

National Convention Report

By Mary Capobianco, Ontario Provincial Accredited Delegate

The beautiful Okanagan lakeside was the amazing setting for the much-anticipated 102nd National Convention. It was obvious from the moment of arrival that everyone was very excited to be meeting in person once again. Not only were delegates warmly greeted at the airport but throughout the following days. Those attending external events, organized for the Saturday and Sunday, expressed positive comments. Throughout the convention, everyone could see the planning committee's attention to the little details. Sunflowers, the official flower for Kelowna, were everywhere. A "Guess How Many Sunflowers at Convention" contest revealed that there were 620 in total.

The opening mass was celebrated at the Immaculate Conception Parish on the Vigil of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The opening ceremonies were followed with a wine and cheese reception hosted by the Knights of Columbus.

Monday morning began with Archbishop Emeritus Martin Currie, former National Spiritual Advisor, celebrating mass on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. When the business sessions began, National President Fran Lucas' opening remarks included the focus on building relationships and making connections with old and new friends.

The Ribbons of Love initiative, with more than 1100 blue and yellow ribbons prepared by the provinces, was displayed in a huge heart shape at the back of the hall. Fran invited everyone to take two ribbons, one for themselves and one to gift to another. Greetings were given by representatives from World Union of Catholic Women (WUCWO), the national Ukrainian President and the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition and Catholic Missions in Canada brought greetings. The day continued with reports from the provincial presidents and national officers.

National President-Elect Shari Guinta outlined all the new resources available on the website, specifically mentioning The Joy of Leadership, the Welcome Program and Embracing Diversity. Shari also announced that the Life Membership moratorium has been lifted. Changes and more information will be communicated in September.

Executive Director Kim Scammel, Executive Director detailed the roles and responsibilities of the National Office staff. Since Marie Rackley, National treasurer was unable to attend, Kim reviewed the financial reports. The amendment to increase the per capita vote was carried with a vote of 7 to 4. This increase will become effective January 2023. Marie Rackley will be providing "talking points" to help councils communicate the increase to their members.

During discussions, it was learned that Saskatchewan provincial council has developed training videos for spiritual advisors. These training resources will be

shared with National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Jensen. The hope is that these resources will be adapted and made available for all.

The day ended with the commissioning ceremony of the 2020 and 2021 new life members.

On Monday evening members finally got to celebrate the 100th CWL Anniversary appropriately with a Roaring 20's themed dinner. Creative costumes, decorations, big band music and the official cake cutting all made for a fun-packed evening.

Tuesday began with mass, celebrated by National Spiritual Advisor Bishop Stephen Jensen. The collection of \$5,109.45 was divided between the CCCB Ukrainian Relief Fund and Rachel's Vineyard Retreat which offers post-abortion support.

Following the mass, Honorary Life Member Barbara Dowding's presented "The Art of Accompaniment". Who better to accompany us than Jesus? She explored how to intentionally walk with someone, even someone you don't like and the freedom that comes when you truly listen to someone. She pointed out that the League is connected to the past but with eyes on the future. The highlight of the presentation was the sharing of stories of accompaniment by Honorary Life Members. There was not a dry eye in the hall as they spoke about who was there to accompany them and who made a difference in their lives.

Points that resonated included:

- "How many times do you smile when you talk about the League?"
- HLM Marie Cameron's quote "If it's meant to be, then it's up to me!" and
- Mary, Our Blessed Mother, is our model for accompanying.

The afternoon speaker was Author Elizabeth Tomlin, the author of *Joyful Momentum, Growing Vibrant, Faith-Filled Women's Group*. Her presentation was also on accompaniment. She spoke about the importance of faith-based groups for women, the intrinsic need to share and be part of a community. Her presentation included many personal stories about her own experiences of accompaniment. She reviewed the Marks of Vocation; Certain, Joyful, Steadfast, Evangelistic and Sacrificial. She reminded us that our vocation is evangelistic by reaching out to someone and sacrificial when we refuse to quit because it's hard.

Wednesday began with the presentation "The League of the Future - Year 4" by National President-Elect Shari Guinta. Shari, along with the goal leads Christa Grillmaur, Jacqueline Nogier, Sr. Susan Scott and Sharon Cieben, gave a strategic planning progress report. Much work has been done and each presenter stressed the tools, resources, workshops and videos now available on the national website. In total there are 21 working groups, 84 members, who, to date, have logged 15,922 hours of work.

National Community Life Chair Faith Anderson reported on the status of CWL projects and the many contributions from members. She reported that 36,378 lbs of food had been collected for food banks. Also of note, were the monetary presentations made to the voluntary funds: \$13,123.70 to Development and Peace,

\$10, 680.45 to CNEWA and approximately \$21K to Catholic Missions in Canada. The eleven applicants for the National Bursary received a total of \$7,900. Faith also made reference to the new brochure for CNEWA (#350), available on the CWL website, and that the D&P brochure (#352) is currently under revision.

National Resolutions Chair Rolande Chernichan presented the resolution *Enact Federal Legislation to Reduce Food Loss and Waste* gifted by Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council. After much discussion the resolution was adopted. The resolution *National Strategy to Address Loneliness*, gifted by Ontario Provincial Council, was forwarded to National Education and Health Chair Margaret Schwab to communicate and action this important topic.

All proposed amendments to the Constitution & Bylaws were approved with near unanimous votes, except for the change of Our Patroness, which was defeated 10 to 1. Manitoba was the only province to vote in favour. All changes are effective January 1, 2023.

The 2023 National Convention will be an annual meeting of members, hosted by St. John, New Brunswick. The focus will be on two days of business sessions with reduced event activities and no keynote speakers. Attendance will be by invitation only and will include national officers, voting delegates, provincial and diocesan accredited delegates, honorary life members and life members.

The final registration report for the 102nd National CWL Convention included a total of 462 members in attendance.