotland Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3M 1X5 Tel. (204) 927-2310

Message from ABMK Provincial President Betsy Fletcher



The Catholic Women's League of Canada
ALBERTA MACKENZIE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL



My Dear Sisters,

Here we are gathered at the 78th Annual convention of the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council in Grande Prairie! Welcome! During our time together this weekend, we will have an opportunity to grow in our spiritual development, learn from our speakers and each other. We will take what we have learned back to our parishes and share our new knowledge with our communities.

Over the past year, we have been busy, as parish, diocesan and provincial councils. Our theme, *"Here I am Lord, Send Me"* has been embraced province wide. Your councils have shown that the theme resonates with them. As I read through your annual reports, it became very clear to me that the theme was an easy one for you to adopt. The focus on mental health inspired you to invite speakers to your meetings to help you understand the challenges persons with mental illness have to deal with, and how we can help them, even if it's just by being there for them.

It is gratifying to see how you have embraced the new structure. Learning a new way of doing things can sometimes be difficult, but you showed you are more than up to the challenge. As we continue with the Three Pillars, we will figure out ways to make them a natural progression to a better way of living the CWL.

In May 2025, many of us joined the March for Life Rally at the Legislature in Edmonton. The Right to life is an important way to show how we care for our fellow human beings from conception to natural death. Hopefully you will be able to join again this coming May. It was interesting to see several MLAs attend the rally to observe. We are having an impact, my sisters! Our weekly ABMK provincial rosary is also a chance to grow in our faith. Please try to come if you are able.

I hope that you will find this weekend filled with faith, fun and fellowship!

May you and your families be blessed abundantly,

Betsy

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

Hierarchy and Spiritual Advisor.....	Most Reverend Bishop Gary Franken
President.....	Betsy Fletcher
Vice-President /Organization.....	Jan Myhre
Secretary/Communications.....	Janet MacPhee
Treasurer.....	Celine Berlinguette
Past President / Archives.....	Mary Hunt
Faith Standing Chair.....	Mary Molloy
Service Standing Chair.....	Lola Alsmo
Social Justice Standing Chair.....	Renee Spohn
Life Member Liaison.....	Ruth Boden



Alberta Mackenzie Honorary Life and Life Members

Honorary Life Members

Agnes Bedard	2006	Marie Cameron.....	2004
Vivian Bosch.....	2002	Fran Lucas.....	2023

Life Members

Mary Antonio	2011	Doreen Lecky.....	1983
Joan Baudais	1998	Judy Look	2018
Florence Bernakevitch	2012	Fran Lucas	2011
Ruth Boden	2018	Gloria Lundberg	2012
Cathy Bouchard.....	2014	Connie McBride.....	2003
Natalie Carley.....	1975	Rose-Marie McCarthy	1987
Janet Cook.....	2006	Aurore McCleary	2006
Hattie Eherer	1991	Barbara McDonald	2005
Gwen Elliott.....	2024	Lucille Partington.....	1997
June Fuller	2016	Lynne Persson	2005
Mary Heinzlmeir	2006	Donna Prevost	2011
Pamela Hill.....	1997	Jean Reader	2014
Dorothy Johansen.....	2011	Linda VandenBerg.....	2024
Rebecca (Becky) Kallal	2002	Mary-Lou Veeken.....	2006
Jeanette Laforce.....	2008	Mary-Anne Warren	1979
Vi Lake.....	2012		

Alberta Mackenzie Past Presidents

Irene Hawkes1948 - 1949
 Isabella Stevens.....1949 - 1950
 Winnifred O'Brien 1950 - 1953
 Alzina Fitzpatrick 1953 - 1955
 Marion Conroy 1955 - 1957
 Mary Hagel..... 1957 - 1959
 Maisie Pronovost 1959 - 1961
 Mary Kelly 1961 - 1963
 Dorothy Roberts 1963 - 1965
 Anne Kirby 1965 - 1967
 Nena Timperley 1967 - 1969
 Ruth Cooney 1969 - 1971
 Stella Niedzwiecki1971 - 1973
 Natalie Carley..... 1973 - 1975
 Mary Anne Warren1975 - 1977
 Ardis Beaudry 1977 - 1979
 Doreen Lecky 1979 - 1981
 Dorothy Keates 1981 - 1983
 Rose-Marie McCarthy.....1983 - 1985

Marie Moulds.....1985 - 1987
 Mitzi Crowe.....1987 - 1989
 Anne Laskosky..... 1989 - 1991
 Agnes Bedard.....1991 - 1993
 Marie Cameron.....1993 - 1995
 Joan Baudais1995 - 1997
 Janet Cook.....1997 - 1999
 Lucille Partington.....1999 - 2001
 Connie McBride.....2001 - 2003
 Mary Heinzlmeir.....2003 - 2005
 Ella Ell.....2005 - 2007
 Donna Prevost.....2007 - 2009
 Fran Lucas.....2009 - 2011
 Sheila M. Houle.....2011 - 2013
 Dorothy Johansen.....2013 - 2015
 Cathy Bouchard.....2015 - 2017
 June Fuller.....2017 - 2019
 Judy Look..... 2019 - 2022
 Mary Hunt.....2022 - 2024



Standing Rules for the 78th Annual Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Convention

1. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall be the parliamentary authority in all cases not covered by the *Constitution & Bylaws* of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, in particular the handling of resolutions and motions.
2. Each person attending the convention shall register at the registration desk and shall be required to wear the official convention name tag for admission to all meetings.
3. Voting members include: Voting delegates (the five diocesan presidents or designates) who may vote on all questions; Accredited delegates (provincial officers, honorary life members, life members, two from each diocese, one from each parish) who may vote on all questions except election of officers, amendments to the *Constitution & Bylaws*, and increase in per capita fees.
4. Voting by registered members shall be by voting card only, which is issued upon registration.
5. Motions and amendments must be submitted in writing to the secretary, signed by the mover and seconder. Only Voting and Accredited delegates may move or second a motion.
6. The member presenting a resolution or main motion may speak for a maximum of three minutes and, when discussion on the resolution or main motion is to be concluded, that member or her designate may have a further two minutes for closing comments, if desired.
7. Any person may speak only once to any motion for a maximum of two minutes (unless permission is granted by the assembly by a 2/3 vote without debate).
8. Upon recognition by the Chair, non-voting CWL members and spiritual advisors may ask questions in discussion or speak to any motion, but they may not introduce motions or vote. When time is of the essence, voting members shall be given priority to speak over non-voting members.
9. Those wishing to speak shall take a place in line at the microphone(s) and, upon being recognized by the Chair, state their name, delegate status, council, and diocese.
10. No materials shall be distributed or displayed at the convention without prior approval of the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial President.

Friday, June 6, 2025
Pre-Convention Gathering (Draft)

- 9:00 a.m.** Welcome
Acknowledgement of Treaty Lands
Morning Spiritual
Opening Remarks and Introductions
- 9:30 a.m.** **Presentation:** Carmen Moore – *Look UP: Gratitude for Discipleship*
- 10:00 a.m.** Health Break
- 10:45 a.m.** **Presentation:** Coadjutor Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan,
Charles Duval, CSsR
- 11:30 a.m.** Elsie Yanik Award Presentation
- 11:55 a.m.** Announcements / Regina Caeli / Grace
Lunch (Prepaid Ticket Holders)
Spiritual Advisor's Lunch
- 1:00 p.m.** **Reconvening Prayer & Workshop**
Lola Alsmo, Mary Molloy & Renee Spohn - *Compassion, Support and Action*

Collection/Disbursement Discussion
- 2:15 p.m.** Health Break
- 2:30 p.m.** **Presentation:** National Secretary/Treasurer, Dorothy Johansen
- 3:30 p.m.** Resolutions Dialogue
- 4:30 p.m.** Registration Report/ Announcements / Closing Prayer
- 5:00 p.m.** Dinner at St. Joseph's (Prepaid Ticket Holders)
- 6:30 p.m.** Opening Ceremonies – Saint Joseph's Catholic Church
- 7:00 p.m.** Eucharist Celebration – Saint Joseph's Catholic Church
Reception to follow in the hall

Saturday, June 7, 2025
Convention Business Meeting Agenda (Draft)

8:30 a.m.

1. Memorial Service for Deceased Members
2. Call to Order
 - Acknowledgment of Treaty Lands
 - League Prayer
 - Welcome and Introductions
3. Notice of the Annual Convention and Meeting
4. Roll Call
5. Credentials Report
6. Recognition of first time Provincial Convention Attendees
7. Approval of Standing Rules
8. Approval of Agenda
9. Approval of Minutes of the 77th Annual Convention 2024
10. Correspondence
11. Report from Pre-Convention Meeting
12. Collection/Disbursement Decision

10:00 a.m. Health Break

10:15 a.m. Business Meeting Continues

13. Reports:
 - a. President – Betsy Fletcher
 - b. Vice-President – Jan Myhre
 - c. Secretary/Communications – Janet MacPhee
 - d. Treasurer – Celine Berlinguette
 - e. Past-President – Mary Hunt
 - f. Spiritual Advisor – Bishop Gary Franken
 - g. Faith – Mary Molloy
 - h. Service – Lola Alsmo
 - i. Social Justice – Renee Spohn

11:00 a.m. Presentation - Bishop Gary Franken – Provincial Spiritual Advisor

11:55 a.m. Announcements / Regina Caeli / Grace
Lunch (pre-paid ticket holders)
Honorary/Life Members Luncheon

1:00 p.m. Reconvening Prayer

1:15 p.m. Business Meeting Continues

14. Reports Continue
15. Diocesan Presidents Reports
 - a. Calgary – Kathleen Winter
 - b. Edmonton – Jean Ashdown
 - c. Grouard-McLennan – Linda VandenBerg
 - d. Mackenzie Fort Smith – Shirley Guitierrez
 - e. St. Paul – Annette de Boer
16. Life Member Liaison Report – Ruth Boden

2:30 p.m. Health Break

2:45 p.m. New Business:

1. Invitation to 105th National Convention 2025 Toronto, August
2. Invitation to 79th Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Convention 2026 St. Paul Diocese
3. Mary Hunt – R3 to 1 Unity Training
4. 2028 National Convention Update – Cathy Bouchard/June Fuller
5. Other Business to come forward

4:00 p.m.

6. Registration Report
7. Announcements
8. Closing Spiritual
9. Adjournment / Retiring of Flags



Financial Statements – Year Ended December 31, 2024

ALBERTA MACKENZIE COUNCIL OF THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA

DECEMBER 31, 2024

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (COMPILATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT)

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Statement 2 - Operations

Statement 3 - Changes In Net Assets

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COMPILATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT

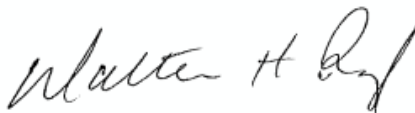
On the basis of information provided by management, I have compiled the balance sheet of ALBERTA MACKENZIE COUNCIL OF THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA as at DECEMBER 31, 2024, and the statement of income and retained earnings for the year then ended, and Note 1 which describes the basis of accounting applied in the preparation of the compiled financial information.

Management is responsible for the accompanying financial information, including accuracy and completeness of the underlying information used to compile it and the selection of the basis of accounting.

