

Report of National Convention 2017, Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Submitted by Linda Squarzolo and Colleen Randall

Delegates began arriving on Saturday August 5th for the 97th Annual Convention. On Saturday evening many attended a wonderful lobster supper at New Glasgow. Sunday tours were offered to delegates ranging from a one-hour walking tour to a 5 hour lighthouse and winery tour of the island. Rain damped the tours but not the spirits. The Resolution Dialogue was well attended by approximately 150 delegates who reviewed four resolutions being brought to the convention floor.

The official opening and Eucharistic Celebration was held at the historic St. Dunstan's Basilica where Mass was celebrated by the Most Reverend Bishop Richard Grecco, Bishop of Charlottetown, and concelebrated by 4 other Canadian bishops including our own provincial spiritual advisor, the Most Reverend Brendan O'Brien, and approximately 12 other priests.

The first day opened with a eucharistic celebration. The keynote speaker was Ken Yasinski, the founder of Face to Face Ministries. His first presentation was "Becoming a Living Thank you". He challenged the delegates to be open to moments in their lives when they should be grateful for all that God has given them. "God is calling all to be another Christ in the world, becoming a living thank you". His second presentation was "The Catholic Identity Crisis". Each person is called to be a missionary and to bring others to Jesus. He quoted Pope Francis who said, "When the church is not missionary she acts as a babysitter rather than a mother".

The business session included the reports of the provincial presidents and national president. Anne Madden made us proud as she presented the Ontario report. Well done!

Monday night's entertainment was exceptional featuring the P.E.I. Pops Orchestra and comedian Patrick Ledwell.

The second day again opened with a Eucharistic celebration.

The guest speaker was Dr. Reginald Bibby who provided the assembly with some very interesting statistical data regarding today's Catholics in Canada, setting the stage for our townhall meeting that was video-conferenced across Canada and hosted 73 sites outside of the ballroom of the hotel. Members were asked to input responses to questions regarding future strategic planning. The results were shared on Wednesday and will be used to formulate the plans for the future... very interesting!

Three new Life Members from Ontario were included in the commissioning ceremony led by Anne Gorman, Margaret-Ann Jacobs and Bishop McGratton. Congratulations to Jeannie Coleman, Anna Brady and Mary Capobianco!

The reports of the National Standing Committee Chairs were informative and inspiring.

The Ontario Provincial Dinner was enjoyed by all who attended.

Day three was opened by the report of the Strategic Planning Committee. The assembly was introduced to all members by short presentations and testimonials. Ontario Past president, Pauline Krupa, gave a moving testimonial as part of this committee.

Dr. June Webber of the Coady International Institute, who has partnered with the League since 1961 providing scholarships to women from Africa, Asia and Latin America, gave a brief update on what the Institute is working on.

Provincial Presidents processed lap quilts of love and mercy from across the country in a moving ceremony as part of the 100th anniversary celebration of the League.

Rita Janes, Catholic Women's Leadership Foundation Chair, announced that the foundation has partnered with the Providence School of Transformative Leadership and Spirituality at St. Paul University (Ottawa) to offer the CWLF's unique leadership program. The CWLF will launch its initial Leadership Program for Catholic women across Canada beginning May 2018. Program and candidate criteria will be available on the Leadership Program page of the CWLF website (cwlfcanda.ca) by September 1, 2017. Program applications will be available online by October 15, 2017.

The assembly was invited to attend the 2018 National Convention to be held in Winnipeg Manitoba.

Four Resolutions were approved, two of which were from Ontario. Additional information is available on the national website.

The closing Eucharistic celebration, which included a reaffirmation of the National Executive, was held at St. Dunstan's Basilica followed by the gala banquet.