



Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council Fall/Winter Newsletter 2023

DECEMBER 2023

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Message	1
From the Desk of Mary Hunt	2-3
VP/Spiritual Report	4-5
ABMK Awards	5
Organization Report	6
Secretary Report	7
Treasurer Report	8
Past President Report	9
Independent Seniors' Advocate	10
2024 Calendar Reminders	10
Service Report	11-12
Social Justice Report	13
Walking Together	14-15
Communication Report	16
Diocesan Reports	17-21
Sanctity of Life & Mental Health	22
CWL National Theme	23

President's Message

Mary J. Hunt
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial President



It has been a busy autumn for ABMK members as we continued Unity Plan Visits, participated in virtual and in-person Retreats, Fall Meetings, workshops and planned the Alberta Mackenzie CWL & St. Vincent de Paul Society Initiative to **Help Feed the North**. As Unity Plan Visits wind down, we thank you for your participation in the **National Unity Plan** visits to address the future needs of the League. Membership continues to be a concern for our councils and we are reminded that if each one of us were to invite and support one Catholic woman in joining the League, our membership would double. ABMK hosted a compelling virtual retreat entitled **Walking Together as People of Faith** on October 1st with Father Christino Bouvette from the Diocese of Calgary. We were joined by CWL members from across the country who were grateful for the opportunity to hear Fr. Cristino speak. In January we begin the New National Theme: **Here I Am Lord; Send Me**. More info follows.

Councils are encouraged to start their membership drives to encourage renewals and recruit new members.

Check out the New **"1"** Campaign designed to **Recruit**: encourage members to invite women in their parish and community to join the League. **Retain**: Show gratitude and appreciation to current members. **Regain**: Welcome members or councils back to the sisterhood.

Memberships should be submitted to National by the end of February. For ideas to use in your membership efforts, please check the National website. Be sure to apply for the Fr. Walter Krewski Awards by the end of February. The form is found on the ABMK website.

2023 is an Election Year for all three levels of the League in Alberta Mackenzie. Encourage your members to consider serving on an executive. Membership on an executive is a wonderful way to learn, grow in faith and foster relationships with your League sisters while bringing forward new ideas and serving your council. A new Executive Handbook is available on the National website located under manuals with information to help you in discerning. Remember that each of us has a role to play in supporting and growing our councils. Please contact me or others of the ABMK Executive with any questions you may have.

CATHOLIC
and LIVING IT!

(Continued on page 2)

Isaiah 58:10 *If you give some of your own food to those who are hungry and to satisfy those who are humble, then your light will rise in the dark, and your darkness will become as bright as the noonday sun.*

From the Desk of Mary Hunt

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial President

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, CWL Members Live out their Profound Calling to Care.

In mid September, an idea was born at our ABMK Executive Fall Meeting to provide aid to northern communities coping with the devastation of wildfires through a large donation of basic food items that are expensive & in short supply which include flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, peanut butter, baking soda, etc.

We approached Archbishop Richard Smith who supported our proposal but suggested that we contact Bishop Jon Hansen of the NWT and St. Vincent de Paul for their views. Both were onboard and SVDP suggested that we partner on the initiative which was such a blessing as we learned that the success of such initiatives relies heavily on connections which they have developed thru time. Bishop Jon suggested that our donation be given to Hay River & Fort Smith who are in especially dire need. When approached, **Manitoulin Trucking** agreed to ship two sea cans of food to the two communities without charge (\$4,000.00 donation). **Freson Bros.** agreed to a discount on the food (\$3,200.00). The sea cans, shelving and padlocks were purchased by SVDP (\$10,000.00). The sea cans are to remain in the two communities to provide future storage for their food banks. **Edmonton Catholic Schools** had agreed to paint the sea cans but due to the onset of cold weather were not able to do so.

Our ABMK Dioceses were onboard and began sharing the news of the initiative with councils throughout ABMK (excepting Mackenzie-Fort Smith who would receive the donation). Each CWL member was asked to donate \$5.00 and if possible, more. **The Archdiocese of Edmonton** contributed \$5,000.00, ABMK Provincial CWL Council (\$5,000.00) and other donations began to come in and at the end of this project over \$59,000.00 in donations of money and services will be gifted to the North. Money collected after the food shipment will be given to St. Vincent de Paul for their continuing work in the North. Our collective prayers, donations, goodwill, and intentional discipleship speaks to Isaiah 58:10 *If you give some of your own food to those who are hungry and to satisfy those who are humble, then your light will rise in the dark, and your darkness will become as bright as the noonday sun.*



Partner To

Help Feed the North



From the Desk of Mary Hunt

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial President *(Continued from page 2)*



Collection food from Freson Bros.



Working with St. Vincent de Paul to load Sea Cans



Thank you from Hay River



Thank you from Fort Smith

Together with the Holy Spirit, we are strong and can accomplish many things including bringing light to the darkness. **Thank you ever so much for contributing to the success of this initiative.**

Janet MacPhee Vice-President/Spiritual Development



The month of November is for remembering – the ones who served in the World Wars and all conflicts since, our family members that have gone before us, our friends, and of course our sisters of the Catholic Women's League. Memorial Services have been held by many councils and parishes and with Remembrance Day being November 11th, many cities, towns and communities did have a service.