I performed the engagement in accordance with Canadian Standard on Related Services (CSRS) 4200, Compilation Engagements, which requires me to comply with relevant ethical requirements. My responsibility is to assist management in the preparation of financial information.

I did not perform an audit engagement or a review engagement, nor was I required to perform procedures to verify the accuracy or completeness of the information provided by management. Accordingly, I do not express an audit opinion or a review conclusion, or provide any form of assurance on the financial information.

Lac La Biche, Alberta
March 11, 2025



CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANT

STATEMENT 1

ALBERTA MACKENZIE COUNCIL
OF THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA
FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2024
(COMPILATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT)

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 49,201	\$ 55,185
Term Deposits	101,808	97,084
Prepaid expenses	1,317	1,500
	<u>\$ 152,326</u>	<u>\$ 153,769</u>
<u>LIABILITIES</u>		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	\$ 1,155	\$ 1,155
<u>NET ASSETS</u>		
NET ASSETS	<u>151,171</u>	<u>152,614</u>
	<u>\$ 152,326</u>	<u>\$ 153,769</u>

APPROVED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:

 Director

 Director

STATEMENT 2

ALBERTA MACKENZIE COUNCIL
OF THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA
OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024
(COMPILATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT)

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
REVENUE		
Provincial per capita assessment	\$ 49,822	\$ 47,262
Fundraising, Feed the North	-	45,863
Provincial convention	18,805	20,090
Interest	5,465	3,749
Support for the North	4,249	5,587
Provincial convention mass collection	<u>1,855</u>	<u>2,206</u>
	<u>80,196</u>	<u>124,757</u>
EXPENDITURES		
Travel meetings and conventions	33,506	28,495
Provincial convention	23,035	19,915
Donations	9,531	3,500
Support for the North	4,249	9,704
National convention	2,024	5,104
Insurance	1,895	1,678
Provincial convention mass collection	1,855	2,206
Videos, books, materials	1,534	97
Awards and gifts	1,209	1,601
Professional fees	788	788
Advertising and promotion	766	422
Training and conferences	600	-
Interest and bank charges	268	53
Office, administration, postage	265	532
Special projects	94	-
Fundraising, Feed the North costs, disbursement	-	46,332
Memberships	-	300
National grant disbursements	-	5,000
Miscellaneous	<u>20</u>	<u>550</u>
	<u>81,639</u>	<u>126,277</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES FROM OPERATIONS	<u>\$ (1,443)</u>	<u>\$ (1,520)</u>

STATEMENT 3

ALBERTA MACKENZIE COUNCIL
OF THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024
(COMPILATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT)

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING	\$ 152,614	\$ 154,134
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES	<u>(1,443)</u>	<u>(1,520)</u>
NET ASSETS, CLOSING	<u>\$ 151,171</u>	<u>\$ 152,614</u>

ALBERTA MACKENZIE COUNCIL
OF THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024
(COMPILATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT)

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICY

The basis of accounting applied in the preparation of the balance sheet of Alberta Mackenzie Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada and the income statement and changes in net assets for the year then ended is on the historical costs basis, reflecting cash transactions with the addition of:

- accounts payable and accrued liabilities

Acknowledgements

Exhibitors and Vendors

Joanna Balaski & Louanne Hart (Art)
Marie Cymbaluk (Art)
Cards from the Heart/Mission Council – Diocese of Calgary
Development & Peace
Immaculate Conception CWL – Sexsmith (Cookbook)
Perpetual Press – Books that Build Faith and Family
Shepherd's Fold – Grande Prairie
St. Joseph's CWL – Grande Prairie (Raffle Tickets)

Our heartfelt thanks to the following councils for hosting this convention

Holy Family – Grimshaw
Immaculate Conception – Sexsmith
Our Lady of Good Counsel – High Level
Our Lady of Peace – Peace River
Our Lady of Perpetual Help – Bezanson
Saint Rita - Valleyview
St. Charles – Nampa

St. John Baptiste – McLennan
St. Joseph – Grande Prairie
St. Joseph – Spirit River
St. Mary – Beaverlodge
St. Paul – High Prairie
St. Thomas More – Fairview
Sts. Peter & Paul – Rycroft

and to

Knights of Columbus Council 3241
for hosting the Wine & Cheese Reception

The Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven,
may the *faith* you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of *charity* enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed *hope*
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.

May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.

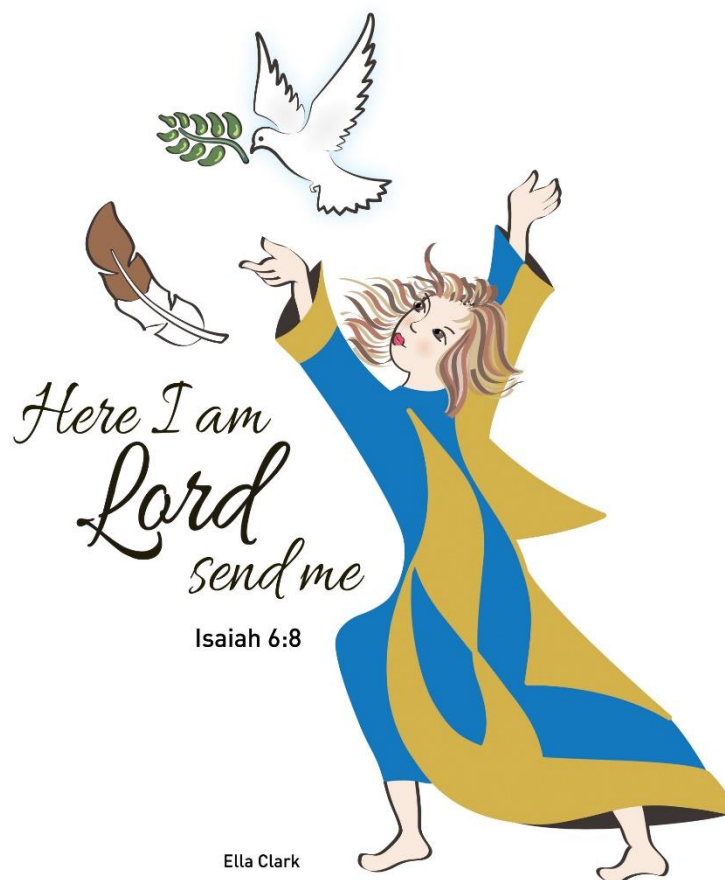
Amen

Francis

The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

2024 Annual Report Book



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial President – Betsy Fletcher

Annual Report

Diocesan Presidents:

Calgary:	Kathleen Winter
Edmonton:	Jean Ashdown
Grouard McLennan:	Linda Vandenberg
Mackenzie Fort Smith:	Shirley Guitierrez
St. Paul:	Annette deBoer

The Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council consists of 5 dioceses with almost 8,000 paid members. We had one council reactivate this year, but had two disband. Statistically, we are down one council. We hope that this is just a blip and we will be on an upswing for 2025. All diocesan councils report challenges attracting new members, and filling executive positions.

Members report being active in most ministries in their parishes. They are involved as sacristans, sacramental prep team members, children's liturgy, lectors, greeters and behind the scenes work. They are a visible presence in their parishes.

The national theme *Here I Am Lord, Send Me* with the focus on mental health has been enthusiastically embraced. The theme prayer is regularly used at meetings. Our council members are ready to step in to help with projects and initiatives. The mental health aspect has seen councils hosting guest speakers, workshops, and discussions at meetings about how mental health challenges can have negative impacts on job security, homelessness, and violence. Other workshops, webinars and speakers have been found that encourage our members to be involved with social justice issues and spiritual development.

Many councils reported using the "1" Campaign and, while some found it to be quite successful, other councils did not. Similarly, councils using the Welcome program found it to be helpful to attract new members. Not enough councils are using this workshop. More work needs to be done here. Members did report using the national website to search for information.

The five diocesan councils completed the Unity Outreach project, and all parish councils that participated really appreciated the information and sharing that took place. Approximately 82% reported finding this initiative very helpful.

For the most part, councils are using the new structure. Of those councils who have not yet started, the reasons seem to be the same for all of them: not enough members; aging members clinging to the previous structure with which they are comfortable, small councils and being unsure of how to begin. Even with only three committees, members are afraid of an increased workload rather than less. More education needs to happen to reassure our membership that they don't have to do it all by themselves, and that creating committees is encouraged.

Councils are concerned that the Letter of Good Standing may deter new members and even those who are currently in our councils. The fears seem to be confidentiality and losing current members who are uncomfortable with this new pre-nomination process. Efforts are being made to reassure our members of the importance of this letter and that confidentiality is paramount.

Once again, in May, our provincial and diocesan councils took our banners to the Alberta March for Life. There was a great turn out supporting the right to life, including members from other faith traditions. It was encouraging to see several Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) who came out to observe. Of course, there is always a contingent of people who do not support this important cause. We did not engage with them, but instead stood proudly for the right to life for all. Other opportunities for solidarity included 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care, Red Sand Prayer Services and World Day of Prayer. Letter writing campaigns are still popular among our membership.

We are working once again to meet with our MLAs. We will be taking issues and resolutions important to our members to this meeting. We have been mostly successful over the years in gaining meetings with these very busy people. They always listen carefully to our concerns.

Members continue to gather weekly, now on Wednesday evenings, to pray the rosary together. This gathering has been going on since the start of the Covid – 19 Pandemic. We pray for various issues and for so many people who are in need of our prayers. It is a time of fellowship for those of us who log in early and a time for deep meditative prayer for all who join via Zoom.

Included in reports received were extra comments made by councils. Some of those comments are listed below:

- Why do elderly council members who are in long term care and are unable to participate fully need to continue paying membership dues.
- Canadian League magazine needs an overhaul, it's looking dated.
- Need our priests to be more involved.
- The survey questions do not address the parish council's focus and activities.
- Many councils are small and do not have the membership numbers to fill positions.

Respectfully submitted
Betsy Fletcher, President
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council



Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Vice-President – Jan Myhre Annual Report

Diocesan Vice-Presidents:

Calgary:	Theresa Duncan
Edmonton:	Lara Bechtel
Grouard-McLennan:	Sandi Bélanger
Mackenzie-Ft. Smith:	Mary Ann Dayagbill
St. Paul:	Vacant

Membership

Membership in Alberta Mackenzie experienced a slight increase in 2024, growing by **141 members** for a total of **7,865 members**. This overall growth reflects the dedication and efforts of councils across the region. While each diocese has its own success stories and challenges, it is encouraging to see membership numbers on the rise, albeit slightly.

Some councils, despite having low membership, remain steadfast in upholding the presence of the League in their parishes and communities. Their commitment ensures the continued visibility and impact of the League.

Membership Drives and Recruitment Strategies

Many councils have found success by holding membership drives in November and December. These drives have proven effective in attracting new members, especially younger women, which has become a primary focus, as they are the future of the League. Councils frequently utilize resources available on the national website to support their recruitment efforts.

The most effective recruitment method continues to be personal invitation, followed by the Welcome Program. To further encourage membership, some councils offer subsidies to offset the membership fees. The “**1**” campaign has also shown positive results. Councils that have adopted this initiative report success in recruiting, retaining, and regaining members.

