



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

St. Paul Diocesan President Oral Report
Convention 2023 Edmonton

Madam President

The Catholic Women's League in the diocese of St. Paul is definitely back to work! We have 15 councils that are active with two more councils unofficially inactive. Our membership is 420 which is down from last year's 438. I am very happy to report that one council which was inactive for over 2 years has begun meeting again and has 17 members!

Our councils continue to be active in all the ministries in church life and their communities. They have sent the postcards demanding legislation to protect our youth from pornography. They have also sent postcards asking for high quality, accessible palliative care and participated in the 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care in some way. Letters have been sent voicing concern against expansion of Medical Assistance in Dying and requesting protection for health care workers' right of conscience. Regarding reconciliation many councils report studying the 94 Calls to Action and determining which ones apply to them and what role their council might play. They are also watching government at different levels to see how they are doing regarding the calls to action.

I had the opportunity to have a brief meeting with the four Poor Clare Sisters in the Stella Maris Monastery in St. Paul. They assured me of their prayers for the Catholic Women's League and also requested our prayers for them, their order and young women discerning a vocation in the religious life. The council in St. Paul has frequent contact with them. The Diocese of St. Paul will be celebrating 75 years this July 17th, and will be starting the celebration with a blessing of a monument "Come to the Well" in front on the Monastery and then a walk to the cathedral where Mass will be said and refreshments served afterwards. The Diocesan CWL council is a bit younger, celebrating 67 years this year.

Our annual convention was held April 22nd in Plamondon and we had the new Bishop Gary Franken say our opening Mass with our diocesan spiritual advisor Fr. Paulson and Fr. Marvin. It was lovely to have the support of our new bishop, and he was able to stay for part of the next morning and hear reports. We had a presentation by Cathy Bouchard, National 1st Vice President on the 3 new chairs and how the work of the League will fit under each. As a diocese we have adopted the new structure a bit early as we had several vacant seats. Many of the councils have done the same thing, so it was a timely and well appreciated presentation. At the banquet we had a short presentation by our new Social Justice chairperson on her trip to El Salvador and the work she did there. She invited us to venture out of our comfort zone if such an opportunity presents itself. Thirty-four women were registered at convention.

One of the projects taken on by the diocese was the sale of the "Catholic & Living it!" theme pins. Brainchild of the Athabasca council and spearheaded by them, over 800 pins have been sold to date. Councils were encouraged to purchase them at cost and then sell them in their councils and parishes at a modest profit. Any profit from pins sold outside of the diocese have been set aside. So far we have donated this money to the Morinville "Church Re-Build" fund, Camp St. Louis – our diocesan youth camp and the Bishop's Seminarian fund. We had a total of 900 pins made up and less than 100 are remaining. I have sent pins from the East Coast to the West Coast. Fundraising is not something that we generally do as a diocesan council but it has given us an opportunity to support some of our diocesan projects. We thank you for your support of this endeavor. We anxiously await the announcement of the next theme!

I have requested some time to speak to the priests of the diocese and Bishop Gary has graciously invited me to their next meeting, later in June. With so many of our priests coming from outside of Canada, I thought that it would be good to give little primer on our wonderful organization, starting with a brief history. As they are aware of what we do locally, I will familiarize them with what we do at the diocesan, provincial and national levels of our organization. They will have an opportunity to ask questions and hopefully see their role in supporting our activities and encouraging the women of the parish to check us out.

We are in the process of following through with the Unity Outreach Project. It has been slow getting started, but we aim to be finished by Christmas.

As with many councils we struggle with women taking on leadership roles, both in the parish level and the diocesan level. That being said, reports from the councils continue to amaze me. The women who are active are very active and often wear several hats at once, both in the League and in the parish. The prayers of the women in the background must also be mentioned and I know that is from where much strength comes.

As I write this it is the end of the day of the Solemnity of Pentecost when the apostles were locked up in a safe place, fearful of the persecution of the Jews. Suddenly they received the Holy Spirit. At that moment, they were filled with courage and strength and the Church was born. As Catholic women we must remember that we received the Holy Spirit at our Confirmation and push forward with the work of the League with courage and enthusiasm as the Apostles did. God will do the rest.

This concludes my report.

Kathryn Bourque President, St. Paul Diocesan Council