

Oral Report for 68th Annual Provincial Convention – Niagara Falls July 2015
Communications Chair

Madame Chair,

ONE Heart, ONE Voice, ONE Mission... this theme fits perfectly into every project that the Catholic Women's League embraces, especially this one. The *Pornography Hurts* Campaign has been the social justice focus of this chair for two years. My goal was to educate members on what pornography is – not just the pictures and video we see in the media but on the science of the addiction. Last year's report was all about that science.

Today I would like to talk to you about the connection between pornography and other social justice issues that are being worked on at all levels of the League.

Human trafficking has a direct link to pornography. The Government of Canada's Public Safety website describes human trafficking by saying, and I quote, "*Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, harbouring and/or exercising control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in order to exploit that person, typically through sexual exploitation or forced labour. It is often described as a modern form of slavery.*"

In Canada we are blessed to have a *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking*. The National Action Plan builds on our government's commitment to work together with partners, such as the Catholic Women's League, to prevent and combat this horrendous crime. We must lobby the government to keep a strong focus on this action plan.

In researching this report I came across many smaller charitable organizations like *IWillBringChange.com* and *CanadianWomen.org* who dedicate themselves to educating the general public and work to raise funds to support reputable partner organizations dedicated to ending human trafficking. They could use both the financial and prayerful support of our members.

98% of sex trafficking victims worldwide are women and girls. 93% of Canada's trafficking victims come from Canada. The internet makes selling women and girls online easy yet, at the same time, more difficult for law enforcement teams to catch the pimps who are hiding in their homes. We need to break down the misconceptions of who these victims are and where they come from.

The connection between pornography and mental health issues is our biggest challenge. Pornography is an addiction like any other. Addicts need support in order to recover. That is where we come in. Prayer is a powerful thing. Pray for those struggling and those who help them.

Our resolution ON.13.01 Reduce the Stigma Attached to Mental Illness called for members to become educated about the reality of mental illness and reduce the stigma that exists in society with several actions. Have you ever emailed the CMHA 'Be Well' Inspirational Postcard to a friend, colleague or family member who is experiencing a mental health problem or who is in some way affected by mental illness? Why not review that action plan again?

It is my honour to congratulate members across the province for their commitment to the *Pornography Hurts* Campaign. Special mention goes to Hamilton Diocese where this project began. It is this commitment to sending emails and postcards as well as telephone conversations with their MPs and MPPs that have made the project such a success. Let's keep the momentum going...

YOU have made my term as communications chair so fulfilling. YOU have made it easy for everyone to see that we are ONE Heart, ONE Voice, ONE Mission. League members live that theme daily with joy and commitment.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Randall