Member Recognition and Appreciation

Recognizing and appreciating members remains a key focus. The awarding of service pins is an annual celebration in many councils, highlighting the dedication and contributions of long-standing members.

To honor deceased members, many councils hold special ceremonies in November and provide an honour guard at funerals, demonstrating their love and respect to their League sisters.

General Information

Councils continue to emphasize the importance of educating members about the resources available on the national and regional websites. This has been especially beneficial for new members, helping them learn more about the League and its mission.

Councils are adapting to the new League structure, which reduces the number of executive positions. However, leadership challenges persist. To address this, diocesan councils are promoting mentorship programs, such as parish buddy systems or prayer partners, to provide support and guidance.

Each diocese reported on the success of workshops and virtual networking events. These events have been effective in engaging members and fostering idea-sharing.

The commitment of League members is evident in their continued service to their parishes, communities, and country. Their dedication is guided by the national theme: *“Here I am Lord, Send Me.”*

Council Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following councils who reached significant anniversaries in 2024

Calgary Diocese	Years	Edmonton Diocese	Years
St. Albert the Great – Calgary	25	St. Matthew - Edmonton	50
St. Mark – Calgary	50	St. Albert – St. Albert	60
Holy Name – Calgary	70	St. Edmund – Edmonton	70
Holy Trinity – Calgary	70	Sacred Heart – Edson	75
Our Lady of the Assumption – Lethbridge	70	St. Anthony – Lloydminster	100
St. Joseph – Magrath	70		
St. Pius X – Calgary	70	Grouard McLennan Diocese	
Sacred Heart – Strathmore	75	St. Joseph – Spirit River	75
St. Ambrose – Coaldale	75	St. Paul – High Prairie	75
St. Anthony – Drumheller	75		
St. Peter – Milk River	75	St. Paul Diocese	
St. James – Okotoks	95	St. Anne - Thorhild	65
St. Patrick – Medicine Hat	100		

Respectfully submitted
Jan Myhre, Vice President
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Secretary – Janet MacPhee Annual Report

Diocesan Secretaries / Communications:

Calgary:	Gail Poshtar / Dorothy Boras
Edmonton:	Gail Seitz-Gratton / Bea Tobias-Punzalan
Grouard-McLennan:	Donna Prevost
Mackenzie-Fort Smith:	Shannon Buckley / Shirley Gutierrez
St. Paul:	Sherry Sikora

The five dioceses that make up the Alberta Mackenzie council all had secretaries for the year 2024. Calgary has a defined separate communications position and a webmaster, Edmonton has a webmaster, and for Grouard-McLennan the secretary is also communications.

From the Annual Reports submitted by councils and reported by the diocesan council:

- most of the responding councils have someone to assist with communications
- primary method of communication for councils is email, followed by meetings and word of mouth (telephone)
- the parish bulletin is still the primary method of advertising events with emails informing members of the event second

The Diocesan Councils communicate:

- by emails to councils with the frequency being from once a week, monthly, 3 to 4 times a year, as an event such as a fall meeting is coming up
- by newsletters – 4x a year, twice a year
- by telephone to parish partners
- by encouraging members to access their websites (for the ones that have) and to access the National website

Use of social media, i.e. Facebook, websites, for the submission of pictures and articles to share with others is on the increase with councils also sharing with National.

Accessing the National Website:

- Individual members/councils are accessing the National website as are the Diocesan and Provincial councils
- Most find it user friendly
- Others not able to find information readily

Suggestions for improvements:

- structured as if you know nothing about CWL
- organized by the 3 pillars – Faith, Service, Social Justice
- key words in the search field should generate results, search bar is somewhat ineffective
- resource section – overwhelming but better organized than in the past
- resources have a “view” option and then an option to download from there (ensuring you are getting the information you want)

- on-line store should be developed to sell League items so that online payment is available

As secretary, my first order of business was to get the new provincial roster updated and sent off to the National CWL office. Next was to review the Secretary Handbook provided by National.

Regarding secretary duties:

- Roster updates and receiving the diocesan rosters
- Minutes of meetings recorded with Action Items being sent out to be worked on
- Attended the National Convention in Saskatoon as a provincial accredited delegate and provided reports back to the council
- Set up zoom meetings

Regarding communications:

- uses email as the main form of communication
- forwards communiques and memos from the National councils to the diocesan councils
- provides links to resources and encourages members to access the resources. This includes but not limited to the National CWL website, the CCCB website, the Vatican website
- promoted National webinars
- puts out one major newsletter around October. This past year a “meet the new council” information newsletter was sent out in June of 2024
- executive officers are encouraged to have three communiques per year to provide information to the diocesan counterparts
- working on the website – cwlalbm.ca
- working on providing a page on the provincial website for the three diocesan councils that do not have their own websites
- as a picture is worth a thousand words, I am trying to record events/meetings with pictures. A few have appeared in the newsletter and on the website. By the time you are reviewing this report, many of the pictures taken will be on the website.

Respectfully submitted

Janet MacPhee, Secretary/Communications
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council



Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Treasurer – Celine Berlinguette Annual Report

The treasurer's position within the Catholic Women's League is one of "overseer" of all financial activities within their Council. Council reports are then shared annually with their Diocesan Councils, compiled and then shared with the Provincial Council. The information received from the Diocesan Treasurers is then compiled for this report. All the work done by treasurers at both levels of the League is greatly appreciated.

The year 2024 was an election year for the three levels of the Catholic Women's League within our province. As some members completed their terms, others were beginning theirs. Our sincere "thanks" to all the treasurers who have so willingly taken on the responsibilities of treasurer in their Parishes and for their Diocesan Councils. Thanks to our Diocesan treasurers for the information provided for the compilation of this report:

Calgary	Diane Miedema
Edmonton	Daphne Cheel
Grouard-McLennan	Jeannine Wood
Mackenzie-Fort Smith	Sylvia Masongsong
St. Paul	Rita Fertig

Every year the National Council of the Catholic Women's League sends out the yearly report survey to all CWL councils in Canada. This year, ninety four Alberta councils responded to the annual survey. Of the responses received 66% of the respondents prepare a budget for their council. 98% of the treasurers present their treasurers report at each meeting and 63% of the respondents have their financial statements reviewed each year.

Every year our CWL members raise money in support of their favourite charities/organizations at a local, national and international levels. The amount paid out to each level is as follows:

- Local level - 86 donations for a total of \$294,200.00
- National level - 64 donations for a total of \$3,399.00
- International level - 62 donations for a total of \$29,447.00

The Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council has a "Voluntary Fund" that supports two purposes. The first is "Nickels for the North" in support of the Mackenzie-Fort Smith Diocese. The cost of travel in the North has always been much higher than anywhere else in the Alberta. These funds are collected from Councils throughout the province and once a year the money collected is sent the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith. In 2024, a total of \$4,249.07 was collected and sent to the North to help with their travel expenses. Alberta March for Life is the other fund that is supported by our Councils. The March is held in May every year, promoting our Pro-Life position from conception to natural death. This past year, \$50.00 was sent to the Alberta March for Life Association.

In 2023, interact e-transfers were set up for ABMK Provincial Council, which has proven to be a great asset for our membership. Many of the Provincial Convention registrants used e-transfers to pay for their registrations. E-transfers were also used for collecting the funds for the

provincial dinner at the National Convention. I anticipate that e-transfers will continue to play a big part of our business practises.

The “Feed the North” project that was initiated in 2023, carried into 2024 and a final payment was sent to St. Vincent de Paul in the amount of \$3,931.32. Additionally, \$600.00 was sent to the Catholic Women's League Diocesan Council of Mackenzie-Fort Smith to cover the cost of paint for the Sea Cans that will continue to be used by the Food Bank in the communities of Hay River and Fort Smith. This was a great initiative that helped many people in the North.

At our September meeting a decision was made by our Provincial Council to make a donation of \$5,000.00 payable to the Archdiocese of Edmonton - Jasper Fund to help those affected by the devastation of the forest fires in that area.

This past year was not without a few glitches. Issues with cheques getting lost in the mail, cheques becoming stale-dated and the postal strike, all added a little excitement to this position.

Respectfully submitted
Celine Berlinguette, Treasurer
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

“The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.” ~ Phil Jackson



Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Past President – Mary Hunt Annual Report

Diocesan Past Presidents:

Calgary:	Renee Spohn
Edmonton:	Clover Oryschak
Grouard-McLennan:	Lucille Partington
Mackenzie-Fort Smith:	Sheila Domingo
St. Paul:	Kathryn Bourque

Past presidents began their term with optimism as churches continued to return to the normal of pre-Covid which included in person meetings in addition to online meetings. They looked with optimism to the future which includes smaller executives.

The National CWL Survey for 2024 indicates that many councils continue to struggle filling the vice president position which often means the current president stays in the role and does not move into the past president role. Many councils report that the position of Past Present remains vacant which has impacted their mentoring role of providing valuable advice and assistance.

The current diocesan past presidents have been valuable in helping councils who are struggling to recover and the League to grow. They contributed not only to their areas of responsibility, but shared of their time and talent wherever necessary. Flexibility was one of their great strengths as they supported current diocesan Presidents whenever needed.

Mentorship/consultation, archives, history books, Constitution and By-Laws, council manuals, elections all comprised the areas of responsibility for past presidents. The diocesan past presidents reported that most of their work was concentrated around mentorship and consultation. They worked with their own diocesan presidents as the presidents transitioned from president elect to president. They helped parish council past presidents with instructed voting, guided new officers in their roles, and helped some councils embrace the new committee structure. Parish past presidents often filled in wherever necessary as many councils did not have full executives.

They reported that the ***Here I Am Lord Send Me theme*** was well received and was found in their reports. They were good about keeping council histories updated. Archives included archiving minutes; annual reports; deceased member lists; financial information; encouraging history books as well encouraging councils to have a secure place for their archives. Some diocesan past presidents helped with understanding the Constitutions and By-laws, the instructed vote process and developing a parish council policy manual.

The Pastoral Letter of Good Standing is new to all levels of the League. Members letting their name stand, submits it to the nomination and elections committee. The form is available at Forms – The Catholic Women’s League of Canada.

Mentoring and consultation is a good part of the work of the provincial past president as well. Keeping in touch with the greater Catholic community is an important role. As past presidents, we understand that our future depends on making the League a priority. Pray for leaders and connect with past presidents sharing with them your love for the League and for them.

In conclusion, past presidents are mentors and women of experience and strength who are credible and effective leaders of the Catholic Women's League of Canada as they continue their work for God and Canada, and who strive to live out the calling of "***Here I Am Lord Send Me***".

Respectfully submitted
Mary Hunt, Past President
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Faith Chair – Mary Molloy Annual Report

Diocesan Faith Standing Committee Chairs:

Calgary:	Margaret Inkster
Edmonton:	Celina Curtis
Grouard-McLennan:	Sr. Connie Harkin, SSND
Mackenzie-Fort Smith:	Cecilia Boyd
St. Paul:	Anita Gauthier

The Catholic Women's League (CWL) councils embraced the new national theme, "*Here I Am, Lord.*" According to the annual report survey, 82% of councils used a variety of prayer styles in their meetings, and over 75% incorporated the National Theme Prayer into their spiritual programs. All five Diocesan Councils within the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council successfully transitioned to the new League structure, with each appointing a Faith Standing Committee Chair.

