



OPC Oral Report

July 12, 2021

Legislation Chair, Margie Royle

When we hunkered down in March of 2020 to face this global pandemic head on, we had the notion that we would give it our all for a month or two and things would be fine. How naive we were! As I write this report, sixteen months later, I am a few days passed my second vaccine, my extreme tiredness being replaced with a sense of hope and joy not felt for ages. A light, yes, a beautiful, bright, welcoming light shining at the end of the tunnel!

We are a changed people. How could we not be! Making our way through uncharted territory, we found ourselves facing challenges we never could have imagined. Being separated from all the traditional family rituals was probably the most difficult for all of us. No celebrating family milestones, marriages, birthdays, or graduations, Christmas and Easter dinner tables absent of all that joyful chaos, new moms struggling through without support and our elderly loved ones in LTCs alone, frightened and confused. Sunday Mass heard on YouTube, or alone in our vehicles, doctor appointments and meetings all on Zoom, grieving tears falling silently on our computer screens while attending virtual funerals. Such profound feelings of loss and disconnect!

Each of us grieved these ambiguous losses in our own way as each of us entered or endured the pandemic with our own unique set of circumstances. Some were far away from family support, some with loved ones in LTCs, some adjusting to widowhood, some diagnosed with serious illness, some living as caregivers, some experienced loss of loved ones, some becoming a new grandparent and some, even, whose lives were relatively unchanged. As unique as our circumstances, were our individual responses in coping with the grief and life changes thrown our way. Losses, both big and small, can build up and lead to overwhelming feelings of loss, sadness, powerlessness, anxiety and depression. All responses are valid. All reflect legitimate responses to circumstances beyond our control. All affected the way we coped with life and its responsibilities.

As we throw the storm doors wide open now and blink cautiously at that warm and wonderful light drawing us forward, let us greet each other with the compassion, empathy, love, and support that has always been found within the sisterhood of our League. We need each other and are truly blessed to have each other. We will gather again, stronger than before, equipped with new knowledge as to how to stay connected and a new appreciation for who we have always been.

Respectfully submitted