

Ontario Provincial Virtual Annual Members Meeting
Lisa Fillingham, St. Catharines Diocesan Council-Oral Report

July 12-13, 2021

The last 16 months have changed the way we think and live.

One of the biggest challenges of COVID 19 was the ache felt when you could not be with someone you cared for. During this period, many friends and family experienced the passing of a loved one. Being true believers in Christ and celebrating Him is a great honour to our deceased loved ones. The inability to have all their family and friends there, granting all in attendance peace in knowing they were cared for and respected to the end, was absent. Cards, phone calls and emails are all wonderful gestures and appreciated but as Catholics, being there to celebrate the life of the person and participate in Mass surrounded by many is a source of great comfort. I could not imagine my mother's or grandmother's funeral and not seeing so many family members and friends at the funeral Mass give their final respects. My heart truly aches for all those who have lost someone.

A glass half full was how these months of isolation have been viewed. The loss of activities has led many to turn to reflection and pray. Time that was never available before is now used seek our Lord for guidance, love and happiness through prayer and adoration. Many found consolation and hope through their prayers and reflections. Our relationship with our Lord was enriched and members that previously would have little extra time to do this, are now incorporating this extra time into their daily lives because of the peace that was gained. This time in prayer and reflection will remain an active part of our lives even as things return to the new normal.

Technology is another positive from COVID. Where would we be without YouTube and watching Mass live? How would we attend spiritual events that nurture our souls without Zoom or Go To Meetings? How could we share inspirational quotes and positives thoughts so easily without Facebook? Technology is a gift, and we can celebrate our faith during isolation with others and not feel so lonely.

One more positive aspect of our social restrictions and isolation, is that many members that did not have or use technology have begun. This is due to wanting to watch and participate Mass as well as connect with family. iPad usage is up across our members and going forward, it will grant the opportunity to see and learn more. Our members confidence is growing,

they are trying to learn new things and are not easily intimidated. It seems so simple for some, but for many it is difficult but not unachievable. The pandemic forced them to adapt, and that change can only enhance their ability to learn more about the League and their faith. We will continue to use technology in our Diocese in a variety of ways, especially in the winter months to stay connected with our members, our sisters in the League.