Adopting a new standing committee can be a challenge, requiring members to refocus and study their roles and responsibilities. The Faith Standing Committee fosters spiritual growth by encouraging members to come together in prayer and action for the good of all people. When members pray collectively, they unite not only as a council but as part of the broader Church.

Prayer remains central to the CWL and is what distinguishes it from other service organizations. Councils were asked how they supported members' communal and personal prayer lives. Most councils used the national website as a primary resource, referencing the CWL calendar for faith events and prayers, and recommending digital tools such as mobile apps or subscriptions for daily Mass readings. Additional resources included the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, national CWL webinars, and guidance from spiritual advisors in developing prayer programs.

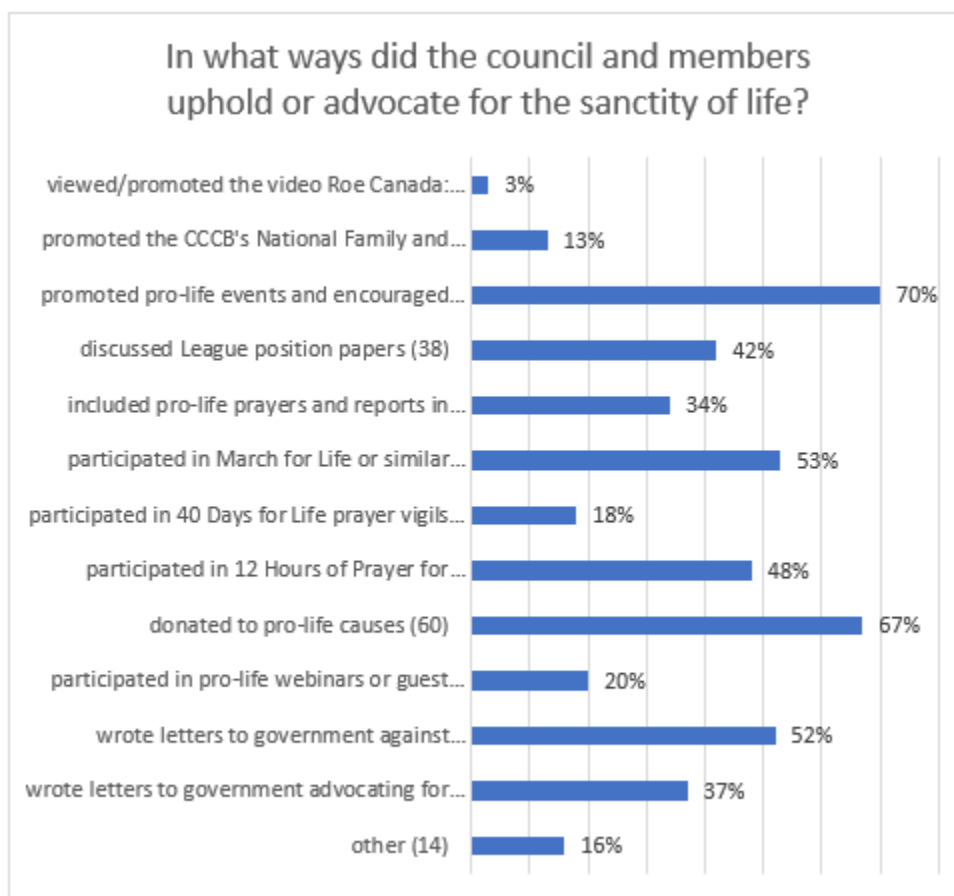
Councils also studied the role of women in the life and mission of the Church. Members read and discussed Pope Francis' encyclicals, participated in the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) "*Conversation in the Spirit*", and joined Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) Year of Prayer webinars. Approximately 15% of councils reported discussing the role of women in the Church, and 18% reviewed League position papers. Members were also encouraged to read the synodal synthesis document and become familiar with pastoral letters related to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Approximately 70% of councils participated in ecumenical or interfaith events. Most took part in the *World Day of Prayer*, sponsored by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. The

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was also highlighted, with about 33% of councils collaborating with other churches in their communities to address local concerns.

To support vocations, councils reported donating to seminary funds, praying for vocations, and participating in events such as the *World Day for Consecrated Life* and the *World Day of Prayer for Vocations*. Several councils sponsored CWL memberships for novices and/or consecrated women religious, while many also made financial contributions to religious orders.

As a pro-life organization, the CWL remains committed to advocating for the rights and dignity of all individuals. The chart below illustrates the extent of councils' involvement in pro-life initiatives:



In 2024, the focus in the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council (ABMK) was to build connections among Diocesan Faith Chairs. Two meetings were held to foster shared spiritual perspectives, discuss initiatives such as the Book of Life and memorials for deceased members, and identify local challenges. These sessions provided meaningful opportunities for collaboration and learning.

The League's new structure encouraged the three standing committees—Faith, Service, and Social Justice—to work closely together. League resources offered a framework for cooperation, and strengthened relationships between Provincial and Diocesan Chairs. In October and November, the three Provincial Chairs co-hosted joint meetings with their diocesan

counterparts. Held via Zoom, these meetings allowed committee chairs to pray together, share their faith, and prepare for the upcoming 2025 Jubilee Year: *Pilgrims of Hope*.

The annual report provides only a glimpse into the vibrant faith life of CWL members. As active participants in our parish councils, we know that our faith extends far beyond what is documented. We are called “to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.”

“Here I am, Lord. Send me.” — Isaiah 6:8

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Molloy, Faith Standing Committee Chair
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Service Chair – Lola Alsmo Annual Report

Diocesan Service Standing Committee Chairs:

Calgary:	Anthea Berdan
Edmonton:	Nicole Favis
Grouard McLennan:	Lynne Oe
Mackenzie Fort Smith:	Rosalinda de Guzman
St. Paul:	Dianna Parenteau

This report is compiled from the responses to the Annual Survey, submitted throughout the five Dioceses that make up this Province. Ninety-four councils completed the survey and answered some or all of the questions relating to the chairperson of Service.

Of these councils, 89% stated they were satisfied with the communication from the standing committee of Service, and 56% felt that yes, there have been positive changes in their council with the new structure of the Standing Committee of Service.

Councils were asked further questions specific to the Service Chair, and a total of 76 Councils supplied answers and comments to one or more of these. A sizable number of councils, 45% of those reporting, answered that yes, their Service Chair was familiar with the material on the National website, and while many indicated that they found it adequate, some commented that they found it difficult to locate specific resources. 22% were not familiar with cwl.ca, or encountered difficulties, including being new to the role, or committed to local or other specific concerns and not using these resources. 29% of those councils answering this query do not have a Service Chair.

Many councils have made efforts to raise awareness or take action related to bullying, racism, human trafficking, and homelessness. Discussions, speaker presentations, workshops and webinars, reading and sharing of articles and brochures, and one on one conversations are among the strategies used by 57% of the reporting councils. A further 21% of councils reported on actions undertaken, such as fundraising, volunteering at organizations providing services, and collecting donated items for distribution. Beneficiaries of the members’ generosity include food banks, shelters, refugees, and the homeless. The remaining councils, 22%, either reported no related activity, or that they had no Service Chair.

Councils across the province and territory face similar challenges in the efforts to relate to the members and encourage participation. Almost two-thirds of councils reporting shared their experiences. Busy personal schedules – a lack of time, both for the chairs and for the members that they are trying to reach is a key challenge. Just as many Councils report having difficulty getting members to participate in committees, on executives, or as volunteers, due to various factors. In some cases this is overcome as they find non-members willing to help, or groups that partner with the League to make projects possible. Less frequent challenges are in the use of newer technologies for communicating information and doing research, and in getting feedback, in determining whether the membership is responding to the issues they are presented with, by their own personal actions. Again, 23% of the Councils answering simply stated that they had no chair and couldn't answer the question.

Our Service chairs across the Alberta-Mackenzie were asked to provide some overall thoughts on the effectiveness of this standing committee. For 48% of those responding to the question, this standing committee is seen as positive and successful. They describe it as an important part of our role as a CWL member, effective in areas of local service as well as in projects of larger scope, and are satisfied with the projects they led. While many still feel they are just learning the new structure, it is described as simple, easier to communicate information, and some chairs appreciate how the structure can overlap and committees work together on projects. 22% of the chairs reported an uncertain or negative response, most of these indicated that they were new and still learning, and some mentioned the large scope of the standing committee, and the difficulties related to finding members to take it on.

Despite the difficulties they encounter at times, our Councils are taking up the challenge, and even where they don't have a member taking on this Chair, there are so many groups out there feeding the hungry, visiting and caring for the sick and the troubled, clothing the naked, carrying out the corporal works of mercy in their home parishes and beyond. This is the simplest and most direct description of Service; that we be the hands and feet of our Lord here on earth, loving and caring for all our brothers and sisters, wherever they may be, wherever we encounter them.

God Bless you all for all you do!

Respectfully submitted
Lola Alsmo, Service Standing Committee Chair
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council



Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Social Justice Chair – Renee Spohn

Annual Report

Diocesan Social Justice Standing Committee Chairs:

Calgary:	Kim Walker
Edmonton:	Evelyn Dunne
Grouard-McLennan:	Mary Antonio
Mackenzie-Fort Smith:	Barb McDonald
St. Paul:	Sylvia Ellison

Dear Sisters,

The Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council is blessed to have five diocesan councils each with their own unique Social Justice Chairperson answering her call, “Here I am Lord, send me.” Thank you for engaging and encouraging members to work tirelessly for Social Justice!

This report includes the 2024 Annual Survey results, and information from each chairperson about their diocese’s projects and initiatives. It highlights a passion to advocate for those most in need, giving us hope.

All diocese’s concentrated on Sanctity of Life, Homelessness, Human Trafficking, Care for Creation, Catholic Education, and Truth and Reconciliation. They shared their Catholic faith, connected with others, and provided resources. Even though not all Social Justice positions were filled, they achieved their goals to bring awareness, educate, and act.

Almost 100% of councils took a stand and were a strong voice for the Sanctity of Life. They touched lives with their powerful daily prayers and constant support for women and young parents. They advocated for senior’s rights, MAiD, and palliative care. There were members who journeyed with a loved one until their natural death, they shared their experiences to help us to understand and be reassured.

Homelessness was a priority for 81% of the councils, they donated to shelters and food banks. There were members who participated in outreach programs; they prepared meals, collected clothes and goods, and met with the people who are homeless.

Most councils, 48% remained committed in their efforts to Care for God’s Creation. They were engaged with Development & Peace, attended events on Earth Day, and continued their sustainable practices.

Their knowledge of Human Trafficking increased, more councils participated in the Feast Day of St. Josephine Bakhita, held a Red Sands Ceremony, and provided supplies for the I’m Worth it Now (IWIN) backpacks to assist people who escaped from human trafficking.

Some councils began their journey to pray and build relationships with their Indigenous sisters for Truth and Reconciliation. They welcomed Elders and Residential School Survivors to share their life stories and joined with them in the Blanket Exercise. Some invited their sisters for tea and prayer, while others celebrated Mass during a pilgrimage to a Marian Shrine.

