



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

Directive: No. 11
Pages: 2

February 5, 2024

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

Happy New Year! It is February and my first directive for the year. The new League structure will be the reality for everyone as the remaining diocesan and provincial councils will be fully transitioned by July. Going forward, the Education and Health standing committee duties will be covered by Service and Social Justice committees.

Here I am Lord, send me (Isiah 6:8)

The new League theme is Here ***I am Lord, send me*** for 2024-2025 calls us to action. Shari Guinta, national president wrote in the [Canadian League, Winter 2024](#) that "mental health was chosen for the theme's focus. The social and economic impacts of mental health are prevalent in all communities, including homelessness, violence, spousal abuse, job loss, and so much more. It touches all areas and levels of society."



Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)

The federal government paused MAiD when mental illness is the sole underlying condition on February 3, 2024. [Bill C-39 An Act to amend the Criminal Code](#) was scheduled to take effect on March 17, 2024. See the Nov. 30, 2023, [Statement by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops on the Non-Permissibility of Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide within Canadian Health Organizations with a Catholic Identity](#).

National Catholic Health Care Week: Signs of Hope

This is the fifth annual [National Catholic Health Care Week](#) which is now underway from Sun., Feb. 4 to Sat. , Feb. 10, 2024 from the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada. The theme is Signs of Hope. It falls on the week leading into The World Day of the Sick, February 11, a Catholic day of observance established by Pope John Paul II to encourage prayers and reflections for those who are ill and for those who care for them.

National Catholic Health Care Week seeks to build understanding and connection with our mission and contribution as a Catholic health community working with others to build a just and caring society where all are seen and heard. See resources [Daily Reflections and Prayers](#) and [Social media toolkit](#).

Here I am Lord, send me, Isiah 6:8

Heart Month: Take the Healthy Heart Challenge

February is Heart Month! Focus on heart-healthy habits and awareness on cardiovascular diseases. Adopt a nutritious diet, check-ups with your healthcare provider, and incorporating regular exercise into your routine. Take the [healthy heart challenge!](#)

Heart Disease in Women [Wear Red Day](#) – Feb. 13

Heart disease is the number one killer of women worldwide and the leading cause of premature death in women in Canada. Globally, cardiovascular diseases affect 1 out of 3 women, yet women are under-studied, under-diagnosed, under-treated, and under-aware heart disease is largely preventable.

Gender Dysphoria

The [Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute](#) did a 4-part series on Gender Dysphoria which is accessible on their website. Below is excerpted from Part 4 (Dec. 8, 2023)

- "Dysphoria itself is defined as a state of dissatisfaction or unease about a given situation. Gender dysphoria is a *psychological condition* in which the individual feels an incongruence between his or her experienced gender and his or her biological sex. This condition is associated with varying levels of anxiety and unhappiness."
- In Catholic teaching, parents are the first educators of their children, and that applies to religious, sexual, cultural and educational matters. Parental rights have been in the news recently for those in support of their right to know and their children's privacy around counselling or treatment around gender identity.

February is Black History Month

This is the 36th anniversary of Black History Month (BHM) in Canada. It is celebrated in February with events and festivities that honour the legacy of Black people in Canada and their communities. The 2024 theme is: *Black Excellence: A Heritage to Celebrate; a Future to Build*. Visit the [Ontario Black History Society](#) for resources on the educational/historical material. Your local community and parish may have educational and parish mass dedicated to honour BHM. In the Toronto area, Annual BHM Mass will be held in-person at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, 520 Sherbourne St. on Sat. Feb. 24 from 02:00 PM 5:00 PM.

Black Life: Untold Stories

The [Black Life: Untold Stories](#) series spans more than 400 years on contemporary issues, music, policing, Black liberation, immigration, culture, and sports. There are eight episodes of 45 minutes in duration.

- Haven, But No Heaven (Slavery)
- Revolution Remix (Civil Rights)
- Northern Beats (Music)
- Migrations (Immigration)
- Creation Insists (Arts & Literature)
- More Than a Game (Sports)
- Justice Denied (Activism)
- Claiming Space (Settlements)