

## Legislation Standing Committee



As I searched for a way to introduce St. Laura of St. Catherine of Siena in a way that would quickly and clearly define her life, the one thought that kept coming to mind was the motto for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy... "Merciful like the Father".

Laura Montoya Upegui was born on May 26, 1874, in Antioquia, Colombia.

In order to help her family financially, she trained as a teacher and began teaching in different parts of Antioquia, educating the students in academic knowledge, but also bringing them Gospel teachings and values.

She felt a growing desire to spread the Gospel and opened her heart to follow God's will. This drew her to helping the marginalized Indian population in South America. In 1914 she founded the "Missionaries of Mary Immaculate and St. Catherine of Siena" and set out with four other young women to live and work with the native Indians, where she spent the rest of her life. Today her Missionary Sisters work in 19 countries throughout America, Africa and Europe.

Mother Laura died on October 21, 1949, after a long and painful illness, and was canonized by Pope Francis on May 12, 2013. She truly embodied the Beatitude -- *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall have their fill.*

As Legislation Standing Committee Chairpersons, we too are filled with a yearning to change those things in society that we see as unjust, unfair and unchristian. God plants these yearnings in our hearts, nudging us to at least try to change the course of things.

Over the past year, we have been nudged by God in many ways ... maybe even at times strongly elbowed... as He has urged us to follow St. Laura's example.

We have supported those things which would lead to a more just and equitable society, and lobbied against things that run counter to our Catholic teachings and beliefs.

We have voiced our views and concerns regarding issues such as the treatment of First Nations Peoples and Physician Assisted Death.

Several of our Resolutions have urged us to hear the cry of the poor, to feed the hungry, to advocate for justice, and to support life and dignity for all. We have made others aware of the many issues facing society today.

Have we succeeded in changing things? Only time will tell. We can say with certainty that through our efforts and our prayers, we have tried!

One Heart, One Voice, One Mission .... Saint Laura was the heart and voice of Jesus, and her mission was to bring God's word and love to those on the margins of society.

Let our mission be to enlighten, encourage and inspire our members to take the lead in showing our love for the marginalized in our society. Our voice can make a difference!

May we, like St. Laura, be "Merciful like the Father".

Carol Richer,  
Legislation Chairperson