The National website resources used by councils included the Catholic social teaching manuals and workshops (22%), Toolkit for Social Justice (17%), “Walking Together with Indigenous

Catholic Women” (13%), and Resolutions Handbook and Guide (11%). Only a few councils were not aware of the resources, however, 53% did not use any of the resources.

The Annual Report Survey confirmed that the members liked being informed about Social Justice concerns and were positively impacted by their council’s activities such as having a speaker, holding a workshop, joining a rally, or emailing the website links and resources. Primarily, they are interested in their local area but made time to learn and act on national issues, too.

The councils monitored government legislation and bylaws of which 77% were federal, 60% provincial, and 19% municipal. Most members participated in letter writing and postcard campaigns, and fewer engaged in petitions and briefs.

Social Justice chairpersons provided sample letters and resources or held workshops to engage members in letter writing campaigns to act on National’s three resolutions, MAiD, and/or advocate for St. Mary’s University advanced education funding.

Several councils, 63% acted on the National resolutions and 49% on Diocesan resolutions. There were 11% of councils that considered drafting a resolution and 4% submitted resolutions. The Edmonton and Grouard McLennan dioceses held resolution workshops, their members were inspired and worked on several resolutions.

Our members were called to action! They were engaged, equipped, and worked tirelessly for those most in need. Their commitment and passion are valued, and they are appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,
Renee Spohn, Social Justice Standing Committee Chair
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council



Calgary Diocesan President – Kathleen Winter Annual Report

Councils Reporting: 29

Councils as of December 2024: 46

The National theme of *Here I am Lord, send me* was the focus of the first two questions with councils showcasing how the theme was used at the council meetings with retreats, guest speakers, workshops, and an online webinar. Councils had mental health speakers focusing on how to help those with mental health issues and how mental health affects homelessness, job security and violence.

Has the council embraced the new structure of positions of president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, past president, faith service and social justice? If the new structure is difficult to manage, please explain

90% of councils have embraced the new structure but not without challenges. Some of the challenges are:

- Difficulty getting members to commit to take on a position
- Problems filling leadership roles, with the same executive running the council for years
- Many councils not having a vice-president and/or having vacant chair positions
- Too much responsibility under one pillar
- Chairperson roles being intimidating in scope
- Roles taking a lot more time
- Aging demographics limiting ability to volunteer more
- Long term members having difficulty adapting to the more generic roles of the 3 pillars and
- Confusion regarding what their responsibilities would be should they consider taking on the lead of a particular pillar

Some councils have resolved filling vacant chair positions by a member volunteering to do individual projects under the pillar but if no one is willing to step up, the project doesn't get done.

Is there anything else the parish council would like the national board to know

- Councils use the resources that are provided by national, provincial and diocesan websites
- Small rural councils have very few members; their main focus is socializing, fellowship and faith with the positions of president, treasurer, secretary and spiritual/faith
- One council is suspending activities for a year in the hope that by 2026, members will agree to let their name stand and serve on the executive. This council has held very successful fundraisers over the years with many volunteers.
- Some councils question why elderly CWL members who are in extended care, need to keep paying their membership to be part of the CWL when they can't come out for activities. We keep in touch with these members by phone or visit.
- Some Presidents are overworked; members are happy to volunteer to help but few want to take on the role to organize something.
- One council suggested that the Canadian League Magazine needs an overhaul. It is a major promotional material, but it looks dated.
 - The National board needs to re-ignite the origins story of the League's founder, they were actively involved in placing women in the workforce and in safe homes.

- Now the general membership is comfortable serving lunches, baking cookies and selling pies. We need to step out of the kitchen, so we are not seen as the default group to manage “kitchen affairs”.
- It was stated that we need supportive parish priests; some councils struggle to get approvals for things they need to sustain their membership
- A council suggested that membership recruitment should be year long not just at specific times.
 - Being visible in the parish throughout the year not just on membership drives.
 - Membership should be reframed as a membership to a national organization, so members from other councils within the Diocese and Diocesan officers should come to help recruit and promote membership in the League.
- Two CWL councils in Lethbridge will be disbanding and forming a new CWL in 2025 after celebrating milestone anniversaries. This will provide an opportunity to become charter members of a new CWL. There will be challenges as many current long-time members are not happy about the situation.
- Standing committee chairs would like to see a specific communication to them as what was done in the past when we would receive memos. This could be emailed to specific local council standing committee chairs.
- The survey questions do not address the parish council’s focus and activities

Respectfully Submitted
 Kathleen Winter
 Calgary Diocesan President



Edmonton Diocesan President – Jean Ashdown Annual Report

Sisters in the League,

We began the year with the **new national theme**, *Here I am Lord, Send Me*. Members of Councils in the Edmonton Diocese have always been there for others and are certainly reaching out where needed, both in their parishes and their communities. It was amazing to see and hear about the vast breadth of projects that all shared at our Midwinter Regional Workshops in February and in the reports submitted. Councils are also ready to support our Diocesan projects with funds or with volunteers, whether it be by adopting a seminarian, donating books to schools or items needed by refugees fleeing difficult situations, or bringing a hot meal to those in need in downtown Edmonton. They are also there when we need to speak out about issues, through letters, prayers, or action. For example, members were present at the March for Life, participated in 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care, prayed for victims of human trafficking using the Red Sand Prayer Service, and participated in the World Day of Prayer ecumenical prayer services.

In the **national survey** responses, most of those in our Diocese who responded (37 councils) indicated that they had *focused on the National theme*: 19% attended an on-line webinar, 16% had a guest speaker, 10% had a workshop, 3% had a retreat; 71% found other ways to focus on the theme. The theme prayer was definitely incorporated into diocesan meetings. The survey also asked about whether there was a focus on mental health. Of the 28 councils who said that they had, 18% had done so with a speaker, 32% with information on how to get help, 41% with information on how mental health affects homelessness, job security, violence, etc., and 36% by other means.

The **national survey** also asked if councils *had embraced the new organizational structure* with regards to the change in officer positions. Of the 39 councils who responded, 82% said yes and 18% said no. I was surprised that some said no but in reviewing the reasons given as to why the new structure might be difficult to manage, it may be that they were unable to fill the officer positions even though there are fewer positions. Reasons given for this included aging members, small council size, no one willing to step up, and younger members too busy with work and families. Another reason that some may not have ‘embraced’ the change is the concern that having fewer positions means more work for those taking on a position. This was especially noted for the secretary position who now also has communication responsibilities. The other difficulty that was noted by several councils was with the responsibilities of the faith, service and social justice committees and confusion over what National has given as to what each committee is responsible for. Many of the responsibilities are intertwined and sorting out who does what can be a challenge. Another issue noted was that some councils are struggling because they have one person who has been working very hard to hold the council together for some time but is now giving up their position. In addition, there were some who expressed concern that the newly introduced Letter of Good Standing would only make it more difficult to fill positions.

Our Diocesan Officers have been reaching out to all councils with the **Parish Buddy program** and have been working with some councils that are struggling with membership concerns or problems with filling officer positions. There was also great joy in being invited to help celebrate special anniversaries with several councils such as St. Anthony, Lloydminster, who celebrated 100 years as a council.

Our 2024 **Edmonton Diocesan Convention** was held April 27-29th at St. Joseph's Basilica in Edmonton with St. John the Evangelist and St. Joseph's Basilica councils acting as the host councils and with assistance from councils at Good Shepard, Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples, St. Agnes, St. Anthony, and St. Thomas More. The convention theme was "The Beauty of Encounter" using the image of The Visitation and focused on different ways that we may encounter Christ and each other. Our speakers were His Grace, Archbishop Richard Smith, on Pope Francis's 'Culture of Encounter', Melissa Guzik on 'The Beauty of Marriage as Encounter', Dr. Matthew Hoven on 'The Beauty of Catholic Education as Encounter', and Dr. Eugenia Pagnotta-Kowalczyk on 'The Beauty of Synodality as Encounter'. The beauty of the Basilica itself was appreciated with a tour. Beauty was also seen in a new Diocesan quilt which was unveiled during the convention. New Diocesan officers were elected and were installed at the mass on Saturday evening.

At our **Fall Meeting** held at St. Margaret's church in Rimbey on September 28th, most of those attending wore orange shirts in recognition of the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. We had Alana LaPerle explain the Archdiocesan Hope and Dignity project which gives a Catholic response to euthanasia or assisted suicide. We also were taught how to make rosaries which were donated to a deacon who does prison ministry.

We are thankful for the support of **His Grace, Archbishop Richard Smith**. Besides coming to our Convention, the diocesan officers were privileged to be able to have an informal meeting with him in December. His appointment of Fr. Curtis Berube to serve as our Diocesan Spiritual Advisor is greatly appreciated. Diocesan officers or other members were invited to participate in the following Archdiocesan committees: Hope & Dignity Advisory Committee, Camp Advisory Committee, the Archbishop's Dinner Planning Committee, and the Together We Serve Advisory Board. We provided the reception following the Chrism Mass, supported St. Benedict's Chapel in downtown Edmonton with a financial donation, and support the seminarians at St. Joseph Seminary with our Adopt-a-Seminarian program and awarded the Doreen Melton Scholarship to Marc Berube, a seminarian studying for the Edmonton Archdiocese.

It is my privilege to represent the Catholic Women's League in this Diocese to our members and the greater community, and at the ABMK Provincial Convention held in Calgary and at the National Convention held in Saskatoon. Meeting CWL members in our Diocese and from other Dioceses is a wonderful experience. We have much to learn from one another and can help each other to *grow in faith and witness to the love of God through ministry and service*. I thank each of you for your membership in the Catholic Women's League of Canada because, with God's grace and by working together, we answer the call to serve by saying 'Here I am Lord'. We can and do make a difference in our parishes, communities, province and country.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Ashdown, President
Edmonton Diocesan President

Grouard-McLennan Diocesan President – Linda Vandenberg Annual Report

Sisters in the League,

Membership Update:

As of December 31, 2024, Grouard McLennan Diocese has 500 members in 15 councils. Nampa St. Charles Council is still in the process of disbanding. Of their 10 members, only three are still residing in Nampa. The rest have moved into seniors residences or assisted living. Those that still wish to remain members have been invited to transfer to nearby councils.

Inactive councils are Crooked Creek, Rio Grande, and Slave Lake. Berwyn council has disbanded. Members still wishing to be part of a council have joined Grimshaw council.

Thirteen members passed away in 2024.

Membership continues to be a focus for this diocese: retaining and gaining members.

Resolution regarding supporting Grandparents raising grandchildren

Increased and Equitable Support for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Due to Parental Inability to Care for their Children.

A resolutions committee was struck from the Beaverlodge Council, the GM diocesan executive, and interested life members to work on this resolution after a presentation by grandparent Joanne Guthrie from Beaverlodge who brought to light injustices and inequities in the system for children being raised by their grandparents. This committee met several times during the year to research and develop this resolution for the purpose of presenting it at the 2025 Annual Diocesan Convention. By the end of December 2024, it was ready to present at the Beaverlodge Council.