Let us remember – lest we forget.

At all of our conventions, diocesan/provincial/national, the CWL has a memorial service for our deceased sisters. The Book of Life, displayed on the altar during our conventions is a wonderful document giving the respect and honour to our deceased sisters. But it can only kept up to date with your help.

I would like to remind all councils to **notify the National Office of the CWL immediately** when one of their members pass. Please do not wait until the end of the year or when you are putting in members, next February, for 2024. I have provided a link to the deceased members form from National.

<https://www.cwl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/505F-Deceased-Member-Reporting-Form-2019.pdf>

Advent is a time of preparation and anticipation of the birth of our Lord, our Saviour.

To help with our Advent preparations here are a few suggestions:

- ✝ the **Daily Mass** from the Loretto Abbey in Toronto, will have an on-line Advent Retreat starting December 3, the first Sunday of Advent. You can signup/register for this retreat at www.dailytvmass.com and in doing so will receive a daily Advent reflection. You will also be able to watch the retreat and the daily mass on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4-hFRovz_k
- ✝ the **December 2023 Living with Christ** misselette (daily mass booklet) have wonderful Advent prayers and reflections on this season; page 165 Prayer for Home and School, page 178 Pope Francis Prayer – Advent: A Favourable Time, page 179 The Sacrifice of Love by John Pungente and Monty Williams, page 183 God of Welcome by Michael McGirr, Page 184 Preparing a Home for the Newborn Jesus by Natalia Kononenko, Page 187 Pope Francis Prayer to the Holy Family
- ✝ the **December 2023 Living with Christ** misselette has a sparate booklet for the Mass for Monday December 25, Nativity of the Lord. It also has a reflection and lined pages for you to journal your prayers, hopes and thoughts for the Christmas Season and the upcoming year.

With Advent comes a new Liturgical Year – which will be Year B Series II of the Church year. For many Advent is a renewal time – a time to start again. Maybe we can do better over the new Church year – as in the words from Micah 6:8:

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.*



*Holy Family Nativity
Sacred Heart Church,
Calgary AB*

Janet MacPhee

Vice-President/Spiritual Development *Continued from page 4)*

Synod on Synodality:

For information regarding the Synod proceedings that took place during October in Rome:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2023-10/synod-walking-together-and-listening-to-the-holy-spirit.html>

Pope Francis' Intention for October was for the Synod.

October 2023 – For the Synod – “We pray for the Church, that she may adopt listening and dialogue as a life-style at every level, and allow herself to be guided by the Holy Spirit towards the peripheries of the world.”

Pope Francis' Prayer Intentions 2023

November 2023 For the Pope

We pray for the Holy Father; as he fulfills his mission, may he continue to accompany the flock entrusted to him, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

December 2023 For persons with disabilities

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the center of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.



Alberta Mackenzie Provincial CWL Awards

Report submitted by Betsy Fletcher, Organization Chair

Elsie Yanik Award

The Elsie Yanik Award was created to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council in 1997. This award is to commemorate the ministry and service of Elsie Yanik to the Catholic community in the Diocese of Mackenzie Ft. Smith. This award will go to a CWL member in Alberta Mackenzie CWL who demonstrates the spirit of Elsie Yanik, a giving woman who shared her gifts and talents help those around her to grow in their faith and serve their community. Candidates for this award should reflect that spirit of faith and service. Guidelines and criteria as well as the nomination form are available on the ABMK Provincial website: abmkcwl.ca.

The deadline to apply for this award is February 15.

Father Walter Krewski Award

This award is named for long time Spiritual Advisor of the ABMK Provincial Council. The purpose of these awards is to recognize councils who have made an effort to increase their memberships in the previous year. The awards are for the highest increase in new (never been a member) members; the greatest percentage of members and the greatest increase in members. Councils can apply for one or all of the categories if their numbers fit the criteria. Even if your council only gains one or two new members, you should apply. Sometimes, all it takes is one new member to increase the percentage of members!

The deadline to apply for these awards is February 28.

The forms to apply for the awards are on the ABMK Provincial website: abmkcwl.ca

Betsy Fletcher

Organization Chairperson



By now most of our councils will be using the new format for council executives. This time will be a learning curve for us. How do we incorporate all of the committees we used to have into just three? It will take time to sort out where our individual council projects fit under the new structure. Don't be discouraged. We are all in the same boat. Christ will calm the waters for us. Trust that you have been given the gifts and talents you need to do it.

In this article, I will focus on recruiting. In January, we'll begin our annual recruiting period, but recruiting all the time is a good thing. So, where to start? We have three pillars, faith, social justice and service. Does your council focus on one of these pillars more than the others? If so, why not start there. What are your members most interested in? Is it faith enrichment? How about creating resolutions? Do your members spend a lot of time helping the less fortunate? Maybe you work on all three pillars equally. Once you figure this out, then you can begin to determine what methods of recruiting will best fit your council and you can tailor your message to the women in your parish. Decide on what you want your council to be.

The next step involves finding the right tools for you to use. The League has a multitude of resources to help you out. You don't have to make it up all on your own. We've probably all used the parish bulletin to advertise The League and invite ladies to join us. Then there is the personal invitation which can be very fruitful. Have you tried any of the new tools and resources from our national website: [The Catholic Women's League of Canada \(cwl.ca\)](http://TheCatholicWomen'sLeagueofCanada.cwl.ca) We don't have to re-invent the wheel. National Office has done that for us!

