

Ontario Provincial Convention
Education and Health Standing Committee
Oral Report 2018

Mary, Comforter of the Afflicted. Afflicted means to experience pain and suffering. It was by Mary's own experience of sorrow that she was taught the sympathy which enables her to comfort her children in all their afflictions. God gave her a mighty and sympathetic heart for this great task. Mary knows the language of Sorrow and the title Comforter of the Afflicted means so much to us in our afflictions. It gives us so much confidence in her ability to heal, for we know her as a mender of hearts.

Through this standing chair, educating our members about homelessness and the many issues in dealing with the homeless, such as mental illness, alcoholism, drug addiction, criminal activity, aggression, poor hygiene and poor health. Learning helps us all create in our own way, ways we can reach out and help. We can start by changing how we think—instead of calling them **homeless**, call them a person without a home—they become more human when we begin to think in this way. Not having a home makes it hard to trust anyone and reduces both your ability and your desire to follow the unwritten social rules that everybody lives by. We can all help by respecting the person, hear their stories. Educating ourselves about programs and initiatives such as Journey Home Hospice, a hospice for persons without a home here in Toronto, Coldest Night of the Year fundraising initiative that raises money for local charities in over 120 communities across Canada, participating in some way in your community on World Homeless Day, this past year it was held on Oct 10, 2017, learning of ways to keep our youth in schools so they graduate and have an opportunity for better employment that can allow them to afford housing.

Through education we have learned that many persons without a home are struggling to live with mental issues. Without access to proper medication and assistance from professionals to deal with their mental illness, they medicate themselves with alcohol and/or drugs, adding to the affliction they are already trying to cope with. Access to proper mental health care is essential to help persons without a home to develop coping skills, get proper medication and become their best self.

Pope Francis said, "When we are weary, downcast, beset with cares, let us look to Mary, let us feel her gaze, which speaks to our heart and says: 'Courage, my child, I am here to help you.'" Mary Comforter of the Afflicted, pray for people without homes, help us follow your example and become comforters for people without homes, to be menders of hearts.