Contacts with GM Diocesan Parish Presidents

January 9, 2024 - Thank you to parish presidents who completed report surveys and sent them to National by the deadline, December 15 (Grimshaw, Beaverlodge, Valleyview, High Prairie, and Fairview). Those who didn't do the surveys were asked to send president reports to the diocesan president and vice president as soon as possible. These reports would be collated and put in the Annual Convention Report. Parish presidents were reminded that there would be elections at the Annual Convention and each eligible member would receive an invitation letter to let their names stand for election in April. They were encouraged to be generous with their talents and time. Regular emails have been sent to executive and parish presidents to encourage and remind them of the Catholic Women's League mission and to keep them informed of what is going on at the various levels of the League.

Fall Meeting Notes

The Fall Meeting was held in Rycroft at the St. Peter and St. Paul Catholic Church Hall with thirteen members of the executive attending. Father Jeyapaul Packiasamy gave a spiritual message, a reflection on the Jubilee Year 2025. The message of the Jubilee is "mission", the theme is "Pilgrims of Hope" and our CWL mission is to bring that hope.

Reports were made on the provincial and national conventions. Faith (Sister Connie Harkin), Service (Lynne Oe) and Social Justice (Mia Klein-Gebbinck) committees made reports. Upcoming workshop to be held in Peace River, October 26, 2024, titled, “Hospitality Accompaniment.” Service Chair, Lynne Oe, and other members met with MLA Ron Wiebe on September 26, 2024, regarding the resolution of Grandparents raising Grandchildren. A Rosary Rally was held in Bezanson. The resolution committee presented an update on resolution planning for Grandparents raising Grandchildren. A report was presented on the Development and Peace Fall campaign - UN Rights of Peasant Farmers. A Review of the Diocesan Handbook of Policy and Procedure, Section 8 Finances was made to align with present practices and Provincial and National Guidelines. More work will be done by the committee in the New Year. A round table discussion revealed several projects on the go in the diocese.

Midwinter Meeting Notes

This meeting was held using Zoom, November 16, 2024. Eight councils were represented. A tentative 2025 budget was presented and approved. The Development and Peace action cards were promoted. A membership report was given and the councils were reminded to send in their membership per capita before the end of February. February was declared our membership month. A poster will be created for the local councils to use. Jeanine Wood was appointed our diocesan APC representative. The possibility of a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support group was discussed, but because our diocese is so large, it would make better sense for local councils to spearhead this type of support.

We decided to invite Archbishop Pettipas to speak at our convention in April. The theme will be “Here I am Lord, send me” and the title will be “Pilgrims of Hope.”

Grouard-McLennan 87th Annual Meeting of Members and Annual Convention

- held at St. Thomas More in Fairview. Theme: Here I am Lord, Send me (Isaiah 6:8), Title person: Mara Kramer, member for over 60 years. Elections were held. Reports from the president, committee chairs and parish presidents were given.
- ABMK President Mary Hunt attended as guest speaker.

2024 104th Annual Meeting of Members and National Annual Convention

- held August 12-14, 2024 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
- 11 members including delegates attended

Reporting

Twelve out of 15 councils completed the 2024 Parish Council Annual Report Survey, double that of 2023. All of those councils reporting focused on the theme of “Here I am Lord, send me” by having a guest speaker, attending a workshop or other activities. Eight out of 15 focused on mental health by having a speaker, discussing how mental health affects homelessness, job security and violence, or other activities in their councils.

Ten councils said they embraced the new structure of positions. Comments on the new structure include:

- Low membership numbers. Difficult to convince others to take on roles. To do a good job and meet expectations of CWL more time is needed. At this time we do not have anyone who can spare the time that is actually needed to meet the needs/expectations of CWL.
- New structure is not difficult to manage. We have focused on the National Theme through our activities and focused on mental health through monthly mass intentions.
- We are a very small council with a very small percentage attending meetings. We do not have enough people or interest to fill all positions.
- It's difficult only in that there is a lack of active members willing to stand for positions.
- We do not have the dedicated member for each position. As a whole we work together.
- Need more members to attend meetings, so as to have Chairpersons of Service and Social Justice. At present in our small council the president relays information from the communiques. Yet we still get involved in Social Justice, i.e. Pro-Life, Abortion and MAiD.
- Not at all. Not difficult to manage.
- We do not have all our positions filled: yes to Past President, Treasurer, Faith, Service, and Social Justice. Secretary has health issues, so others have filled in for her, no to president and Vice-President.

Three of the reporting councils used the “1” Campaign or a membership campaign/project. All 3 reported 100% success. All 12 councils encourage their members to personally invite prospective members. Five out of the 12 use the Welcome Program to promote the League with prospective and new members. Ninety-two per cent of reporting councils encourage members and prospective members to visit the national website for information and resources as a recruitment tool. “Share the Words” material has been used by 7/12 reporting councils. The greatest challenge with membership for the councils is attracting new members (50%).

The top three methods these councils use to become informed of resources at various levels are email (83%), meetings (75%) and word of mouth (58%). Most reporting councils meet monthly (58%), the rest of the reporting councils meet more often.

Of the councils that reported, 25% visit the national website regularly. Some rarely visit the website, claiming difficulties in accessing various resources. The online store is hard to navigate and the price list is hard to find.

Eight of the 12 reporting councils view the National League postings on social media. Eight of the 12 reporting councils have submitted pictures and short descriptions of council events or occasions to share on social media. Seven of the twelve councils have someone assisting the secretary with communications activities.

Five of the 12 treasurers prepare an annual budget. 11/12 treasurers present financial reports at each meeting. Five of the 12 treasurers have someone review the council financial statements each year. Three councils reported their donated funds.

On the past president, 4/12 have been consulted, 4/12 have not been consulted, 4/12 councils have the treasurer as a vacant position. 5/12 have been part of the elections committee, 8/12 have been approached by the president for assistance, 4/12 have shared revisions to the National Manual of Policy and Procedure, 7/12 councils have had someone who updated the council history in the past 12 months, and 5/12 past presidents have involved members in capturing historical information.

Past presidents reported being most proud of:

- History is updated manually, photo album and some files.

- Being around and supporting the executive.
- Our mortgage burning and donations to the new hall.
- Advised the new president on some policies and activities that the new president was not aware of.
- Working on our council's own Policies and Procedures.
- Attending on Diocesan meetings, workshops, and convention.
- Since the President position is vacant, the past president has urged the council members to step up to chair meetings. This strategy has been viewed with skepticism and trepidation by most, but hesitatingly by some. The former past president has filled in a couple times. At other times the president takes leadership but reminds the council that the position is vacant as she is the official "Past" President.

Other Meetings Attended

- ABMK Virtual Meeting, January 13, 2024. Passed on meeting notes to Lucille Partington, diocesan president, diocesan executive and parish council presidents regarding the ONE campaign and donations to Feed the North (ABMK initiative).
- Faith Formation Team, May 15, 2024, via zoom. Much information was shared regarding the Jubilee Year. Office of Evangelization and Catechesis web page, <https://www.archgm.ca/faith-formation/> was reviewed.
- The deaneries made reports and the Hospitality and Accompaniment workshop in Grande Prairie was announced. The relationship between pastors and Catholic schools was discussed.
- Meeting with Nampa CWL council to assist in the disbanding process, June 20, 2024, at St. Charles in Nampa. Phone calls were held with the president and secretary to answer questions.

Workshops

- Spiritual Workshop, February 10, 2024, at St. Rita Church Hall in Valleyview. National Theme: Here I am Lord; speaker was Sister Connie Harkin, SSND. Women in the Bible, Father Jeyapaul Pakiasamy, spiritual advisor, and Lucille Partington, diocesan president.
- Fall Education Workshop, October 19, 2024 at Immaculate Conception Church Hall in Sexsmith. Letter writing by Linda VandenBerg, president of the Diocese. Thirty members attended and 41 letters were handwritten and collected for mailing to various levels of government regarding the three national resolutions passed at the summer national convention. A follow up email containing a moving YouTube video of grandparents raising grandchildren: https://youtu.be/sjB_aAkfgzo?si=dMPEvvnLPRiYceA to council presidents, and messages and Communiques from committee chairs in envelopes to council presidents. Also following this workshop, Bill S-210, Bill C-63, and Bill C-62 were reviewed. A further 10 letters were written to the government by the diocesan president. Emails were sent to committee heads thanking them for sharing the information and working hard to keep our council presidents up to date.

Forced to Flee: People and Rights Under Threat Webinar Notes:

The three panelists, Father Ekeno (priest from Africa), Yolanda Gonsales Cerdeira (lawyer from Honduras), and Anne-Christine Bloch (a Geneva Lawyer) painted a picture of global devastation, slavery, destruction, exploitation, continued oppression, but also of local abuses, overcrowding, invisible borders, lack of resources, uncertainty, misinformation, control of the media, and psychological trauma. Just when I was ready to shout “what can we do?”, hopeful solutions were presented. In our own countries, public opinion needs to be changed. We need to hold our leadership to their responsibilities. We need to work on our moral obligation to solidarity in the world. Those that want to help need to listen to the people in the communities - they have good solutions that work for them. (I.e. Honduras) The United Nations may be the only international group that could hold multi-national companies accountable.

Mail outs from National

The documents were reviewed and forwarded to executive and local council presidents as directed.

D2L Training Group (national)

President Linda Vandenberg was selected to work on the training group as instructor. The online meetings have been informative and the goal is to take the resources from the national website and create courses that members can access at their own pace so that more of the members will become informed of the Catholic Women’s League especially in the area of leadership.

Resolutions Working Group (national)

As a new life member, Linda Vandenberg is also on the resolutions working group and will be reviewing the resolutions handbook and meeting in 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Vandenberg,
Grouard-McLennan Diocesan President



Mackenzie-Fort Smith Diocesan President – Shirley Gutierrez Annual Report

Sisters in the League,

Our council is full of surprises. Due to our supposed to be new diocesan president stepping in at our diocesan convention and then going AWOL and resigning in October, I have stepped in for her to attend the Provincial convention in June so we'll have a representative in our council. And had to do it again in August, attending the National convention in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. I had to do some work as well with switching executive after encountering some problems. Currently, we still don't have a secretary for our diocesan council. I am hoping and praying that someone will have the courage to take the position as our diocesan convention is coming up.

On a positive note, members are starting to come out and attend the provincial and National conventions last year. And they were excited and looking forward to attend again for the upcoming conventions. Also, one of our councils is having a great increase in membership so I encouraged them to apply for the Walter Krewski awards. All their executive positions are also filled up so I'm happy that at least the locals are good.

Our Diocesan convention was well attended in April and focused on the Beatitudes. This year we are focusing on the Jubilee Year of Hope as our theme for our 61st convention in Hay River. We are busy getting ready for the convention coming up this April.

I continue to encourage members to check the National and provincial websites for event happenings and pass any information, communiques that I received. I also invited locals and diocesan chairs on Faith, Service and Social Justice to join the zoom meetings that the ABMK has been hosting since October. I also joined them every time there is.

I also attended a zoom meeting hosted by Betsy and some provincial execs with regards to the situation in one of our councils. It has to be put on hold due to the winter season.

Our invited Life member speaker that's supposed to come in the North and do a workshop was also put on hold due to medical reasons.