You can download the short videos from the website to a memory stick and play them in your parish before Mass begins (with permission from your parish priest). The videos are short and inspiring. Share them on your parish Facebook page. Print off pamphlets (#313 is a good one) from the website and place them in the pews and have some available wherever your parish has other information brochures. Wear your scarves pins and t-shirts if you have them, when you serve at Mass. If you have a member receiving a significant milestone pin, present it at Mass. Create a weekly or monthly article for your parish bulletin detailing what you are doing as a council.

These are just a few suggestions for you to consider. One thing is certain, if we don't take some action, CWL membership numbers will continue to decrease. The worst that can happen when inviting someone to join this marvelous organization is that someone will say "No". That's ok. Continue working on it. Look for the ladies in your parish who are young and computer literate, the ones who volunteer in your community. Tell them about our work for God and Canada. Don't forget to pray about it too!



Jan Myhre Secretary



As my CWL journey continues, I am continually inspired by my sisters in the League.

When I attend various gatherings, meetings and conventions, I am reminded of the quote from St. Catherine of Siena in our Catch the Fire workshops, *“Be who you are meant to be and you will set the world on fire.”* I continue to pray to Our Lady of Good Counsel and to the Holy Spirit to grant me wisdom and understanding to know the will of God.

Over the years, I have learned more and more about Parliamentary Procedure, especially as I watched Life Member Connie McBride, as for many years prior to the pandemic, she was the parliamentarian for our Calgary Diocesan Conventions. She became my mentor as I learned the various aspects of running a meeting, presenting motions and the methods of motions, amending motions, voting, etc. Connie inspired me, and by attending Parliamentary Workshops, I was able to enhance my knowledge on meeting procedures.

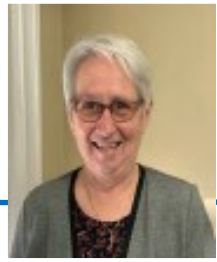
To that end, Calgary Diocesan Council hosted a **Parliamentarian Workshop** in Calgary on **Friday, November 24th and Saturday, November 25th**. Members from the Calgary Diocese as well as three life members were in attendance. The workshop was sponsored by Alberta Mackenzie council, who paid for the facilitator, [Todd Brand](#), a Professional Registered Parliamentarian, who educated us on how to run an effective meeting, how to prepare an Agenda as well as Minutes to a meeting, and various types of Motions. Not only was it educational, but we had a lot of fun while we were learning. Our thanks to St. Bonaventure council who made sure we didn't go hungry by providing us with refreshments and lunch both days. The workshop was attended new members within the last few years, members who would soon be council presidents, regional chairs, council presidents, members on diocesan council, as well as ABMK council and life members. After thanking Todd for spending two days with us, he received our traditional “Blessing Song”. I thoroughly recommend Todd as a facilitator if anyone would like to host a Parliamentarian Workshop.

One of the many [Strategic Plan resources](#) available on the national website is *“Share the Words (52 Reasons to Talk about the CWL)”*. One of the words I appreciate is *“Leaders” - The Catholic Women’s League has many programs and workshops that empower women in becoming confident leaders who journey together to build God’s kingdom in the areas of faith, service and social justice! Come walk with us. Check it out! What’s your favourite word? Share it with women in your parish, you family, your community. What’s your CWL?*



Parliamentary Workshop—St. Bonaventure Parish—November 2023

Celine Berlinguette
Treasurer



My dear sisters in the League,

It is hard to believe that we are already in the Fall Season, the leaves have yellowed and fallen to the ground, our gardens have been cleaned and we've had a taste of the cold temperatures and snow.

Our Mid-winter and fall meetings were held at the Star of the North Retreat House in St. Albert and as usual successful and a lot of information was shared. In June, the Provincial Convention was held at Corpus Christi Parish. The opening Mass was held at the Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples and a reception was held in their hall. Buses were hired to take us to and from the opening Mass. It was a very good convention, great venue, speakers and food was enjoyed by all and our costs came in within budget.

At our convention concerns were voiced about the lack of ability to e-transfer funds to the ABMK CWL Provincial account. After our Fall meeting, with all approvals in place, INTERACT e-transfers became a reality.



The 2024 Convention Planning Committee held their first meeting at the Ascension Parish in Northwest Calgary on September 28th. Our next meeting will be held via Zoom.

At the Fall meeting we were made aware of the needs of the North for basic food supplies such as flour, sugar baking powder etc. With the forest fires in the North, evacuations and the need to feed the fire fighters, basic supplies became impossible to get and very expensive. The proposal that was made by our president was that if each CWL member were to donate the equivalent of the purchase of a cup of coffee approximately \$5.00 each, we could raise \$40,000.00. At that meeting the Provincial Council made a motion to donate \$5,000.00 towards this worthy cause. So with the help of St. Vincent de Paul and with the generous donations of many, two sea cans of food will be shipped North, one to Hay River and one to Ft. Smith.

Thinking back to our CWL roots, wasn't that what Kathryn Hughes was all about....a women of action. It's amazing what can happen when we pool together.

