

**75<sup>th</sup> OPC Convention, July 12, 2022**  
**Oral Report**  
**Presented by Annette Chaplin**  
**President**  
**Pembroke Diocese, Ontario**

Our Pembroke Diocese includes several parishes in Quebec. On November 3 in 2021, 3 of our diocesan executive council travelled to Temiscaming, Quebec, about 70 km north-east of North Bay at the northern extremity of our diocese. The council had invited us to come and meet with 2 First Nations women; One from Kebaowek First Nations and the other from Wolf Lake Band. Unfortunately, as Covid would have, at the last minute, they had to cancel.

At this point, their president and the three of us decided to present the Welcome Program to the parish council. I had given this workshop recently at the fall general meeting, and I had my iPad with me, which contained the workshop. The talk generated much discussion, and I also was able to provide information on the Annual Report Survey

This little council is a great example of The Little Council That Could. Forty-two members make such an impact in their parish, community, and area. The meeting included: what they were presently doing for the Food Bank, the Pajama Tree Christmas Collection, a future bake sale, their own December dinner and meeting, decorating the church for Christmas, and reaching out to the homeless woman who was living in a tent, outside the town. They had already done so, and the woman didn't want help, but winter was coming, and members were concerned.

Another inspiration from this council was their council room setup. The president had made a poster of the diocesan and national executive, and each name had a recent photo of the person beside it. She wanted members to be able to put a face to the name, since they had little contact with outside councils, or even parishes in this remote area.

What was very evident to us "outsiders", was the care the members had for each other, and their love of God. It was an easy group of people to instantly feel relaxed and welcome in.

All our councils are inspiring in so many ways. I especially enjoyed reading the reports from councils that claimed "they were not able to do anything" during Covid, and yet listed reach out to seniors, donating to the food bank and the local counselling services, providing a funeral lunch, sending cards to members, and supporting their parish.

Our smallest councils can teach the big executives at the Diocesan level so much about energy, charity, faith, and sisterhood.

It is always inspiring, and an honour and a joy to spend time with them.

Madame President this ends my report.