



**Ontario Provincial Council
The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Education and Health Standing Committee**



Care for our Common Home

Directive #14

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February 5, 2019

To: Diocesan Education and Health Committee Chairpersons
From: Wilma Vanderzwaag, Ontario Provincial Council, Sub Committee Chairs: Mary Lou Watson and Heather Sisk
cc: Diocesan Presidents, Archbishop O'Brien, Ontario Provincial Council Executive, National Health and Education Standing Committee Chairperson

"The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace."
Psalm 29:11

I am starting this directive with a good news story that helps care for our common home and persons without a home. On February 4, 2019 Starbucks announced that it will donate all of its unsold food. Starbucks Canada has announced the launch of Starbucks FoodShare, a national effort to provide nourishing, ready-to-eat meals to people in need. The company is making a commitment to rescue 100 per cent of food available for donation from its more than 1,100 company-owned stores. They have found a way to safely donate chilled, perishable food, while preserving its quality. Building on a successful pilot with Second Harvest, the largest food rescue organization in Canada, the program will launch in Ontario starting with more than 250 stores in the GTA by February 22. Starbucks is actively working to expand the program to even more cities and provinces, with a goal to have a national solution in place by 2021. 58% of food produced in Canada is wasted which equals 35.5 million metric tonnes of food. Imagine if other fresh food providers were able to donate 100% of their food to local food banks and shelters. This would reduce the amount of food being dumped that could be helping others have nutritious quality foods that would improve their overall health.

Please pray for the upcoming meeting on the protection of minors being held on February 21-24, 2019 in the Vatican. Archbishop Scicluna, Adjunct Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith stated, "a synodal meeting, the first ever of its kind to address the issue of sexual abuse of minors in the Church" and that it is "quite significant because it brings together the presidents of over 100 bishops conferences from around the world, and the heads of all the Eastern-rite Catholic churches".

Keep a sharp eye on our Provincial Government as there has been consultation documents that pose the question as to whether hard caps on class sizes should continue, and if they were removed, what would be an appropriate size. This is regarding the caps on class sizes in kindergarten and in Grades 1-3. Currently kindergarten class-size cap is 29 students and for primary grades it is 23. Those early years are crucial years for our children.

The Ontario government is backing off from key provisions in a bill introduced late last year that would have allowed local municipalities to open up the province's protected Greenbelt for development. This came about due to public pressure! Our voices matter.

I have attached the new Canada Food Guide and the healthy eating recommendations. It encourages eating meals with others and limit food high in sodium, sugars or saturated fats. Read your food labels and be mindful of what you are eating. It also encourages us to replace sugary drinks with water. Share this guide with members and your family.

Can you get yourself up out of bed, go to the washroom, take your medication (if any), brush your teeth, comb your hair and get dressed in six minutes? Personal Support Workers are expected to on average get long term care residents up and ready in that time. A physically able person would be hard pressed to get it all done in that time and it doesn't even account for residents that have mobility issues, hearing aids, dentures and incontinence products. France Gelinis MPP for Nickel Belt has introduced Bill 33, the Time to Care Act, as an amendment to the province's current Long-Term Care Homes Act. The proposed legislation would mandate a minimum standard of daily care that would see each resident in a long-term care facility receive at least four hours of direct, hands-on care from a personal support worker. There is currently no mandated standard for daily care in the province for the 78,000 residents living in these homes. Bill 33 must pass a third reading before it can become law. Despite support for this bill, Ontario Long Term Care Association, which represents nearly 70% of the province's long-term care operators, expressed concern about the practical application of the minimum standard of daily care as there is no mention of funding to support such an effort. France Gelinis has a petition for this bill. For copies of the petition contact her office at 705-969-3621 or 1-877-280-9990. You can also google the 6-minute challenge to see more and even try it yourself. Let us support this initiative and get members to sign the petition.

Dr. Moira McQueen from the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute prepared an article for the World Day of the Sick on February 11, 2019. We are encouraged to be a gift to the sick and suffering, which means to be a presence not a present. The article is attached to this directive. Please take the time to read and reflect.

If any Diocesan Education and Health Chairs receive information regarding an issue that everyone in the province should know about, please forward it to me so that it is included in a directive. When we all work together, we can make change happen.