As we are getting closer to the end of the year, we need to look at all the good works we have done during the year and report on them. Part of the reporting process also includes the financial aspect of our Council's work. The Voluntary Fund Disbursement form can be found at: cwl.ca > resources > forms > #513 or 513F. The Voluntary Fund Disbursement form is sent to the CWL National Office. The Nickels' for the North and Alberta March for Life remittance forms can be found on <https://www.cwlabmk.ca/> > forms and awards and click on the form you require. If your Council is making a donation towards Alberta March for Life and/or Nickel's for the North, please have your remittance into the treasurer by mid-December so the funds can be disbursed of before year end.



Judy Look Past President



“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. “

At the provincial convention in June in Edmonton I presented a workshop that was entitled Change is Here/ Embrace It/ Love it. It focused on CWL but as I write this article, I am reflecting on how quickly change happens often initiated by circumstances beyond our control. Pandemic was the focus for a long time and now war is permeating our consciousness. The news is very bleak and although we are not physically on the front lines we are spiritually. We as CWL members are reminded that God calls us to be light for a world full of darkness; to battle the negativity that is being imposed on us. We can do this through gratitude. How blessed are we to live in this country, to be visible non persecuted Christians, and to have the freedom to be women who can determine their own future.

We must uptick our battle against the culture of death. We must not become complacent and think that somebody else will do it. We must make sure our God is at the forefront of our battles by turning to Him and asking for His guidance before we make the phone call, write the letter or make the visit as we work on our social justice issues. We cannot let evil think that good is no longer in the fight. Our homes and churches must be places of refuge where we prevent divisions from taking hold. We must remember that the spirit that lives in each of us binds us together. We must stop dabbling in the 7 deadly sins. There is no room for jealousy, envy or gossip all sins that kill.

As past presidents we must be generals in this war. We must take the lead to make sure that our councils are one in spirit. We must remember how important it is to live the corporal works of mercy so people can see how we Christians love one another. Our meetings must operate in the environment of gratitude and intentional prayer. Let us ask the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Mother to give us wisdom and courage to help bring peace to the world by bringing peace to our councils.

You became a past president because years ago you answered the nudge from the Holy Spirit to join the League. Your work as a past president is invaluable as it is rooted in gratitude and experience - the experience that allows you to look beyond what is to what could be. Faith, Service and Social Justice is at the heart of what we do as they build relationships and effect change. We aren't "has beens" we are knowledge keepers, and we can see the future.

As knowledge keepers' archives play an important role in what we do. Let us make sure they are protected and put in a safe place that future CWL'ers can build on. The Alberta government provincial archives is a good place for them. Let us review our policy and procedure manuals, update if necessary and make sure every member of our executive has read them. Let us be the gentle welcomer at our meetings and talk to all the members to build an inventory of gifts and talents. Each one of our members is a wealth of talent and giftedness and when it is time for nominations for elections, we know who we can ask. Let us remind our executives of unfinished work (from years past) and take the lead to see that work completed.

Let us be women who embrace change, grow with it, fight the negativity with gratitude all enveloped in Our Lady's mantle to be placed at the foot of the Father in gratitude and thanksgiving. Let us be women who are "Catholic and Living It!

Independent Seniors' Advocate Submitted by Judy Look

Lobbying for an Independent Seniors' Advocate

Keeping in mind our core values of faith, service and social justice, we are encouraging every member of the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial council to contact her local MLA regardless of their political affiliation. This contact could be through a letter, an e-mail, a phone call, or an in-person meeting in outlining the need for an independent seniors' advocate - an independent officer of the legislature. All Alberta political parties need to be aware of our concerns. We are also encouraging our members to ask their neighbours and friends who are not members of the CWL to support this initiative by contacting their MLA.

Although we are CWL members we are speaking as private citizens and not as CWL members. Any official contact with government will be made by the Provincial President.

A sample letter available on the website can be used to help formulate your letter. The Alberta Provincial Council hopes to meet with the Alberta government in the spring of 2024, so we ask that you to contact your MLA no later than February 28, 2024.

Your participation in this campaign is crucial as the government needs to hear from as many Albertans as possible to communicate our wishes regarding seniors' issues and concerns.

For more detailed background information please go to our provincial website cwlabmk.ca

2024 Calendar Reminders

May 8, 2024: Mother's Day Virtual Retreat

Presenter: Dr. Josephine Lombardi

May 31/June 1, 2024: ABMK Provincial Convention

Ascension Parish, Calgary

Guest Speakers: National President Shari Guinta (confirmed)

Bishop William McGrattan (TBC)

August 11 – 14, 2024: CWL National Convention

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Mary Molloy
Service Standing Committee Chair and Education Chair



This past year was a transitional year for many councils in our province. Some councils maintained a Community Life Chair, while others adopted the new Service Standing Committee format. As you know, the provincial council adopted the new structure and at the National Annual Meeting of Members in August the new structure was adopted.

Navigating the various activities of the Service Committee, there are several resources on the national cwl website that can assist with the adopting the duties of the Service Standing Committee. I draw your attention to two documents in particular on the national website: "The Joy of Leadership – Module 1: Ministries" (835/835a) and "Toolkit for Service" (637). Service embraces the works of mercy from Matthew 25:35-36:

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."

