



**Ontario Provincial Council  
The Catholic Women's League of Canada  
Recording Secretary**



***Care for our Common Home***

Directive #3  
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February 13, 2019

To: Diocesan Presidents and Diocesan Recording Secretaries  
From: Mary Capobianco, Ontario Provincial Recording Secretary  
cc: Archbishop O'Brien and the Ontario Provincial Council Executive and the National Secretary – Treasurer.

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*...let us be 'protectors' of creation,  
protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature,  
protectors of one another and of the environment.*

*Pope Francis*

With the introduction of the National Theme *Care for Our Common Home* our thoughts turn to finding ways to protect our planet and reduce the footprint for our future generations.

In my current role as recording secretary, I realize that despite best efforts, I inevitably find myself printing a lot! I think I may not be alone in this so I decided to research the possible impacts. Like most people I understand that recycling paper is important and the importance of saving forests, etc. However I found that the ink and toner printer cartridges we use are even more harmful.

Compared to some big climate topics, printer cartridges may be considered a minor issue but even minor issues deserve our attention.

Research shows that 11 ink cartridges and 1 million toner cartridges per day are thrown away. That adds up to more than 375 million empty ink and toner cartridges thrown out every year, and most end up in landfills. That is a waste that we should and can stop!

Ink and toner cartridges are made up of several materials, of which most are chemicals that may have the potential to be damaging to you and the environment. Another damaging effect of not properly disposing of ink cartridges is that the toner (carbon black) has been classified as a potential carcinogenic by the International Agency on Research on Cancer.

It may take between 450 and 1000 years for a printer cartridge to fully decompose in a landfill site, so you can imagine the negative impact millions of these improperly discarded cartridges has on our environment.

Surprisingly 75% of empty cartridges in Canada are not recycled even though there are plenty of reuse and recycling options, and many of them are free and easy to use. Since 97% of the materials used in printer cartridges can be recycled, this means the waste can be reduced to only 3%!

When you recycle your printer cartridges, you conserve energy and natural resources, as you reduce the energy needed to generate new materials.

In addition to disposing of the printer cartridges correctly, it's also important to raise education on how to reduce the waste of the cartridges. For example, if you do need to print, try to minimize the print space. When printing emails or information found on a website, you will find that what you want to print may also be cluttered with fine print and advertisements and other useless information. So before you print make sure you are only printing the necessary pages. And finally ask yourself: do you really need to print that email?

So what else can we do to minimize the environmental damage?

In an effort to raise awareness of this very concerning issue, I am challenging each parish and/or diocesan council to hold an ink and toner cartridge drive. This is a fairly simple way to not only raise awareness of the problem we currently have but also reduce the millions of cartridges that end up in our landfills each year!

Suggestions on how to get started:

- Assign someone or form a small committee to run with this. This project is not specific to recording secretaries so feel free to get everyone involved!
- Educate your members on this issue and research the different options available for disposing (recycling) the cartridges responsibly in your area. Some manufacturers offer their own recycle program option. Check with your local Staples Office Supplies store for their recycle program.
- Ask your members to bring their used ink and toner cartridges to a meeting to drop off in an assigned box or bin.
- Check with your pastor if you can extend this to the whole parish. *Staples* offers a pick-up service for over 50 cartridges or more. Think of the awareness this would raise.
- Check with the schools within your community to see if they have a recycle program. There are organizations that may have programs in place and may want to partner with the schools.

These are just some suggestions but feel free to explore and expand on these and be sure to share your ideas.

To help with this project, I have attached a Flyer Template. This is a sample only. Feel free to adapt for your own needs and/or create one of your own.

I have also attached a report template. I would love to hear how your council put your faith into action by *Caring for our Common Home!*

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me and I will be happy to help in any way.

*Blessings always,*

*Mary Capobianco*