



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

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To: Diocesan and Parish Standing Committee Chairs for Education and Health, Service and Social Justice
Cc: Linda Squarzolo, Ontario Provincial President, Diocesan Presidents, Ontario Provincial Officers, Marlin Taylor, Life Member (OPC Education and Health Sub-Committee), National Education and Health Chair
From: Hilarion Mitchell, Ontario Provincial Education and Health Standing Committee Chair

The start of the liturgical season with Advent, Christmas and the New Year is filled with prayers, retreats, bazaars, celebrations, making resolutions, etc. in the company of our League sisters, spiritual advisors, family and friends. It is also a time when these observances impact our health and the environment.

"The way you help heal the world is you start with your own family."
Mother Teresa

Bring Your Own Dishes

During one of my Unity Outreach sessions, the president reminded members to BYOD (bring your own dishes) as in plates, cutlery, cups and glasses in addition to their food contribution from home for their Christmas dinner. An amazing idea as it saves members from using Styrofoam, plastic cutlery, even paper products. A small but significant way of being mindful of the impact of our actions, *Laudato Si' - Care for Our Common Home* in our relationship with God, each other, and the earth.

BYOD also means more time for all members to socialize and to enjoy the company of others, try new foods and exchange recipe ideas from the diverse cultures represented in the council. Hence, their BYOD reminder provided an opportunity through this directive to promote healthy eating, care for the environment and our global family over the holidays.

Holiday Healthy and Mindful Eating

Seasonal foods and drinks are the cornerstone of any holiday including Christmas and the New Year. 'Tis the season for eggnog, apple cider, turkey, stuffing, ham, Christmas pudding, fruit cake, shortbread cookies, deli meat trays and snacks rich in calories, sugar, sodium and fats. [Diet-related diseases](#) (type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer) can be prevented through a healthy diet and lifestyle). Mindful awareness of the food environment at home, League, work and at other functions can minimize the negative health effects and guilt around eating during the holidays and throughout the year with the helpful tips below.

- Make homemade foods from healthy ingredients.
- Skip processed foods such as cold cuts, salad dressings, etc.

- Make vegetables and fruits half your plate, choose whole grains and plant base foods.
- Eat healthy snacks before going out. Watch grazing and mindless eating.
- Think proportions versus portions when selecting foods.
- Drink water for satiety and make it the drink of choice.
- Read food labels, avoid foods/drinks high in sodium, sugar and saturated fats
- Bring healthy foods to the event, especially if there are underlying health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension.
- Skip the temptation for seconds, recognized fullness.
- See [Canada's Food Guide](#) for healthy eating guidelines.
- Heart & Stroke: [Healthy eating basics](#)

Environmentally Friendly Holiday

The environmental impact of the holidays includes air, rail and auto travel, increased purchase of gifts, food, clothing, paper, use of decorative lights, etc. Helpful tips to minimize this are as follows.

- Donate non-perishable food to local food banks, SVDP, etc. given these economic times of high food prices, food insecurity, homelessness, etc.
- Waste less food and choose local, seasonal food that is produced sustainably.
- Food best before dates foods can be used beyond the date on the package.
- Green Gift Giving (re-gifting, sustainable resources and recycled materials)
- Reuse wrapping paper, festive fabrics or kraft paper bags with compostable decorations.
- Spend less, buy second hand, repurpose and regift items no longer needed.
- Refresh and accessorize your current wardrobe instead of purchasing new.
- Donate clothing no longer needed to clothing drives, boxes, home collections.
- Waste less water, use LED instead of incandescent lights.
- Use reusable instead of disposables (no single-use plastic packaging)
- [Tips for a Sustainable Holiday](#) [Sustainable Gift Giving](#)

Single Use Plastic Ban Federal Court Ruling

The Federal Court overturned the single-use plastic (SUP) ban on Nov. 16, 2023, citing that the Federal Government labelling all plastic manufactured items toxic under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act as unconstitutional. The toxic designation is required for the government to regulate the use of substances in Canada. However, the decision does not change the legislation currently in effect on the ban on the SUP items (straws, stir sticks, check out plastic bags, cutlery, some takeout containers and six pack rings). See [Plan for the Ban: What the federal court's decision actually means ...](#)

Education and Health 2023 Annual Report

The Education and Health questions (41-46) are grouped with Service (Christian Family Life and Community Life). Do encourage your parish council counterparts to complete and submit their 2023 annual report by Dec. 15, 2023.

Pray for peace! Have a blessed Advent, Christmas and New Year to you and your family.