Pope Francis' instruction on September 1st, 2016, added care of creation to the traditional set of works of mercy.

Service also includes catholic education, literacy, bursaries, and scholarships. Councils should have no difficulty adjusting to the Service Standing Committee.

The focus for the coming year will be on to help the hungry and homeless, assisting those who have been affected by floods and forest fires, walking with our sisters and brothers on a journey to heal and rebuild the broken legacy of the past, and supporting our catholic schools. Over the coming months, information and activities will be developed and forwarded to each diocese to help parishes with information and suggestions to implement.

Joline Belliveau, National Chairperson of Service in her second communique, reminds us that monthly meetings need not always be held at the same time, on the same day or place. Councils could consider scheduling an activity of service instead of their monthly meeting, or scheduling a meeting at a senior's home, or a homeless shelter to highlight one of projects or groups your council supports.

The 3rd National Truth and Reconciliation Day was celebrated on September 30th. Many councils found various ways to mark this national day. Continue to encourage members to become aware of the calls to action of the TRC. They can be found at www.reconciliation.ca or reflect on one of the homilies and speeches by Pope Francis on his Penitential Journey Pilgrimage in Canada in July 2022. His words are available in "Walking Together", published by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Councils across Alberta supported Catholic Education Sunday on November 5th through praying the Novena for Catholic Education or using the Mass Intentions. If your council isn't connected to GrACE (Grateful Advocates for Catholic Education), you are encouraged to contact them at contact the Executive Director at gracedirector7@gmail.com.

I conclude with a renewed sense of purpose for the coming year. "Rescue the weak and the needy, deliver them from the hands of the wicked" Psalm 82:4.

For God and Canada

(Continued on page 12)

Mary Molloy
Service Standing Committee Chair and Education Chair *Continued from page 11)*



Presentation to Gianna Centre
Denise Blackstock, Mary Hunt, Vera Fischer, Mary Molloy
ABMK Social Justice Chair, ABMK Provincial President, Manager, Gianna Centre, ABMK Service Chair



Rock painting at ABMK Fall Meeting



Painted rocks on display

Walking Together as People of Faith: Celebrating Truth & Reconciliation Day Submitted by Judy Look

What an amazing virtual retreat we were blessed with on October 1st. facilitated by Rev. Father Cristino Bouvette a young Calgary diocesan priest of Metis background who opened our hearts to the true meaning of reconciliation. He was chosen to organize the liturgies for the Pope's visit, is Vicar for Vocations and Young Adults and most recently has become the pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Strathmore. He applauded us for having a retreat to reflect on the people who call the land home and the people who share the land with them. He shared his journey as a priest as he mentioned his work in different parishes and with young adults. We soon learned that his heart belonged to two special ladies who he credits with helping him become the man he is today; his Kokum his Cree grandmother who was a survivor of residential schools and his Nona his Italian grandmother who immigrated to Canada and survived all the struggles that come from being an immigrant. He began as all story tellers do with his personal story which included being a descendent of a Methodist minister. He shared that the commitment that the Roman Catholic Church has to Truth and Reconciliation comes from the Church's commitment to Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is committed to walking with our neighbour both in joy and in suffering. His Kokum and Italian grandmother were witnesses to the look of healing and reconciliation. He shared that when his Nona's husband passed away his Kokum who had lost her husband years before came to the funeral. She travelled to Medicine Hat a very long bus ride from her farm for the funeral. When she walked into the Church she went up and hugged his Nona and Nona said to Kokum "You know". Two very different women raised in different cultures both overcoming much prejudice came together and embraced. That is what walking in friendship looks like; to be with each other in pain and in joy. He shared that no amount of retribution will bring about reconciliation only the walking together as friends. Knowing the other's pain and working through it together allows healing. We must get over the fear that prevents us from interacting with our indigenous brothers and sisters. Shared friendship doubles our joy and divides our sorrows. He challenged us to think about the meaning of truth and who decides it's meaning. Jesus said I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. It doesn't matter how many orange shirts we wear; how many days are set aside, or how much money will be spent the only thing that will bring about healing and reconciliation is a change of heart, a heart that is open to transformation and is willing to reach out in friendship. It was a great afternoon an afternoon of laughter and some tears as we checked into on our own hearts and began feeling a tug saying, "I need you to reach out, see your neighbor as friend, work at this friendship and be healed."



Walking Together as People of Faith: Virtual Retreat

Reverend Cristino Bouvette



A Very Special Thanks to:

Reverend Cristino Bouvette

From the Diocese of Calgary

Presenter at Our Virtual Retreat

On Sunday, October 1, 2023

Walking Together as People of Faith

For a most interesting, inspiring, and compelling presentation.

Question: We seek your comments and sage advice in responding to the email we received from a CWL member in Ontario who attended the virtual retreat on Sunday. Concerns about Land Acknowledgements have also been raised by CWL members in Alberta. Any direction you are willing to provide would be greatly appreciated.

Response from Father Cristino: There is a lot of mixed reaction to the practice of making land acknowledgements. They are admittedly one of the calls to action of the TRC, but we should be careful to remember that the calls to action are not automatically infallible expectations. I have personal apprehensions about their use. When you repeat something over and over again, it can diminish the meaning as people just become desensitized to hearing them.

