

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA

OTTAWA DIOCESAN COUNCIL

ORGANIZATION STANDING COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 24, 2011

COMMUNIQUE # 1

TO: Parish Council Organization Chairs

FROM: Sharon St. Jean, Ottawa Diocese Organization Chair

"When we turn our backs on the poor, we turn our backs on Jesus Christ"Mother Teresa

It is wonderful to see everyone back, after what I hope was a restful summer. It is back to schedules, cooler nights, beautiful fall colors, and working as "women of peace and hope, centered on poverty".

MEMBERSHIP

In her Organization Standing Committee report, at the July 2011 convention, Marlene Pavletic, who was at that time the Organization Standing Committee Chair, told us that the overall decline in membership in Ontario, over the past several years seemed to have turned a corner.

Membership rose slightly in 2010, to 53,208 from 53,120 in 2009. Organization chairpersons at parish and diocesan levels had worked very hard to see that members renewed and that effective ways were used to recruit new members. We are urged to do all that is possible to keep the trend going.

Betty Anne Brown-Davidson, in her written report for the National Convention in Toronto, commented that in every organization, the most valuable resource is the members. That holds true for the Catholic Women's League. Betty Anne says and I quote, "without the delight, enthusiasm, creativity, loyalty, quantity and talent of members, nothing could be accomplished."

As organization standing committee chairs our focus needs to be on members, recruiting them, keeping them as members, and appreciating and using their talents. We need to offer them workshops that will help them develop leadership skills, provide them with the resources they need to do their work well and once each year report on the wonderful accomplishments and efforts they have made.

One way that was reported to help increase membership was the addition of more spirituality and prayerfulness at meetings; another was providing transportation for members who would not otherwise be able to attend meetings. Often women will give up their membership simply because they can't attend meetings and functions. Recognition of member's devotion to the League and the hard work they have done in their councils, by giving of pins, awards or

appreciation dinners or luncheons, was found also to be helpful. Two provincial councils found that making members aware of the importance of attending conventions and being part of the convention process, was a great way to promote the League.

However, the best promotion of the League is an enthusiastic and dedicated member. Parishes are encouraged to use “on-line” membership remittance of per capita fees. You only need to complete an “on-line” membership system enrollment form, obtain an access code and follow the steps provided. All membership chairpersons would have received a list of instructions, in April of 2010. This process is much more accurate and the per capita cheques will be received by the dioceses and provincial council much faster. I have placed an On-Line Remittance of Per Capita Instruction sheet in your baskets. Please take time to read this valuable information.

Betty Colaneri, newly elected Organization Standing Committee Chair, for the province of Ontario, reported in her 1st Directive, that we are encouraged by Velma Harasen, National President, to get “1” woman to become a member of the Catholic Women’s League. Just imagine the possibilities.

I would like to remind you of the importance of sending me changes to your executive lists as they occur. This includes standing committee chairs and spiritual advisors. If possible please include addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. I can assure you this information will be treated with respect of privacy. Please read carefully, the new Privacy Policy that is in your baskets.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership development is the most important way we can ensure the survival and growth of the Catholic Women’s League. If we truly want to see the League flourish with members who are confident in the impact that they can have, as such a huge group of women, with a common focus and goal, why wouldn’t we do all we can to educate ourselves in what the League is about and all that it offers.

Attending workshops, study days and participating in League events, such as conventions, is an amazing way of learning, having fun, and making new friends.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Our Diocesan Council is offering a Leadership & Public Speaking Course, which will be held Wednesday evenings, beginning October 5th, from 7-9P.M. It is a seven week course and a commitment to the seven weeks is necessary. Holy Spirit Parish in Stittsville will be our host. What an amazing opportunity. I urge you attend, if at all possible. It is even free. Only 20 people will be accepted and the deadline for registration is this Monday, September 26. Please let me know today if you might be interested or send me an email as soon as possible.

RESOURCE MATERIAL

We are blessed to have so much resource material at our disposal. Materials such as the National Policy & Procedures Manual, which is updated on a regular basis. This can be downloaded or ordered from National. Leading the League and the Executive Handbook are invaluable to good council management. We can keep up to date by reading the League Magazine and Be League.

I encourage all Councils to develop a Policy and Procedure Manual.

ANNUAL REPORTS

In your baskets you will find a reminder on the Annual Reports, due by December 15. Yes, the dreaded Annual Report. What a great reason for a gathering, both from a business and social point of view. Get your executive, the whole executive, together; bring your council calendar for the past year showing all events. Bring reports and minutes etc. By doing this as a group items to be reported will only appear under one chair and you can have a great time in the process, as go over all your council has done for God and Canada. Referring to the Annual Report Checklist, that all presidents should have, will make your work that much easier.

Elections

It is soon going to be election time for some councils. Please consider allowing your name to stand for a position on the executive. It is a wonderful way to allow “your light to shine”. Each of you has so much to offer.

Please mark your calendars for the Advent Retreat, being held at The Diocesan Center, 1247 Kilborn Place, Ottawa, on Saturday November 26, from 9A.M.-3P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon St. Jean
Pres. Elect/Organization Standing Committee Chairperson
Ottawa Diocese

Live simply
Love generously
Care deeply
Speak kindly,

**Your sister in the League,
Sharon**