We lost a dear member in Hay River and did an honor guard for her in the fall. Our beloved Gerda Hazenberg from Yellowknife had to move to Edmonton and was given a little farewell. We missed both ladies!

Our sincere gratitude for our sisters in Alberta for their continued support thru Nickels for the North project that helped us a lot in our travels and education received thru attending conventions, workshops and retreats.

We will continue to do on what we have. We are on trying times and God is there to help us and get through with these challenges.

Respectfully submitted.

Shirley Gutierrez, President
Mackenzie-Fort Smith Diocesan President

St. Paul Diocesan President – Annette deBoer Annual Report

It is always amazing to review the year and recognize just how much the Catholic Women's League in St Paul Diocese does for their parishes, communities and the world beyond our borders. In 2024 St Paul Diocesan council consisted of 15 parish councils for a total of 441 members. This was up by 5 members from 2023. 11 councils completed the National online survey and 10 councils submitted their written President's reports which were used to compile this report.

Unity Outreach Program continued in the first part of 2024 and was appreciated by those councils who received a visit from then President Kathryn Bourque and Past President Lola Alsmo. 82% of councils have embraced the new structure but comments on the reports indicate that even with the reduced number of positions councils are still struggling to fill all the leadership roles. Several indicated that as a small council they work together to maintain a presence under the three pillars. Two councils have no President and the members take turns chairing the meetings.

One hundred percent of councils participated in the National theme, *"Here I am Lord, Send Me"* in various ways. Mental health was focused on by the majority of the councils including how to help those with mental health issues and how mental health affects homelessness, job security, violence, etc. One council hosted a workshop on this topic.

Leadership / Membership

As the Vice President / Organization position for St Paul Diocesan CWL was vacant in 2024 the "1" Campaign for membership and the Welcome Program have not been widely promoted or used. Of the two councils that used the "1" Campaign, only one council felt that it was effective and only five councils have used the Welcome Program. All councils report actively encouraging current members to personally invite prospective members. Councils are also praying for vacant positions to be filled.

St Paul Diocese is facing the possible closure of one council - St Paul Cathedral Council and the Pickardville council is collecting memberships but not active. Leadership, attracting new, and especially younger members as well as a lack of attendance at meetings are some of the primary challenges of councils,

Communication

Communication is vital to any organization including the CWL. Councils use the usual methods of communicating – by phone, e-mail, church bulletins, announcements after Mass as well as websites for the council or the parish, and one council reports having their own Facebook page. The primary means of communication are word of mouth and email. At least one council has produced a newsletter they shared with members and the parish. Members appreciate the communiques coming from Diocesan, Provincial and National councils and are happy that that process is more streamlined.

80% of councils encourage members and prospective members to visit the National and Provincial websites. *“Share the Words (52 reasons to talk about the CWL)”* has been used by three councils. Concern has been expressed that the CWL National website is not always easy to use – it was felt that the search feature does not work as well as it should. 64% report seeing League postings on Facebook and other social media sites. 4/11 councils have submitted pictures of council events to share.

Faith

As the first pillar, Faith is extremely important to all members and every activity has a faith component. Councils are celebrating priests’ birthdays and ordination anniversaries. Members follow mass or rosary on radio or TV. Participation in World Day of Prayer, presenting bibles to grads, remembering deceased members through the memorial ceremony are other activities mentioned.

Members are active in RCIA and preparing children for their sacraments; two councils participated in the Military CWL Medley Chapel in the 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care. One council spoke about holding a living rosary prayer night for the Feast of Our Lady of Good Council. Honour guards were held at the funerals of a members showing support for both the deceased member and their families. Councils sell religious items to help promote the faith. One council visited nearby sister councils for prayer and fellowship. Meetings were held in member’s homes, which was felt to increase the bonds of friendship. Holding meetings in the care facilities allows senior members to more easily attend. Craft evenings were held together as part of the one third fun in a meeting.

Service

Catering funeral lunches, serving Meals on Wheels, being active in parish ministries and on parish pastoral councils, providing fellowship after mass, clothing drives, working with other community churches to collect blankets and food for the needy, collecting mitts, toques and coats for kids, visiting the sick and housebound, cleaning and taking care of plants inside and outside of the church, sponsoring Giving Trees at Christmas and volunteering at their local parish food pantry – these are just a few of the ways our CWL ladies fulfil their service role in a parish.

Councils have a variety of fundraising activities that allow them to donate to various good causes – selling raffle tickets, holding garage sales, bake sales & plant sales to raise funds. They donate to food banks and Christmas hamper programs, donate clothes or household items to local women’s shelters, and a couple councils report providing a scholarship to a local grad.

One council continued their tradition of hosting a Mother’s Day tea in long term care. Another participated in their local Christmas Festival of Trees donating the proceeds from the tree raffles to help the community’s youth. One created a parade float for their local agricultural fair parade and won a prize! A Remembrance Day wreath was sponsored by a CWL council, while another helped with crafts at a local Girl Guide camp.

Social Justice

Faith, Service and Social Justice all overlap in the activities of our CWL Parish councils, with service and social justice activities especially being completely interlinked. Each of the items

listed above in Service are the actions that takes place to fill a social justice need. Parish Giving Trees (to collect unwrapped gifts for community Christmas hamper programs), *Angels in Motion*, and *Light Up a Senior* are all initiatives to help less fortunate at Christmas.

Pro Life activities – letter writing, signing petitions to stop Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) from being allowed for mental health issues, praying for the unborn and the sick, Walk for Life, “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” are mentioned as social justice actions.

Several councils participated in preparing a Christmas dinner for the poor and homeless. Warm Socks for Cold Souls was one council’s campaign and several councils collect baby items for pregnancy care centres and / or donate funds to pro-life organizations. Collection of items for local Women’s Shelters and sponsoring a family through “Save a Family Plan” or a child through Chalice is an endeavour of many councils. Gift cards have been given as a sign of hope to people in difficulty. One council sponsored a family with an Easter basket and again the same family at Christmas; they plan to repeat this in 2025. Many supported the Feed the North initiative and Catholic Missions in Canada to help our CWL sisters in the north.

Within active councils all members work together to encourage membership and help get things done.

We pray that through our faith, through our service and through seeking social justice we may make our world a better place. “Here I am Lord, send me.” Is our theme, and CWL councils are responding - We hear the call and we answer!

Respectfully submitted
Annette deBoer
St. Paul Diocesan President



Congratulations 2024 Elsie Yanik Award Recipient

Bonnie Strum, St. Ambrose, Coaldale

Bonnie is a member of St. Ambrose Parish, Coaldale in the Diocese of Calgary and has served her council since joining the League at St. Ambrose in 1971. She served as treasurer, several terms as secretary, and president. Bonnie is always one of the first women to step up and offer her time and talent for any occasion, and serves in each of the League pillars; **Faith** as the *Pastoral Care Coordinator* for St. Ambrose Parish, **Service** as the councils' *Funeral Lunch Coordinator*; and **Social Justice** as the *Soup Kitchen Coordinator* for St. Ambrose lunch schedule at the Lethbridge Soup Kitchen. Bonnie gracefully lives her vocation as a wife, mother, grandmother, sister and friend.

"Make a difference. Create a better world by being kind. Kindness is enduring. Kindness is contagious. Kindness makes everyone feel good." - Elsie Yanik

As we celebrate the 77th Anniversary of the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council, we are delighted to present the **Elsie Yanik Award** to a very deserving nominee, Bonnie Strum. The award was established to celebrate our 50th Anniversary as a council to "*commemorate the leadership and ministry/service of Elsie Yanik to the Catholic Community in the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith*". This award speaks to the women in our Alberta Mackenzie councils who personify the spirit of Elsie Yanik which is selfless, joyful, kind and giving. Guidelines for nominations state that the nomination must be submitted by a Parish or Diocesan Council. The nominee must be a League member in good standing (has paid her membership fee in the current year). Portray a leadership role. Has demonstrated a commitment to ministry/service in an area or areas of need in a parish or community.

Bonnie was nominated by her parish council, St. Ambrose. Diane Miedema of St. Ambrose states: *"God had a specific purpose in mind when he created our sister Bonnie. He envisioned an extraordinary women who would embrace her call to ministry and graciously offer her gifts and talents in loving service to others. He crafted the perfect blend of compassionate heart, joyful spirit and positive can-do attitude. In our council, our parish, and beyond, Bonnie embraces every opportunity to serve her brothers and sisters in Christ."*



Pictured left to right:

Betsy Fletcher, Bonnie Strum, National President Shari Guinta, and Mary Hunt

Past Recipients of the **Elsie Yanik Award** include Mable Solomon, Gabrielle Simpson, Renee Spohn, Lucille Partington & Rosemarie McCarthy.

PRAAYER FOR HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

O Blessed Virgin,
Our Lady of Guadalupe Intercede for us
with your Son
That we who live in this land,
Indigenous and non-Indigenous together
may experience healing and
reconciliation,
on a renewed journey for justice and
peace for our children.
Mother of the Church,
pray for us.

<https://ourladyofguadalupecircle.ca/>



The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council
78th Annual Convention

Spiritual Program





A Pentecost Prayer Service

“May we become seeds of hope for all creation.”

Laudato Si week theme

Introduction

There is a great need in our world today for the presence of God’s love, mercy and peace. The great Feast of Pentecost on which all Christians welcome again the Coming of the Holy Spirit is celebrated on June 8th. Today, in anticipation of this great feast we gather together for some moments of reflection, sharing and prayer on the issues facing us, our world, our country and our families and requesting the renewal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Opening Song: We are One in the Spirit

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord, x 2
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored

Chorus: *And they’ll know we are Christian by our love, by our love.
Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.*

We will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand x2
And together we’ll spread the news that God is in our land.

Chorus: *And they’ll know we are Christian by our love, by our love.
Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.*

We will work with each other, we will work side by side, x 2
And we’ll guard each one’s dignity and save each one’s pride.

Chorus: *And they’ll know we are Christian by our love, by our love.
Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.*

Opening Prayer

Bishop Gary: Let us pray.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Glory to you, Father, for you reveal yourself in your creation and call all people to live in your presence.

Glory to you, Christ Jesus, for you give yourself entirely to each one of us and invite us to do the same.

Glory to you, Holy Spirit, for you gather us together in love and unity.

Glory to you, One God who is Love, in whom we are created, redeemed and made one. You, who bestow heavenly gifts upon your church, safeguard, we pray, the grace you have given, that the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out upon her may return all its force and that the spiritual food may gain her abundance of eternal redemption through Christ our Lord.

All: *Amen.*

Scripture Reading: *Acts 2:1-11*

Bishop Gary: *John 20:19-23*

Reflection: Bishop Gary

Intercessions

Leader: Enlightened by the Word of God, let us now turn to Him with our prayers of petition.

Reader 1: Let us pray for all we need under heaven. In anticipation of Pentecost, may our hearts pulse in the life of the Holy Spirit. May we live in the miracles of God and in the healing of all our earthly ills. Lord in your love.

All: *Send us your spirit*

Reader 2: Let us pray for Christian unity this Pentecost. May all Christians know the wonder, joy, and goodness of life. May tensions ease and unity be restored among all believers. Lord in your love.