However, when they are going to be used- and there are plenty of good and reasonable moments to do so I think the lady who commented below is right in recognizing that we should be acknowledging all land as coming from the Creator even before belonging to a traditional group of people. And that is in keeping how Indigenous people would acknowledge this too. So if the CWL are going to use these consistently in the future, I would simply encourage you to have them begin with something like "We acknowledge that we are on land which is the gift of the Creator, traditionally inhabited by..."

I hope this is helpful. Thank you again for inviting me at the beginning of this month and God bless your ongoing efforts!



Gloria Lundberg
Communications Chair



On October 10, 11 and 12, 2023 Clark Communications presented Virtual Information Sessions on **Sharing is Caring**. Clark Communications is the marketing agency working with the League and Dorothy Johansen, National Secretary-Treasurer facilitated the sessions.

The focus was to introduce the updated National website and participants were sent a marketing ‘Care Package’ after the sessions were completed. Information in the package included: CWL Logo Positioning, Resolution Kit, Share the Words, National Map Poster, Sharing is Caring Links, Sharing is Caring Presentation, Social Media Cheat Sheet, and What’s Your CWL Poster.

If you were unable to attend and would like have this information, please contact me at: abmkcwlcommunications@gmail.com and I will forward the zip file to you.

On November 24 & 25, a Parliamentary Workshop was held at St. Bonaventure Parish in Calgary. Thanks to Jan Myhre, ABMK Secretary for facilitating the workshop and the St. Bonaventure CWL for providing the lunch and coffee breaks. The presenter was Todd Brand, a Professional Registered Parliamentarian and he managed to make what could be a boring topic fun, interesting and very informative. For anyone moving into an executive position this is an excellent workshop to attend.



Parliamentary Workshop



Procedure practice—Life Member Cathy Bouchard holding the gavel

Renee Spohn Calgary Diocesan President



To be an intentional disciple of Jesus Christ means living life with a purpose, to know, to love and to serve God in this life, and rejoice with Him forever in the next. In September, our St. Mary's University CWL Chair for Catholic Studies lecture series speaker was Leah Perrault. She was inspirational asking us in the spirit of Hope to reflect on our journey with Jesus confronted with challenges, gifted with His mercy and grace to fulfill what He is asking us to do.

Our Calgary Diocesan CWL Council's intention is to build relationships, faith, mentor, and make a difference in our communities.

The Diocesan Officers prioritized visiting councils to get to know the members. Each visit has been a blessing! One only needs to be with them to appreciate their work and witness their immense faith and love for one another.

We collaborate with our Spiritual Advisors to increase membership, enriching our parishes and the League. Each news bulletin has a "get to know a Spiritual Advisor" article. In August, we featured our vibrant Catholic community with articles welcoming our two new priests, the Adopt-A Seminarian Program, and SERRA. Recently, we held our first workshop sharing how we can start, build, and grow relationships with our Spiritual Advisors.

With a foundation of faith, we committed to having a spiritual retreat in all five regions. The Diocesan Advent Retreat, "Having a Mary heart during a Martha season" will be on December 2nd in three regions hosted by Holy Spirit CWL, Calgary, St. Martha's, Lethbridge and Holy Family, Medicine Hat. In April 2024 we are planning a Risen Lord! retreat in the Highwood Region.

For our members we will facilitate training on the National resources, how to access and use them effectively. For all ABMK members, we will host a Parliamentary workshop on November 24-25th at St. Bonaventure Parish, Calgary.

We influence our communities with faith, service, and social justice. Our priorities are Catholic education, I'm Worth it Now (IWIN), palliative care, and Truth & Reconciliation. We partner with St. Mary's University and financially support our CWL Chair for Catholic Studies. Councils pray for human trafficking with the Red Sand ceremony and donate items for the IWIN backpacks. Members attended the "Breakfast with Nations" and participated in activities with our Indigenous sisters on September 30th. We look forward to giving Christmas Stockings to the thirty girls of Stardale's Women's Group again this year.

In hope we ask to be intentional disciples of Jesus Christ, living life with a purpose, and knowing "He who started a good work in you will carry it to completion." Philippians 1:6



Clover Oryschak **Edmonton Diocesan President**

As this newsletter goes out, we find ourselves just entering advent. A time of preparation and joy as we anticipate the welcoming of Christ's light into the world.

During advent, the theme of light is reflected through the four candles of the Advent wreath; one candle for each week of Advent, until Christmas Eve when the larger Christ candle is lit. Many families during Advent also set up a nativity set, leaving empty until Christmas Eve the manger where the Christ child would later lay. In our family, it has always been the task of the youngest child, our daughter Grace, to hide the baby Jesus, and then to try hard to remember where she put Him when Christmas Eve arrived! Thankfully, she always managed to find Him again.

Where do we find Christ in our lives? How do we prepare for Christ's coming? How do we share Christ's light with others?

One way to prepare for Advent and share Christ's light in our hearts is through intentional discipleship. 'Intentional discipleship' is about putting faith into practice and helping others to do the same. Our new national CWL theme starting January 1st is "Here I am Lord, send me!" which is a call to intentional discipleship as members of the Catholic Women's League. As CWL sisters, we encounter one another as companions on the journey and serve as intentional disciples alongside one another for the benefit of all God's people. We bear witness to our shared Catholic faith so as to help bring Christ's light to all those who need to feel His hope, love and peace.

