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*"I alone **cannot change the world**, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." – St Mother Teresa*

I no longer have children anticipating the first day of school but September still gives me "new year" vibes. I have just returned from the 105th Annual Convention of The Catholic Women's League and was reminded of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations (WUCWO) "Device-Free Family Meals" that was introduced to the League in December 2024. We were asked to share with WUCWO about our experiences. More details can be found at <https://www.cwl.ca/wucwo-device-free-family-meals-campaign/>. This campaign was part of WUCWO's 2023-2027 set of resolutions and dealt with family with the intent to keep people connected.



Cell phones are everywhere. Globally, 1.3 billion Smartphones were sold in 2023. Statistics Canada data indicates a significant increase in cell phone ownership and usage in Canada, with cell phones largely replacing landlines in households and growing in popularity across all age groups, especially among seniors. In 2021, 93.9% of households reported having at least one cell phone, a substantial increase from 2019. A new study from OntarioCasinos.com discovered that the average Canadian will spend 70.46 days each year on mobile apps, or 14.46 years of their life if they use mobile devices for 75 years.

There are also Social and Ethical Concerns with cell phone usage. The extraction of raw materials is sometimes linked to poor labor conditions, human rights violations, and even conflict, particularly for minerals like tin, tungsten, and tantalum. The industry's design for obsolescence and the lack

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of accessible repair options contribute to a cycle of consumption and waste, perpetuating social inequality in some areas. Resolution 2024.03 Grant the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise Legal Authority to Investigate Environmental and Human Rights Abuses may provide councils with added information and action plan activity for a meeting.

What can we do as League members to mitigate the problem and find solutions? Inform members on the responsible disposal of old phones to recover valuable materials. Repairing devices and avoiding frequent upgrades reduce the demand for new production. Host a parish based electronic waste day.

As women of faith, we must recall Pope Francis' words from Laudato Si' (s.42): "All creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures is dependent on one another.

