



Hamilton Diocesan Council
of
The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Inspired by the Spirit — Women Respond to God's Call



Directive #1

October 2017

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1. To: Organization Chairs, Organization Committee members
 2. From: Linda Perron, Hamilton Diocesan Organization Chairs
 3. cc: Diocesan Officers, Council Presidents
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Autumn greetings!

Most organization committees in the Catholic Women's League are organizations of one – you. As chair of a committee or as the one and only, your responsibilities include recruiting and maintaining membership for your council.

Nearly everyone I know who is in any organization worries about their membership numbers these days. The complaints usually include: People are so busy they don't have time for volunteering for anything else; or, parents (mothers!) are so busy driving their kids to extra-curricular activities, sports, music lessons, whatever, that there isn't any time for CWL. So, I guess the good news is, we're not alone in our shrinking numbers. The good news *also* is, we don't have to settle for shrinking numbers. The League really has something for everyone. Our job (as Organization chair) is finding out what women are looking for. Are the women in your parish seeking more spiritual gatherings? Catherine Ferren (Spiritual Development chair) has a directive on our website with suggestions you could use for your meetings. If the women in your council are especially political, focussing on information you receive from Teresa DiFalco or Vicki Lee may draw them to meetings. (I maintained my membership for twenty years when I was too busy with children to be very active just to do my part keeping our influential numbers up for when our National council lobbied Ottawa.) Do you have parishioners who love history? We are gearing up for our 100th anniversary. There really is something for every woman in the Catholic Women's League.

Many councils operate around the calendar year, beginning their terms of office and renewing memberships in January. National council records memberships from January, so that makes sense. BUT, for many councils, fall is the time for membership drives because it helps League matters avoid being lost during the busy time before and after Christmas. As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. (Joshua 24:15)

If your council has struggled to retain memberships using a December-January membership period, may I suggest that this year you try an October-November membership drive? If you typically hold a late-fall membership activity (Advent retreat, Christmas party, gift-making or craft workshop), perhaps you already open it to all the women in your parish, but if you don't, you could. You can use this occasion to let members pay for their membership renewal (and new members join). And, if your council can afford it, why not enter the names of those women and draw one lucky winner at that event? Her membership will be reimbursed to her and paid by your council. Afterwards, make an announcement in your parish bulletin if you can. It's an opportunity to share a bit of good news. After all, everybody likes *free*.

Of course, you know that membership is not your only responsibility. The Executive Handbook (www.cwl.ca/resources/manuals) outlines all the duties of the of the Organization chair:

- Recruit members and maintain membership
- Leadership development
- League resource material
- Annual reports
- Life membership

I hope to offer you more information over the year for each of these topics, but for now, let's keep a focus on maintaining and growing our membership. My next directive will include more information about annual reports. Remember the format changed last year and went to an online reporting system.

One last reminder that our Provincial President, Anne Madden, asked us to consider how we apply the Holy Spirit's gift of *patience* to our League work. As you are busy in your councils this fall, rely on the Spirit's gift and Our Lady of Good Counsel's intercessions to guide your efforts in your work for God and Canada.

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(Joshua 24:15)