Throughout this past year, Edmonton Diocesan officers and parish CWL councils in our diocese have been busy feeding the hungry in Edmonton's inner city via our new sandwich making and serving the hungry initiatives lead by Susan Casey (Diocesan Social Justice Chair) as well as coordinating the crafting of a beautiful new quilt to celebrate women saints lead by Evelyn Dunne (Diocesan Faith Chair), and cultivating a strong partnership in support of the newly renovated Our Lady of Victory Camp lead by Margaret Korte (Diocesan Service Chair). We are also involved with the Edmonton Archdiocese's Hope and Dignity Advisory Committee represented by Jean Ashdown (Diocesan Vice President). And, we have enjoyed our trips out to visit with our parish councils this past year as part of the National CWL Unity Outreach Project. I wish to extend my gratitude to all of the visit facilitators who helped with this, including Mary Molloy (Diocesan Past President), Mariette Huot (Diocesan Treasurer), Pat Keith (Diocesan Secretary), and many others. This past year, we also welcomed a new Diocesan Spiritual Advisor, Fr Curtis Berube! In the new year, we look forward to spending time with our members again February 3rd and 10th for our Mid-Winter Regional Workshops. The 2024 Annual Edmonton Diocesan Convention will be held April 26-28th at St Joseph's Basilica in the heart of downtown Edmonton. Our theme for our next convention is "The Beauty of Encounter", lead by our keynote speaker Archbishop Smith.

This Advent, may you find Christ wherever and whenever you seek Him. And, may the light of Christ shine brightly within you.

On behalf of Edmonton Diocesan Council, I wish you a joyous Advent season and a very Merry Christmas! Christ is Born, Glorify Him!

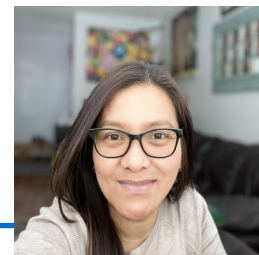
Clover Oryschak
Edmonton Diocesan President



Hot meal program—Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples



Sheila Domingo
Mackenzie-Fort Smith Diocesan President



It has been a hectic summer for us here in the North. With our community being evacuated twice due to wildfire, one in May and again in August, it has been a difficult year for some of our members. Hay River, Fort Smith, and Yellowknife have been evacuated for a month. With our members being displaced all over Alberta, it was the most frightening day of our lives as we watched and waited for the outcome. Our town was spared from the fire, but unfortunately, some nearby communities were not as fortunate.

We are very grateful and blessed for the generosity of our sisters in Alberta-Mackenzie Provincial CWL Council and The Society of St. Vincent de Paul that joined together to start a shared Initiative to Help Feed the North. They sent Fort Smith and Hay River communities a sea can each, full of donations of basic food items such as flour, sugar, baking powder, etc. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!!!

The Mackenzie Fort Smith Diocese will be holding its midwinter meeting on January 27 through Zoom to discuss our Diocese's 60th Annual Diocesan Convention on April 12-14, 2024. The place for the convention has not yet been decided.

As we move to the new year I will continue to work on better communication with each council and better distribution of news and updates from the Provincial. As Bishop Lobsinger said in his homily, "Be conscious in what we do, be intentional in living our faith. Intentionally give our lives and service to others to be His disciples today and every day and to be mindful of others who have less".

To our Alberta Sisters, thank you for your Nickels for the North, who continue to support our members in attending different conventions for the League. Please continue to pray for our communities especially those who are affected by wildfires, for them to be uplifted by the helping hand of God.



Kathryn Bourque
St. Paul Diocesan President

Greetings from St. Paul Diocesan council! This beautiful fall weather we've been having has allowed the farmers to take off their harvest and do some field work. And it will certainly shorten our winter!! Praise be to God!

This fall we have been busy in the diocese. We have almost wrapped up the Unity Outreach visits. The more distant communities will be done by Zoom. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to visit most of the councils in person. This has been accomplished by three of us on the executive.

Our Mid-winter Meeting will be held by Zoom on February 3rd, 2024. We have found this platform to be most appreciated by councils and have better participation than if we met in person at this time of year.

Our Diocesan convention is being hosted by St. Mary council in Westlock on April 12th- 13th. We're looking forward to a good turnout with this central location. It will be a time to reconnect and embrace our new National Theme: Here I am Lord, Send me!!

Councils are busy with membership drives. God willing, we will maintain our current membership of 433 and perhaps even see an increase! We have finally wrapped up sales of the "Catholic & Living It!" pins with the last of the profits going to the provincial "Feed the North" initiative. Just over \$700.00, it was a unanimous decision at our Fall meeting. Councils have also embraced the "Feed the North" initiative on an individual basis.

In closing, I would like to wish all my sisters in the League, both the Diocese and the whole province, a very Merry Christmas season filled with love and peace. May it be a time to rejuvenate and reflect on the past year. May 2024 be fruitful, healthy and rewarding as you continue your work in the League



Sanctity of Life: Euthanasia and Mental Health Submitted by Jan Myhre & Lia

IMPORTANT CALL TO ACTION:

On February 2, 2023, the Government of Canada introduced legislation (**Bill C-39**) announcing plans to delay MAiD eligibility for people whose sole underlying medical condition is a mental illness until **March 17, 2024**. This is a one-year delay from the original timeline. They said that this delay will provide them with more time to develop practice standards and training, and to allow for better data collection and sharing.