All: *Send us your spirit*

Reader 3: Let us pray to break down barriers of neglect and walls of despair. May we be ready for the healing love of Pentecost, the joy of the Holy Spirit in every moment and in every earthly need. Lord in your love.

All: *Send us your spirit*

Reader 4: Let us pray to rely more deeply on the Holy Spirit. May chaos on our streets be eased into peace. May hopelessness among our youth end in the joy of Christ's love. May sorrow cease and love endure. Lord in your spirit.

All: *Send us your spirit*

Reader 5: Let us pray for people facing tragedy and loss. May such sadness be remedied in the presence of the Holy Spirit. May we work diligently to mend the lives of people suffering from mental illness, homelessness, war, natural disasters, storms, and floods. Lord in your love.

All: *Send us your spirit*

Leader: In the silence of our hearts, let us pray for our own families, friends and our CWL sisters gathered together. Let us ask Mary Our Mother of the Lord to pray with us.

All: *Hail Mary ...*

Leader: In preparation for the feast of Pentecost; Let us ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be renewed in us: O Lord Jesus Christ, before ascending into heaven, You promised to send the Holy Spirit to finish Your work in the souls of Your Apostles and Disciples. Deign to grant the same Holy Spirit to me, that He may perfect in my soul the work of Your grace and Your love. Grant me: the Spirit of WISDOM,

All: *that I may despise the perishable things of this world, and aspire only after the things that are eternal;*

Leader: the Spirit of UNDERSTANDING,

All: *to enlighten my mind with the light of Your divine truth;*

Leader: the Spirit of COUNSEL,

All: *that I may ever choose the surest ways of pleasing God and gaining heaven;*

Leader: the Spirit of FORTITUDE,

All: *that I may bear my cross with You, and that I may overcome with courage all the obstacles that oppose my salvation;*

Leader: the Spirit of KNOWLEDGE,

All: *that I may know God and know myself and grow perfect in the science of the Saints;*

Leader: the Spirit of PIETY,

All: *that I may find the service of God sweet and amiable;*

Leader: the Spirit of FEAR,

All: *that I may be filled with a loving reverence towards God and may dread in any way to displease Him.*

Leader: Mark me, dear Lord, with the sign of Your true disciples, and animate me in all things with Your spirit.

All: *Amen*

Sending Forth and Blessing Prayer

Bishop Gary: May God the father of light who was pleased to enlighten the disciples' minds by the outpouring of the Spirit, the Paraclete, grant us gladness by his blessing and make us always be filled with the gift of the same Spirit.

May the wondrous flame that appeared above the disciples powerfully cleanse our hearts and actions from every evil against the Church of Christ, the Family and all non-human creatures and fill them with its purifying light.

May God who has been pleased to unite many tongues in the profession of one faith, give us perseverance in that same faith and, by believing, may we journey from hope to clear vision.

And may the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down on us and remain with us forever.

All: *Amen*

Bishop Gary: As we end our moment of prayer together let us offer one another a sign of peace and send each of us out to be witnesses to Christian Unity.

Morning Closing Prayer

Regina Caeli

Leader: Queen of heaven rejoice, Alleluia

All: *For he whom did merit to bear, Alleluia*

Leader: Has risen, as he said, Alleluia

All: *Pray for us to God Alleluia*

Leader: Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, Alleluia

All: *For the Lord has truly risen, Alleluia*

Let us Pray:

All: *O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech You, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen*

Meal Prayer

Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen

Gathering Prayer

Leader:

Glorious and Blessed God,
we place our work and ourselves into your hands.
Anoint our creativity, our ideas, our energy
so that even the smallest task may bring You honor.
God, when we are challenged, guide us, when we are weary, energize us.
May the work that we do and the way that we do it, bring hope, life and courage
to all with whom we encounter. Rooted in Your love may Your face illuminate all
activities done in Your name.

All: *Amen*

Friday Closing Prayer

Leader:

Let us be still and recognize the **presence** of God with us and in us.
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
Let us pray:

All: *Lord God, our loving Creator, from whom all good things come, we give You thanks
this evening for supporting us in our League work.*

*Thank you for the coming together here of our minds and spirits, to create good works
to fulfill Your will.*

Our minds and spirits were open to each other, and therefore, open to You.

*There were times when we may have been doubtful or frustrated to meet the call of the
task ahead of us. But, with the wisdom and guidance of Your Holy Spirit, we now find
joy and help again in this, our work... Your work.*

*So dear Lord, knowing our needs, please remain with us as we go forth with even
greater enthusiasm and confidence.*

Leader:

Through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel and in the name of Jesus Christ
our Lord,

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,

All: *Amen.*

Memorial for Deceased Members

Opening Song: **Here I am Lord**

I, the Lord of sea and sky
I have heard my people cry
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save

Refrain

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night
I will go, Lord, if you lead me
I will hold your people in my heart

I, who made the stars of night
I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Refrain

I, the Lord of snow and rain
I have borne my people's pain
I have wept for love of them
They turn away

Refrain

Finest bread I will provide
'Til their hearts be satisfied
I will give my life to them
Whom shall I send?

INVITATION TO PRAYER

Bishop Gary: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: *Amen*

Bishop Gary: The grace and peace of God, Our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you.

All: *And with your Spirit*

Leader:

We gather today to honour the members of the Catholic Women's League of Canada who have gone from this life to their eternal rest in Christ. In the world today, perhaps as never before, the church needs enlightened and faithful laity. Members of the Catholic Women's League of Canada live their faith by serving others and thus discover Christ through relationships with others.

The members we honour today made a commitment to be a witness of Christ, carrying out the mission of Christ at home, in the parish and in their diocese.

We recall their service to others, and we pray that the God of all joyously welcomed them into the fullness of life, where they rest in peace.

OPENING PRAYER**Bishop Gary:**

Gracious God, hear our prayers on behalf of your faithful servants whom you have called to be with you in paradise. May they be welcomed joyfully into the presence of the angels and the saints. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

All: *Amen*

SCRIPTURE READING:

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John 1:1-6

Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. My father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you may also be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

MEMORIAL ROSES AND LIGHTING OF CANDLES

Leader: We now honour the deceased members of the Catholic Women's League. A candle will be lit to remind us of their life in Christ and a rose will be presented as a living memorial of their presence among us.

Calgary Diocesan President:

We thank God for the gift of our sisters who went to their internal rest in 2024 in the Diocese of Calgary.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord

All: *And may perpetual light shine upon them*

Edmonton Diocesan President:

We thank God of the gift of our sisters who went to their internal rest in 2024 in the Diocese of Edmonton.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord

All: *And may perpetual light shine upon them*

Grouard-McLennan Diocesan President:

We thank God of the gift of our sisters who went to their internal rest in 2024 in the Diocese of Grouard-McLennan.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord

All: *And may perpetual light shine upon them*

Mackenzie-Fort Smith Diocesan President:

We thank God of the gift of our sisters who went to their internal rest in 2024 in the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord

All: *And may perpetual light shine upon them*

St Paul Diocesan President:

We thank God of the gift of our sisters who went to their internal rest in 2024 in the Diocese of St Paul.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord

All: *And may perpetual light shine upon them*

Bishop Gary: We thank God for the gift of all our Spiritual Advisors who have gone to their internal rest.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

All: *And may perpetual light shine upon them*

PRAYER OF BLESSING FOR THE BOOK OF LIFE

Bishop Gary:

Ever loving and gracious God, we thank You for the gift you gave your Church in the people whose names are inscribed in this **Book of Life**. You called them to be the salt of the earth and a light to the world. Their good works gave glory to you and were an example and encouragement for all of us. We ask you to bless this **Book of Life**. We ask you to bless those members of the Catholic Women's League of Canada whom we honour in this Book. We ask this blessing through Jesus Christ and through the intercession of our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel.

All: *Amen*

(Sprinkling of the Holy Water)

Closing Hymn: Songs of the Angels

May Songs of the Angels welcome you,
And guide you along your way.
May the smiles of the martyrs greet your own,
As darkness turns into day.
Every fear will be undone
And Death will be no more.
As songs of the angels bring you home
Before the face of God.

CLOSING PRAYER

Bishop Gary:

Mary, our mother, gave herself completely to you. Blessed is she who gave humanity to Jesus and blessed are our sisters who spent their lives serving others in God's name. We join Mary in proclaiming your greatness and thank you for giving us life through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

All: *Amen*

FINAL BLESSING

Bishop Gary:

May the peace and love of God be with you always.

All: *And with your spirit*

Bishop Gary:

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All: *Amen*

Let's us conclude by offering each other a sign of peace

Leader: Together let us recite the “League Prayer”

League Prayer

We humbly pray You,
O God our Father, to bless
The Catholic Women’s League of Canada.
Bless our beloved country, our homes and families.
Send Your Holy Spirit upon us to give light to our minds
and strength to our wills
that we may know and fulfill Your great law of charity.
Teach us to share with others
at home and abroad,
the good things You have given us.
This we ask through our Lord Jesus Christ
and the intercession of our patroness,
Our Lady of Good Counsel.
Amen

Morning Closing Prayer

Regina Caeli

Leader: Queen of heaven rejoice, Alleluia
All: *For he whom did merit to bear, Alleluia*
Leader: Has risen, as he said, Alleluia
All: *Pray for us to God Alleluia*
Leader: Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, Alleluia
All: *For the Lord has truly risen, Alleluia*

Let us Pray:

All: *O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech You, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen*

Meal Prayer

Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen

Gathering Prayer

Leader: Be still within and without. Let us place ourselves in the presence of the Lord.
God is here with us.
Let us pray together:

All: *Father, Creator God, who formed us in your image and gifted us: Jesus, Saviour
God, who came and walked with us and shows us the way;
Holy Spirit who inspires us and gives us the courage to be all the we can be;
We ask that you bless us today as we come together to prayerfully discern our
giftedness.
Open our hearts to your invitation to use these gifts as we continue to journey as
members of the Catholic Women's League, in service of God and of all God's
people.*

Leader: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the
beginning, is now and forever shall be, world without end.

All: *Amen*

Closing Prayer:

Leader: Let's us conclude our time together
In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

All: *Lord of day and night,
of beginnings and endings,
as we prepare to conclude the 78th Annual Convention,
we once again lift up our hearts to you,
The Divine Source of All Life.*

*We thank you for the gifts that have been
present within this act of service to you, O God.
We are grateful for the gifts of sisterhood and understanding,
of mutual respect and shared vision,
of perseverance and insight into the common concerns we share.
For these and all other graces, we are thankful.*

*As you have blessed our coming together,
now bless our departure and journeys
homeward.
May your blessing be upon us,
in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Amen.*

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Here I am Lord, send me.

Heavenly Father,

Through the ages, you have called many to serve you.

Abraham, Sarah and Samuel; Martha, Mary and Elizabeth,

As well as countless men and women throughout the ages.

All were different, and each brought unique gifts to your service.

Now today, we too hear your call to come and follow, to bring our gifts to your service.

Help us, O Lord to make our reply, "Here I am Lord, Send me" with full and generous hearts,

in order that we may be your instruments in the building of your Kingdom.

We ask that you hear and answer our prayers through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Bishop Wayne Lobsinger

