

**75th Annual Convention of the Ontario Provincial Council
The Catholic Women's League of Canada
ORAL CONVENTION REPORT**

July 12, 2022

Submitted by: Lisa Henry, Diocesan President

Diocese: Sault Ste. Marie Diocesan Council

Madam President,

With one more year of the pandemic under our belts, we proved that we could adapt and overcome. As members, we rose to the occasion by mobilizing our efforts and focused on outreach to anyone and everyone. Through phone calls, cards, getting groceries or prescriptions for our members, online meetings, and spiritual programs, we identified gaps and filled the spaces where we were needed most.

It's the little things we did that made the biggest difference in so many lives. Phone calls meant so much. A kind "hello, how are you doing?" was all it took to bring joy to their day. Being able to connect on a zoom call and see one another, lifted the spirits of our members. Compassion, love, and outreach were the priority. One initiative through the Compassionate Committee for the Homeless, provided 200 backpacks filled with everyday necessities in both the spring and fall through the *Backpacks of Love* campaign.

Bridges were built across the diocese and country through virtual regional spiritual programs. Alleviating isolation through prayer, music and community brought us closer and demonstrated that not even a global pandemic could keep us apart!

In April 2022, the light broke through, and in true CWL fashion, we bravely forged ahead with an in-person convention complete with the big hugs we are so famous for!

Our CWL sisterhood is unstoppable and that was never more evident when our then, Past President, Betsy Currier was in Toronto accompanying her husband for surgery. Due to COVID, Betsy did not have the access to her husband as much as she would have hoped at the hospital, and that can be a very isolating and stressful. Cathy McKinney mentioned this to our Toronto CWL sisters, and they arranged for transportation so Betsy could attend a Day of Reflection followed by mass and a luncheon. What a beautiful expression of sisterhood and love.

The Holy Spirit was at work in the hearts and hands of our sisters ensuring no one was left behind. Loneliness was definitely at the forefront of this pandemic, but the strength of our collective sisterhood demonstrated a tenacity of purpose that we could persevere in any challenges or obstacles. Our faith shone bright during these trials and tribulations and with the grace and fortitude of the Holy Spirit, we were able to allow the love of God to work through us to touch the lives of others. The pandemic challenged us in profound ways, and we found ourselves navigating rough waters. We were inspired by the members who persevered and continued on in their works. Consolation came in the realization that our hope is not in the comfort and security of this passing world but in Jesus Christ. He is our constant and sends us on our own way to be a part of the mission of building the Kingdom of God. If we look around at the waves, we will sink. But, if we keep our eyes fixed on Him, we can walk on water.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Henry