

**Ontario Provincial Council of
The Catholic Women's League of Canada**

**AMM, July 12, 2021
Oral Report**

Madame Chair:

On behalf of our nearly 7000 members from the Toronto Diocesan Council, I extend prayers to you, our fellow sisters and spiritual advisors throughout Ontario during our collective ordeal with the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Public health measures were necessary to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. However, these caused increased social isolation, loneliness and poor mental health for some individuals. The pandemic highlighted our interdependence on each other. *"We are connected to the rest of the human family, to the created world, and to those who will come after us in future generations."* (Laudato Si)

From the start of the pandemic, our goal was to stay in touch with members by embracing new opportunities resulting in many firsts for the diocesan and parish councils. Our 103 councils were at the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic. During periods of uncertainty, it is not always advisable to wait for the storms to pass for "normal" to return.

We were fortunate that many councils and members used and participated in events virtually and in-person when permitted, used phone calls and social media. The diocesan council hosted executive and regional meetings and special events through teleconference, virtually or a hybrid of in-person and virtual. Virtual events included: National 100th anniversary (June 2020), held a livestreamed year end mass and prayer service for the Year of St. Joseph (December). We opened 2021, with a New Year party (January) then held Development Day (February), presentation on Ethical Vaccines (March), Mental Health (April), diocesan 99th and 100th AGMs (May), three CWL Wednesdays on the League Welcome Program (April), Mary Garden (May), Internet or Interact (June), Diocesan Council 100th Anniversary (June), Indigenous Peoples Day (June). Three of our virtual events had over 400 members and as high as 470. Attendance included spiritual advisors, religious orders and non-members from Ontario and other provinces.

The diocesan council placed an ad in *The Catholic Register* June 2020 to thank the pandemic heroes, planted 115 trees at the Gore Meadows Community Centre in Brampton (September), provided one-time donations in lieu of the annual in-person attendance to Martyrs' Shrine, the Serra Foundation, Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), and Catholic Family Services of Toronto for Ending Women's Abuse, Catholic Family Services of Durham, Catholic Missions in Canada (CMIC), Journey Home Hospice.

Several councils made masks for organizations and members, held drive-by events such as food drives, graveside honour guards, memorial service, birthdays, anniversaries, prayer services, card and bingo games, tree plantings, etc. Some councils used e-transfers to collect membership fees. The 99th and 100th AGMs were

evaluated using Google forms. The hosting of the 101st National AMM in Toronto in August 2021 was cancelled in March.

The 2020 Tree Planting Project, called on us to celebrate our "*roots*" from the past century to "*branch out*" into the next century. The pandemic accelerated the branching out to use new technology and other ideas that were not readily apparent pre-pandemic. We will continue to build on this momentum beyond our Toronto Diocesan Council's 100th anniversary.

Yours in Faith, Love and Service