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Blessings and hugs, *Wilma*

WORLD DAY OF THE SICK, FEBRUARY 11, 2019

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

When we talk about the sick we most often think about care, compassion and good works. The Church has always emphasized the importance of the corporal works of mercy, and these are primary in looking after the needs of sick people. Being ill makes us vulnerable: we are at our weakest physically and sometimes mentally, which in turn can affect our spiritual lives, and can lead to feelings of depression and sadness.

We know that when we are very sick “we are not ourselves.” I think this is an important consideration – that feeling of somehow not being the whole person we are normally capable of being. We do not care about matters that are usually important to us – how we look, how we feel, how our work is being affected. We may not want to have visitors, partly because we do not have the stamina, partly because for many of us our pride is damaged in being seen in a weak and helpless state. We can even feel guilty – we are causing people so much bother, our needs are taking up other people’s time and so on. We ask the Lord: why must I be sick? Why me? Why now?

In many cases these questions are unanswerable, at least in the way in which we would like to hear the answers! Sometimes we have partly brought on our health problems through life style, carelessness, perhaps recklessness, but answers are even more difficult if we have a false sense that illness and sickness do not happen to me: I am different; I am strong; I do not need any help. When I talk like this, I am showing I do not need the Lord in my life; I’m showing the order of my life is “me first,” independent “me,” and the Lord is second (at least!).

For Christians, this attitude cannot be right. We know we are to imitate Christ. We are not asked to endure all that he endured, but we will always experience some suffering, sometimes at a deep level. We know, too, that the legalization of euthanasia can affect our thinking. We ask the same questions: why should we suffer? Why should we persevere in enduring pain that is not only physical, but mental and emotional? Perhaps a more developed spirituality could help us face our mortality and human limitations, if we allow others to counsel us in attempting to answer these questions from a Christian perspective.

Pope Francis tells us to realize that our body and our life are gifts. This immediately places us in another approach to the experience of illness. This year’s official celebration of the World Day of the Sick is being held in Calcutta, and the Pope reminds us that Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta “... made herself available for everyone through her welcome and defence of human life, of those unborn and those abandoned and discarded”. The main point here is that she “made herself available.” This is a true gift to others: the idea of a “present” being human presence and not a

material gift. This personal response, although for most of us at a much lower level of giving, is possible for everyone to make to help the sick and suffering.

In response to our experiences of human weakness when we are ill, the Pope writes in his Message: “We will always be conscious of our limitations as ‘creatures’ before other individuals and situations. A frank acknowledgment of this truth keeps us humble and spurs us to practise solidarity as an essential virtue in life.” This is so important in countering our self-centredness and pride, the pride that makes us think our good health is a personal achievement, not a gift from God. Such acknowledgment broadens our scope for humility and the need for help.

Pope Francis’ use of the word “solidarity” shows how important this virtue is for the individual and the common good: we stand together in being gifts to each other, the sick and the helper, in a relationship that benefits both of us as well as the broader community of help in which we find ourselves. It is so important that the dignity of the sick person is respected in this relationship. It is not a one-way practice of care on the part of the helper, but a human relationship which, as the Pope states in praising the role of volunteers, makes it possible “... for the sick to pass from being passive recipients of care to being active participants in a relationship that can restore hope and inspire openness to further treatment.” The Pope calls not only on individuals, professionals and volunteers, but also on Catholic health care institutions to be examples of self-giving, generosity and solidarity in their care of the sick.

The idea of “gift” is reinforced by the Pope in his comment that “The joy of generous giving is a barometer of the health of a Christian!” This wise comment shows us that giving of one’s self is not only a Christian duty in caring for the sick, but the sick are also called to give of themselves in a mutual relationship with their helpers. Both sides will then grow in spiritual health, over and above the seeking of personal health. The development of relationship becomes not just a duty, but a “joy!”

Pope Francis frequently highlights our need for showing joy as one of the major marks of being Christian, and it is not surprising that he points towards the joyful possibilities that can be experienced even in times of sickness and ill health. He tells us that the development of the relationship of solidarity between sick people and their helpers can be a means to this joy. It is a gift we can give to each other to counter the seeming despair of the world in the face of suffering and our capacity to handle it.

Moira McQueen, CCBI