



**Ontario Provincial Council  
The Catholic Women's League of Canada  
"Inspired by the Spirit,  
Women Respond to God's Call"**

**Directive # 1**

**Date:** August 20th, 2017

**To:** Diocesan Community Life Standing Committee Chairpersons

**From:** Joanna Sisk, Ontario Provincial Community Standing Chairperson

**Cc:** Diocesan Presidents, Provincial Officers, National Community Chairperson, Sub-Committee Chairpersons

**Greetings:**

I am from Ottawa and have been a member since 1974. I have held various positions in the League and am humbled to serve on the provincial council as an officer. I am a registered nurse and have been in large urban hospitals, nursing homes and a small-town hospital.

As your new provincial community life chair, I am excited to share information, ideas, concerns and issues, as we learn, share and pray for change over the next two years. I have formed a subcommittee of two interesting members who also are excited to take this journey with us. They are Rosanne Sogan, Hamilton Diocese and Alice Uvanile, Thunder Bay Diocese.

**Focus for 2017-2018**

Provincial President Anne Madden has challenged us to focus on **Homelessness**.

I was happy to be asked to chair Community Life and then was excited to hear that our focus was homelessness. I was an outreach nurse for five years on the downtown streets of Ottawa serving the homeless (unstably housed).

Homelessness causes and consequences are complex. Historically, individuals experiencing homelessness in Canada were older, single men. The homelessness crisis we see today is much more diverse including, youth (couch surfers: those who had to temporarily live with family, friends, in their car, or anywhere else because they had nowhere else to live—a situation referred to as 'hidden' or 'concealed' homelessness), women, families, women with children, seniors, veterans, foster children, and indigenous peoples.

Many factors can contribute to an individual being homeless and makes it difficult to regain self-sufficiency, especially when homelessness is for long periods of time.

## To Get Started

Spend time as a diocesan council/parish council learning and discussing what causes a person or group to be homeless. You might also want to study what options are available for the homeless in your area. Homelessness has many faces, through Faith, Love, Hope, as noted in first Corinthians 13:13, we will address this social crisis. Even seniors who have no one to care are homeless, they may have a roof but no support.

Here are some websites that address homelessness with suggestions for action:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-socialdevelopment/programs/communities/homelessness/understanding.html>

<http://homelesshub.ca> <http://homelesshub.ca/CommunityProfiles>

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2017/05/31/common-misconceptions-abouthomelessness.html>

[Hidden homelessness in Canada - Statistics Canada](#)

Please research others that will give ideas and suggested actions. Perhaps you would share those with me.

## Dioceses

Please choose a group of homeless individuals you wish to focus on in your diocese: youth, women with children, seniors or First Nations. Each area of the province has unique and individual needs and issues, please choose what will have a significant impact in your region.

Attached is a list of **50 Plus Ways to Help People Who Are Homeless.**

I realize that we are already doing many of these suggestions but perhaps there is something that will spark interest.

I will be passing along information on the many areas covered under our community life committee over the year.

I look forward to hearing from each of you with ideas, suggestions, thoughts and questions as we continue to be inspired by the Spirit and respond to God's call.