

Ontario Provincial Council of
The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Annual Meeting of Members July 12, 2021
Diocesan President's Report
Joan Lemay, Pembroke Diocese

“My yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:25-30)

Dealing with the fear and isolation associated with COVID 19 has given us pause to reflect on what we do in the face of adversity. After the initial shutdown in March of 2020, most councils set up phone contacts with their members, recognizing that *Loneliness* was a big factor, especially among our vulnerable members. Councils sent cards and notes of encouragement to members.

Several councils were able to carry on business by embracing technology. They learned new skills, held meetings virtually, increased their communication through emails and attended webinars. Our deep gratitude to those sister councils who opened their webinars for other councils to attend. Technology was a gift during these times. However, other councils were not able to tap into the resources of technology. As our spiritual advisor, Father Michael Coyne, cautioned us in his address at our annual meeting of members in May, we need to consider these sisters and not leave them behind. We are challenged to bridge this gap.

Our diocesan council, held monthly Zoom meetings, I sent a bimonthly newsletter to parish presidents, we held a fall and spring diocesan meeting by Zoom, as well as our annual meeting, and we held a Diocesan Christmas Zoom Party. Diocesan executive increased their phone contact to parish presidents.

Councils reported that they had opportunity to enhance their spiritual lives. Members reported spending more time in individual prayer and meditation. Some councils held outdoor prayer gatherings, others requested that members pray in their homes, at a specified time and date with specific prayers.

Various councils found innovative ways to fund-raise, from take-out spaghetti dinner, bakeless bake sale (thank you Peterborough Diocesan CWL for this idea), and a cookbook sale project. However, on the whole, fund-raising projects were curbed.

Pembroke Diocesan CWL and 4 parish councils are celebrating their 100th anniversary in 2021. The diocesan council is updating our history book, to be completed in the fall of 2021. A celebration dinner will be delayed until our 2022 annual meeting. St. James the Less Council, Eganville, sold solar lights, to commemorate past CWL members, a grandmother, mother, friend, to place around the church yard, and planted a tree to commemorate their anniversary. St. Francis Xavier, Renfrew published a commemorative cookbook. St. Columbkille, Pembroke and St. John Chrysostom, Arnprior are delaying celebration until public health restrictions are lessened.

We are women of faith and we live our faith. I recall the prayer we pray at the installation of CWL officers. The response is “I will with God's help”. We will keep our minds and hearts open to God's call, and we will learn and grow from this experience.

Respectfully Submitted

Joan Lemay