



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Vancouver Diocesan Council

President: Barbara Renaud

Spiritual Advisor: Father Tom Smith

National Theme: Care For Our Common Home

Provincial Theme: Witnessing to the Truth

Diocesan Theme: Held in the Palm of His Hand

To: Parish Council Presidents (action)
Diocesan Life Members (information)
Provincial Officers & Standing Committee Chairs (information)
Diocesan Presidents (information)

Date: September 21, 2019

Communiqué # 1

Introduction

Dear CWL Presidents and members, welcome back to another year working to “grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.”

I am very excited to be working with my executive council, both to welcome back our returning chairpersons and to extend a warm welcome to our new executive members, as they are working to present their first oral reports and communiques. I appreciate the courage these members have shown to step forward into a leadership role.

For those who do not know me, I am a member of St. Luke's Parish in Maple Ridge, where I live with my husband of 36 years. We have four grown children and two grandchildren. I am a convert to the faith, having gone through the RCIA program and being baptised in 1999. I joined the CWL in 2004 and the Diocesan council in 2013, where I have served as Resolutions, Spiritual Development and Organization chair.

New Diocesan Theme

When choosing a theme for my two-year term, I spent some time meditating upon my faith journey and was inspired by the hymn, On Eagles Wings, among other things. My theme, “Held in the Palm of His Hand” is meant to convey the idea that we must trust in God as a loving parent. So often, in my faith journey, and in my journey with the CWL, I have not been able to foresee the outcome of whatever I was doing. It is only in looking back that I can see the Lord's plan. In trusting God, we trust that we will always be cared for, and that God knows what we need better than we do ourselves. Being “Held in the Palm of His Hand” means fully trusting in God's love and guidance.

I must thank my new Spiritual Development chairperson, Erin Merth, for her talents in needlework, as she has created a beautiful cross-stitch illustrating our new theme. This piece of art will be displayed on our prayer table, so be sure to see it. With her art, Erin has perfectly tied together our Diocesan theme with our National theme, Care for Our Common Home.

Parish Visits

As I embark on my two-year term, I hope to steal an idea from our Archbishop, and visit all 57 parish councils in our diocese. I know proper etiquette maintains that it is not right to beg for an invitation, but I will do so anyway.

I am asking all councils in the Diocese to invite me to their events. I would be happy to attend a fundraiser, a dinner, a Mass, a monthly meeting or whatever other events you are planning. I will do my best to make time for all invitations that come my way. Please feel free to email or call me.

This also brings up the fact that communication in our Diocesan Council is a two-way street. Our Executive appreciates the opportunity to pass along our knowledge and experiences in our communiques and oral reports, but we want to hear from you too. Please don't be afraid to contact any one of us with your comments and issues. The Diocesan Council is your first line of assistance with any problem that you are having, so please, contact us first, whatever you require. The Diocesan Council is here to serve the Parish Councils, not the other way around.

I will be instituting a question/suggestion box at our general meetings, for you to submit questions or ideas to us, whether you wish to remain anonymous or not. Any questions that come to us, we will attempt to answer, either in a communique, at a meeting, or privately upon request.

Resolution 2013.01 Building Relationships and Partnerships with Canada's Indigenous Peoples.

In 2013, this resolution was passed at our National Convention, encouraging "all members to reach out to indigenous peoples in their communities." I was reminded of this resolution when attending the Provincial Convention in Nanaimo last June, where I saw Bishop Gary Gordon speaking along with a panel of employees of the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District, who are working to incorporate First Nations culture and language into their curriculum. We were introduced to the idea of "syeyutsus" or walking together.

During a question and answer period with the panel, a question that came from a CWL member was how to build those relationships with indigenous people and groups. The answer that was given was to wait for an invitation and to accept it when it came. With that in mind, I accepted an invitation to attend the Stó:lō Business Association's Longhouse Harvest Dinner, in a beautiful longhouse in Chilliwack. During the evening, which included a drummer and a storyteller, I was struck by the attitude of stewardship towards our common home, as well as the sense of gratitude towards our Creator. We certainly already have much in common with First Nations peoples, and I hope to continue to build relationships and partnerships during my term as President.

National Convention Speakers and Presentations

I invite all members to go to the national website, cwl.ca, and you can see many of the presentations by guest speakers at our National Convention, with more soon to be posted. If you couldn't be in Calgary, you can still be inspired by these wonderful presentations, and it may encourage you to attend a national convention in the future.

I thank all of you for your continued prayers and support. May Our Lady of Good Counsel continue to intercede for you, and may you all continue to know that you are "Held in the Palm of His Hand."