



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

**Edmonton Diocesan President Oral Report**  
**Convention 2023 Edmonton**

Madam President:

At the end of April, the Edmonton Diocesan Council (comprised of 61 parish councils representing over 3,600 members) celebrated its 101<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention in Red Deer. His Grace Archbishop Richard Smith celebrated our Opening Mass at Sacred Heart Church, Red Deer. Our convention was held at St Mary's Church and focused on our theme of "Rise Up!". Convention highlights included: a talk by Fr Mark McGee to launch the convention theme and explain what the Catholic understanding of Rising Up means. This was followed by a talk by Dr Mary Clare Stack and her colleague Colin from Catholic Social Services about how we as CWL members can get more involved in practical and meaningful ways to help the homeless in our communities. Homelessness is increasing, but many people are afraid to or don't know how to help. The session began with 'John' a homeless man quietly coming into the convention hall and Sr Mary Clare acknowledging his presence and asking him to speak about his experiences as he was greeted by convention delegates. 'John' was then revealed as Colin – Sr Mary Clare's colleague at CSS. An important reminder for all of us not to judge a book by its cover. Finally, we had a workshop about the CWL's Welcome Program which included women from three different parish councils sharing how they recruit new members, provide an orientation to the League, and create a culture of welcome. Having individual members speak from different parish council experiences was particularly powerful. Going forward, we will try to include more talks on important CWL issues with individual members facilitating workshops based on their personal council experiences.

Our 2023 annual convention also provided an opportunity for ladies from our newest CWL council, Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples whose executive was formally installed in February, to join us for the first time as voting and accredited delegates. Candida Shepherd is Sacred Heart CWL's President and Fr Soosai is the council's Spiritual Advisor. Celebrating the Opening Mass for Provincial Convention at Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples was especially meaningful given the reactivation of their CWL council (one of the original councils in Edmonton over 110 years ago!). As well, because of the central role of Sacred Heart Church of the First People's during last summer's Papal Visit. This past year, the Edmonton Diocesan Council committed to raising \$25,000 for the refurbishment of the stained glass windows at Sacred Heart after the fire at their church. I am happy to report that as of the end of April, we have met our \$25,000 goal and the last of the funds for the stained glass window refurbishment will be presented to Sacred Heart soon.

It is hard to believe the Papal Visit was only last July – it seems so long ago! But I would like to thank all CWL members who assisted our Edmonton Diocesan Council with staffing the volunteer

accreditation centre for the Papal Visit by responding to our call for CWL volunteers. I know we had CWL members who drove from Calgary's Diocese to help, and there may have been members from other Diocese as well The Catholic Women's League of Canada Edmonton Diocesan Council – I can't thank you enough for your spirit of service. The CWL really impressed the Archdiocese and Papal Visit organizers with our organizational skills and can-do attitude no matter what was needed!

In addition to Edmonton Diocesan Council's 2022 activities already reported in the Provincial Convention booklet, since the start of 2023 our diocese once again facilitated multiple mid-winter regional workshops, coordinated a book donation project for Edmonton area schools (with 4 books by Indigenous authors: *On the Trapline*, *I Hope*, *When We Are Kind*, and *What's My Superpower?*), collecting items for refugee bags, providing \$4,500 in support for St Benedict's Chapel in downtown Edmonton, helping parish councils celebrate IWIN red sand ceremonies, creating a Women Saints quilt and spiritual reflection, taking part in the March for Life rally on May 11th, and partnering with the Edmonton Archdiocese to help relaunch the Our Lady of Victory Camp this summer (July). OLVC is in need of help from CWL councils – there is a major workbee happening June 10th. If you are interested in helping, we have information on our diocesan CWL webpage or you can contact Deacon Claude Baril at (403) 896-3745 or by email at [cbaril53@gmail.com](mailto:cbaril53@gmail.com). If your council would like to get involved in some other way, you can email [camps@caedm.ca](mailto:camps@caedm.ca).

As part of National Council's Unity Outreach Project, our council has a team of 14 diocesan officers and trained facilitators visiting all 61 parish councils in our diocese. Many will be visited by June, but some of the initial visits will have to wait until September since many of our councils do not meet each month or have socials this time of year, and do not meet over the summer. As an added faith component to aid in this initiative, our Diocesan Council has also created a prayer we have asked all of our councils to pray each time they gather: it is called the "Prayer for Renewal". It can be found on the Edmonton Diocesan CWL website: [www.edmontoncwl.org](http://www.edmontoncwl.org).

As of our diocesan convention, the Edmonton Diocesan officers have changed position names to be aligned with the new three committee names: Faith, Service and Social Justice. We were able to do this easily as we already had only 8 officers. We will be finalizing our diocesan realignment under the new committee structure in June. And, we are already planning for our Fall Diocesan Executive Meeting to take place Saturday September 30th at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Parkland County. Our theme for our Fall Executive Meeting will be "Hand in hand with our youth on their faith journey". Our mid-winter regional workshops will take place this coming year in January 2024. And, our 2024 Edmonton Diocesan Convention will be held at St Joseph's Basilica, Edmonton April 26-28, 2024. Our 2024 Convention Chair is Tara Pev from St John the Evangelist CWL.

This coming year, additional key areas of focus will be continuing to advocate for parish councils in the Edmonton Diocese, encouraging members to continue to reconnect with one another, assisting any councils that are struggling or that are in need, and helping councils navigate changes to policies and procedures as a result of League restructuring. May Our Lady of Good Counsel continue to guide and bless us. This concludes my report. Clover Oryschak President, Edmonton Diocesan CWL Council.

This concludes my report.

Clover Oryschak President, Edmonton Diocesan Council