

Report of the 99th Annual National Convention Calgary Alberta, August 2019

The 99th Annual National Convention of The Catholic Women's League of Canada was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Calgary AB from Sunday, August 18th to Wednesday, August 21st. Prior to the start of the convention, several tours were organized for the delegates on Saturday and Sunday. On Sunday afternoon more than 200 members gathered for the resolution dialogue and were able to review the two resolutions that would be presented during the business meetings.

The official opening and Eucharistic celebration were held at St. Albert the Great Parish. Most Reverend William McGrattan, Bishop of the Calgary Diocese, presided at the Mass, assisted by five archbishops and bishops and many priests. Several dignitaries were in attendance to extend greetings. A reception followed.

Monday began with a Eucharistic celebration with Most Reverend Gerard Pettipas, Archbishop of Gouard-McLennan, assisted by four archbishops and bishops, as well as several priests. The business sessions began with a special "Calgary Welcome" and the national executive were presented with white cowboy hats. Reports, presented by the provincial presidents and national executive, were interesting and informative. Alex Schadenburg of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition discussed the reasons why some people choose euthanasia and encouraged members to view the movie "Fatal Flaws". The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition is a temporary national fund and a cheque for \$18,045 was presented from member donations. A ceremony to welcome eleven new Life Members was held. New Life Members from Ontario include Shirley Christo, Marie-Theresa Lamphier, Ana Sousa, Anna Tremblay and Anne Vincelli. A request was made to encourage members to participate in surveys related to the strategic planning. Attendees were informed a request was sent in a parish mailout to obtain emails of parishioners to participate in one such survey but there were not enough respondees for statistical accuracy. In the evening many members enjoyed the "Western Shindig" which featured western food, line dancing, a "real Cowboy", the princesses from the Calgary Stampede and a lively band that had everyone up on the dance floor.

Tuesday began with Mass with Most Reverend Richard Smith, Archbishop of Edmonton, presiding. Delegates were given the opportunity to attend two breakout sessions from a choice of four, each relating to the environment and the theme "Care for Our Common Home". The workshops included "Carbon Conversations", "Practical Tools", "Spiritual Practice" and "What the Catholic Church says". Tidbits from the "Carbon Conversations" and "Practical Tools" workshops respectively: 10% of global warming is caused by food waste and the day when we consume more than the earth can replenish in a year comes later each year and for 2019 is estimated at July 29.

The keynote speaker was Sister Dorothy Ederer. She was an engaging speaker who entertained the audience with stories of her life and ministry. The business sessions ended with a service to remember deceased members and spiritual

advisors. The Ontario delegates gathered in diocesan groups at various restaurants for dinner.

On Wednesday Fran Lucas, National President-Elect gave a presentation about the Strategic Plan for reorganizing the League. Between 2019 and 2021, reorganization will take place. By Fall 2020, the restructuring will be unveiled and councils will be asked for an instructed vote to be given in 2021. The group tasked with marketing and awareness will continue their work until 2023. Members were given the opportunity to ask many questions and offer their comments. Father David Reilander of Catholic Missions in Canada expressed his appreciation to the League for the support given over the last 25 years. He explained that Canada is still a mission country, especially in the further north. Funds are required to support the missions. A cheque of \$38,160.20 was presented to Catholic Missions in Canada. A motion was made to adopt a "Day of Prayer" for Catholic Missions in Canada. Melodie Gabriel of CNEWA (Catholic Near East Welfare Association) explained about the projects supported by the League in the Holy Land, the Infant Welfare Centre and Shepherds Field Hospital. As a League voluntary fund, a cheque for \$16,346.18 was presented. A motion was also made for the League to have a "Day of Prayer" for Christians in the Holy Land. A presentation was made about Coady Institute, which fosters social change and has received support from the League since 1961. A cheque for \$22,991.40 was presented to them. Delegates were also given information about National Catholic Health Care Week.

Two resolutions were adopted at the convention:

- 2019.01 Canada to Honour its Commitment to the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- 2019.02 Canadian Support for the United Nations *Treaty on the Prohibition Nuclear Weapons*

A presentation was made to invite members to attend the next convention in Montreal in 2020, August 9 to 12. Following the Closing Mass celebrated at St. Mary's Cathedral, the Gala Banquet was held.

By Provincial Representatives

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