



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

Directive # 3

Date: November 20, 2017

To: Diocesan Community Life Standing Committee Chairpersons

Cc: Diocesan Presidents, Provincial Officers, National Community Chairperson, Sub-Committee Chairpersons, Archbishop B. M. O'Brien

From: Joanna Sisk, Ontario Provincial Community Life Standing Committee Chairperson

Pope Francis' quote:

"In switching on the light of the Nativity scene, we wish for the light of Christ to be in us. A Christmas without light is not Christmas. Let there be light in the soul, in the heart; let there be forgiveness to others; let there be no hostilities, which are dark. Let there be the beautiful light of Jesus. This is my wish for all of you, when you turn on the light of the crib."

This Christmas take a moment to reflect on the importance of the marginalized peoples in the Christmas story. Homeless people who did not belong were prominent. Mary and Joseph were portrayed as homeless people. There was no room at the inn. Mary and Joseph stayed with the animals and Jesus was laid in a manger, an open trough. The shepherds were dirty, smelly men who weren't welcome in town. They wouldn't have been welcome in the temple or synagogue because their work made them ritually unclean. They knew before anyone else that Jesus was born. The dirty marginalized were the ones who met Jesus first.

This Christmas take a moment to reflect on a homeless or street person. A homeless person often sleeps in places that are not beds eg.in front of doors, over street heat vents, under a bush along the canal, in abandoned vehicles, etc. Think about it; the Christmas story a symbol of homelessness is one of displacement, vulnerability and weakness.

The nativity scene should remind us to pray, to give, and to advocate for the less fortunate. It should also remind us to see the person through the eyes of God who sees them as His creation, worthy of dignity and respect.

As we prepare to observe this Christmas, how do we view the homeless people in our communities? Do we see them as individuals fashioned in the image of God and carrying in them the light of Christ? Can we be open to them as heralds of good news? Or do we treat them as most of society does; as worthless folks — nothing more than lazy drunks/addicts? As you encounter homeless people, perhaps it would be worth considering what it truly means to keep Christ in Christmas.