



**Ontario Provincial Council
The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Education and Health Standing Committee Chair**
Go Make a Difference

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Attachments: N/A

To: Diocesan and Parish Council Education and Health Committee Chairs,
Chairpersons of Service and Social Justice, Council Presidents
Cc: Linda Squarzolo, Ontario Provincial President, Diocesan Presidents,
Ontario Provincial Officers, OPC Education and Health Sub-Committee
National Education and Health Chair
From: Hilarion Mitchell, Ontario Provincial Education and Health Standing
Committee Chair

February is Black History Month! The theme for 2023 is "Ours to tell". February is also Heart Month.

The blue hyperlinks in this directive will take you to the original sources.

Black History Month

This was summarized from Canadian Heritage. The City of Toronto was the first ever Canadian proclamation of Black History Month in 1979. In December 1995, Dr. Jean Augustine, the first Black Canadian woman elected to Parliament, motion in December 1995 was unanimously carried in the House of Commons to officially recognize February as Black History Month in Canada. Senator Donald Oliver, the first Black man appointed to the Senate, in February 2008, introduced the Motion to recognize contributions of Black Canadians and February as Black History Month. It received unanimous approval and was adopted on March 4, 2008. The adoption of this motion completed Canada's parliamentary position on Black History Month. The 2023 "Ours to tell" theme is an opportunity to engage in open dialogue and a commitment to learning more about the stories Black communities in Canada have to talk about their histories, successes, sacrifices and triumphs. See more info on [Black History Month digital toolkit page](#).

Saint Josephine Bakhita

"If I were to meet the slave-traders who kidnapped me and even those who tortured me, I would kneel and kiss their hands, for if that did not happen, I would not be a Christian and Religious today."- St. Bakhita

St. Josephine Bakhita was born in 1869 in the Sultanate of Darfur and died on February 8, 1947 in Schio, Italy. She was a Sudanese-Italian Canossian religious sister who lived in Italy for 45 years after being a slave in Sudan. St. Bakhita was canonized on October 1, 2000 and is venerated as a modern African saint. She was the first Black woman to receive the honour. She has been adopted as the patron saint of modern Sudan and human trafficking survivors. February 8th is the feast day for St. Bakhita.

Prayer

O St. Bakhita, assist all those who are trapped in a state of slavery; Intercede with God on their behalf so that they will be released from their chains of captivity. Those whom man enslaves, let God set free. Provide comfort to survivors of slavery and let them look to you as an example of hope and faith.

See [Novena to St. Bakhita](#)

The Catholic Church in Africa

This summary is from Reuters (Jan. 29, 2023). Pope Francis visits to the [Democratic Republic of Congo \(DRC\) and South Sudan Jan. 31-Feb 5, 2023](#), where conflicts have left millions of refugees and displaced people grappling with hunger. Catholics represents half of the populations and where the Church is a key player in health and educational systems as well as in democracy-building efforts. Africa is growing in importance within the Catholic Church and is poised to become an even more important global center of Catholicism in the decades to come. The Pillar (Dec. 21, 2021) article on [Demography reigns down in Africa](#) more priests were ordained from Nigeria than any other European countries. The United States and India were the only two countries that ordained more priests in 2019 than Nigeria.

623 Embracing Diversity: Tools for Council Use

This League resource was released in 2021. The goal, "Through outreach and service, members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada foster a culture where all life is valued with dignity and respect." The strategy, "Embrace diverse cultures and ages." Members and councils are to use the tool kit to learn more and to engage diverse groups within the council and parish.

February is Heart Month

This summary was taken from Health Canada. Heart Month provides an opportunity to focus on the efforts to improve our heart health. Heart disease is currently one of the leading causes of death in Canada, second only to cancer. Approximately 2.6 million Canadian adults aged 20 and older live with ischemic heart disease (IHD), the most common type of heart disease. The risk factors of heart diseases and conditions are diabetes, smoking, high cholesterol, a lack of exercise, high blood pressure, poor diet, sleep apnea, family history and obesity. Men 45 years of age or older woman 55 years of age or older are more likely to be hospitalized or die from heart disease. Indigenous Canadians and Canadians of African, Chinese, Hispanic and South Asian. Lifestyle choices to reduce the risk of heart diseases and conditions includes limiting alcohol, reducing stress, physically activity, eating nutritious foods, maintaining a healthy weight, quitting (or not starting) smoking.

Education and Health *Go Make a Difference* Projects

- Wed. March 8, 2023: Nutrition Month including Managing Diabetes
- Mon. May 8, 2023: Horizons of Hope Overview

Both events will be virtual and held from 7:00 – 8:30/9:00 pm. More details will be circulated through email and posted on the [provincial website](#).