



Hamilton Diocesan Council
The Catholic Women's League of Canada

ONE HEART
VOICE
MISSION

ORGANIZATION – Annual Reporting

Dear Sisters in the League

As you may have heard over the past few months, the process for annual reporting will be changing. Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec and one parish in Alberta piloted these new computerized annual reporting forms provincially and submitted positive feedback.

As of now, the projected timeline has the Presidents receiving a mailing by mid-October with hard copies from National with instructions for completion and the report form links/access information distributed in the same package. This will then be due back to National by mid-December. It does not go to the diocesan executive. Provincial is aware that some communities have dialup service for their Internet and may not be able to do this on-line. However, where there is good service the expectation is that the forms will be filled in and sent on-line. It is the assumption that if a parish does not have access to a computer the hard copy may be completed and forwarded to National. I encourage you to be open to this new method of reporting.

I am planning on attending a workshop in Toronto in mid-September to receive training on this new process and will be offering my assistance as we take on this new endeavour. The way the team plays together determines its success. Smile — we can do it!

As you prepare for the fall, you might want to go through the latest annual reports from the 2015 Annual Report book or previous books to see what ideas other councils have submitted for obtaining and maintaining membership. There is always at least one thing worth trying to give your membership drive a lift. Are members beginning to lose interest and eventually drop their involvement and stop renewing their memberships? In some councils, membership seems to be declining year after year: this is a sign to check and reignite the fire. Take steps to retain members. Why not step aside from the "we always did it that way" and try new ones? If you have members who just want to feel part of the organization — get them engaged. Each member has a talent. Why not personally ask them to share their talent, make them feel welcome? People will forget what you said, they will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

We need our membership to grow so that our voice is stronger when the National Council meets with government representative, bringing our resolutions and concerns to them. When they quote the number of members in the League (approximately 81,000), they know our "one voice and one mission" should be taken seriously as our "one heart" holds the power to sway votes.

We need to get back to our roots, learn more about our organization and not be afraid to embrace the future. Renewing our education in the Catholic Women's League can help us better appreciate our organization and hopefully attract new members and possibly some younger members. Browse our Catholic Women's League website www.cwl.on.ca for background information, suggestions etc.

Check out the National Manual of Policy and Procedure — always some new information to be had. Take a few minutes at your meeting to deliberate on our Mission statement. Do we recite this at our meetings and understand what we are saying as a member of the Catholic Women's League? The Objects of the Catholic Women's League? This is something we don't always see written or posted. Maybe review it once in a while to see how your council is doing or has done an activity that falls under standing committees for each "object".

Have you reviewed the Catch the Fire or S'Mores Workshop that are available to help your councils and members? We offer both and are anxious to bring this training to your councils. Maybe a few councils could gather together to host one of these workshops? Our teams are ready and willing so please let us know when you would like us to visit and bring our knowledge to you. These programs deepen the faith, broaden the knowledge and lead members to encounter Jesus with One Heart, One Voice and One Mission. Whatever your needs, we have something to offer.

With many Catholic Women's League parish councils having elections this fall, consider starting early to invite members to let their names stand. Many won't consider taking an office because they don't feel prepared, don't know enough about the different positions on your executive and what they entail. We welcome new leadership at all levels but often we do not spend any time helping the new leaders — mentoring them. We cannot and should not expect people to step into any job knowing exactly what to do. Those who have already completed their term on the executive are best equipped to teach. As leaders we are like gardeners — we need to help people grow as we grow ourselves. We are all Sisters in the League!

May we continue to build the League together with new memberships, strong leaders and community of commitment to God and Canada.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel help us grow in mercy.

Joan Schurter
Hamilton Diocesan President-Elect and Organization Chair