

My dear Sisters in the League,

In what ways do you think you have grown or changed as a Catholic woman since becoming a member of the Catholic Women's League?

What do you like about the CWL? What would you talk about to prospective women who are thinking about becoming a member of the Catholic Women's League?

What made you become a member of the CWL?

Each of us has our own story why we joined the Catholic Women's League of Canada. It could have been that our mothers were members and paid our dues or we were just asked. We may have attended a Day of Reflection, a tea/bazaar or a funeral luncheon. Whatever it was, we must have been impressed. Something stimulated and caught our attention to bring us here. It was these types of situations that have allowed us to be and become what we, as individual women and you, as sisters in the CWL, are.

In Canada, the Catholic Women's League started as an organization to help immigrant families who were coming to live here. As we know, the CWL, since 1920, has become and is the largest national organization uniting Catholic women as a community striving for spiritual, cultural and intellectual growth and development of social action.

HOW?

By developing programs directed to spiritual development, attending workshops, retreats, Days of Reflection. These CWL activities touch every aspect of our spiritual lives as we have developed a deeper appreciation of our faith as Catholic women.

As sisters in the League, you have and will continue to represent women promoting Catholic teaching. The signing of many petitions and many writing campaigns about various issues, taking part in the March for Life in Ottawa, Life Chain and Pornography Hurts campaign, you, the ladies of the Catholic Women's League, have a powerful voice with our governments, both federally and provincially.

How many of you have attended a provincial and/or national CWL convention? You want to see the CWL work for you. Attend one of these conventions! This is where it happens! The many motions and resolutions that have influenced government legislation have worked for the betterment of social justice, religious peace and freedom. Your one individual voice at council meetings does change lives. What you do has caused the CWL to become a force to be reckoned with.

By encouraging the development of Christian values and the work of Catholic women by caring for and supporting the vulnerable and less fortunate. You have gone beyond the Church's teachings as you have assisted in volunteering and doing

something. Getting out there and not just sitting there becoming lethargic is the way we really practice charity.

The Catholic Women's League is more than teas and bazaars, planning dates for, organizing and attending meetings that fit into no one's schedule because we are so busy running here and driving there. The business of our lives does not allow us to have fun. We have to find it. We have to schedule it into our lives.

We started attending meetings because, for most of us, it was an evening out, an evening to come together to discuss what was pressing in our lives. Actually, it was probably a way of getting away from our lovely, crying children. Meetings today can still be the same way.

Our mission statement and prayers help us see who we are and what we do as a Catholic women's organization. It speaks of the "CWL being a national organization rooted in Gospel values calling its members to holiness through service of the people of God."

Service invites us to respond through our actions. We are called to follow and imitate Jesus by embracing the Beatitudes, listening to and meditating on the word of God as we practice the commandment to love our neighbor. In other words, we are those true witnesses of Jesus, being aware of the Spirit as we continue to grow, understand and share the gifts God has given us. Yes, the councils add richness to Catholic Women's League, but what do we bring to our councils?

If the mandate of the CWL, that is, its spirituality, and its complete devotion is service to others and ministering to not only the parish as a whole, but also the fringes of society as sisters in Christ, it is time that we all receive a call to renew ourselves as Catholic women to be that example of how to live the faith in our everyday lives. It is also time get to work and continue to do great things for the people that need it the most in the communities in which we live.

Therefore, in this Jubilee Year of Mercy, that our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has called the faithful to be a part of across the world, I cannot think of a better time for religious groups, namely the Catholic Women's League, to also take this as an opportunity to re-examine truly what it means to be a member in this modern world in which we live, and how we can continue to be in swift service to others and that it can continue to show people that the CWL has a place in the Canadian Catholic community.

We have taken Our Lady of Good Counsel as our patron. Isaiah calls Mary that "wonderful counselor." (9:5). The Holy Spirit guided her whole life as she gave herself to fulfill the Father's plan. She was enlightened by the gift of counsel, that wisdom she shared with others.

Through her intercession and the words of the League prayer, “send your Holy Spirit upon us to give light to our minds and strength to our wills that we may know and fulfill your great law of charity,” we strive to imitate Mary’s true role in the life of the Church. We ask God for that gift of counsel to teach us to know his will and to guide us in all we do.

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