In anticipation of a Bill being reintroduced in the Spring of 2024, **MAiD Postcards** will be available thru National Office in the next few weeks for mailing to our Members of Parliament. Postage will not be required on your postcards and letters as they are being sent to Members of Parliament.

Let your voice be heard on this critical **Sanctity of Life** issue.

Information will be available on the ABMK website.

The accelerated adoption of the Euthanasia law in Canada has thrown us into a troubling attack on the sanctity of life. Initially introduced by the Canadian Government to alleviate severe physical suffering, the law is now being suggested as a method to manage mental health conditions.

Bill C-7, an amendment to the Criminal Code relating to medical assistance in dying (MAiD), proposes expanding eligibility for MAiD by removing the requirement that for a Person seeking assistance; natural death must be reasonably foreseeable. This could allow individuals not nearing the end of their lives, including those with mental illnesses such as depression, to avail themselves of this provision.

Since its adoption, over 31,000 medically assisted suicides have occurred in Canada; a number projected to rise significantly with the planned expansion of the law to include those suffering from mental health conditions. However, mental health illnesses are highly treatable. Symptoms can be managed, and lives can be lived to the fullest. Broadening access to MAiD is not the solution, particularly when our priority should be to choose life over death. We must ensure all efforts are taken to protect the most vulnerable from medically assisted premature death, which can be prevented with adequate treatment and care. We should ensure that those suffering from mental illness are treated medically, not through assisted dying.

As the CCCB urges all the faithful in their Open Letter 2 in May 2023: “We encourage individual Catholics and their families, faith communities, Catholic healthcare professionals and any other people of good will to continue courageously and unwaveringly to witness to life, to tend to and accompany the sick, to resist pressure to support or participate in ‘MAiD,’ and to pray that our law makers may see the harm in what they are permitting to take place.” Let us continue to pray for those living with mental health challenges and illnesses and those who care for them, that God may strengthen them in hope, and that they may find the support they need from family, healthcare professionals, faith communities, and others.



CWL National Theme 2024 & 2025

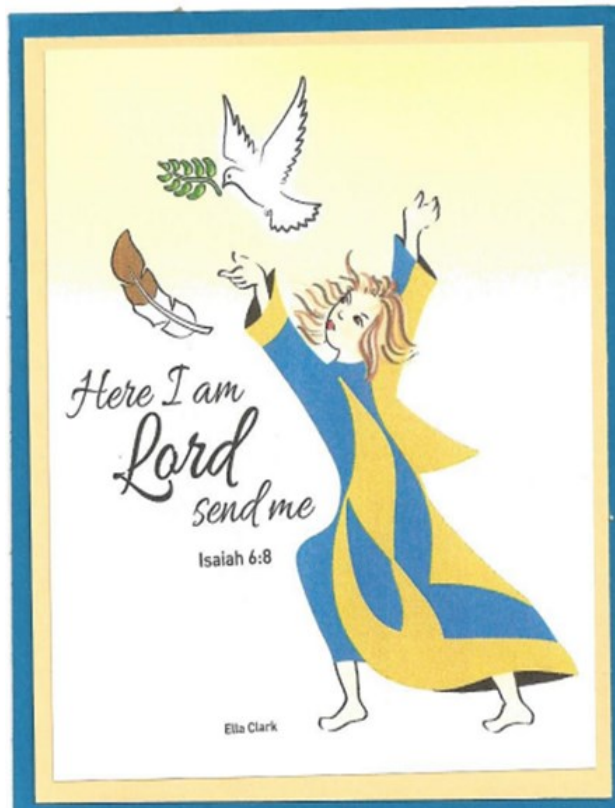
At the Annual Members Meeting held in St. John, New Brunswick in August, 2023 our new National President, Shari Guinta shared the National Theme she has chosen for the coming two years beginning in January.

Shari was inspired by Isaiah 6:8 and felt this was the time in our League history to remind ourselves of our baptismal calling to serve the Lord and His people.

Shown here is the illustration we will use and the theme prayer written by National Spiritual Advisor, Bishop Wayne Lobsinger.

At the Fall Meeting of the National Executive, theme development was explored and it was decided that the focus would be Mental Health and the various ways Mental Health impacts our lives. More information will be provided by Shari in the New Year to share with your councils.

A prayer card will be inserted into *The Canadian League Magazine Winter edition* for you to use over the next two years.



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



Loving Father, open our hearts to your infinite love for all people,
and to your presence with us wherever we go in your name.

Lord Jesus, deepen the spiritual life of the Catholic Women's League.

Strengthen the faith and good works of our members,
building-up life in the world by being Catholic and Living It!

May we imitate you with works and mercy, welcoming the forgotten,
suffering or vulnerable wherever we encounter them.

Holy Spirit, strengthen us to live our faith, witnessing to life, peace
and social justice daily wherever we are in Canada.

Through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Counsel,
may we be joyful and responsive to our Christian calling,
by truly being Catholic and Living It!

We make this prayer through Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah,
who lives and reigns with the Father,
and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever.

Amen.