



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Archdiocese of Edmonton

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL, PRAY FOR US

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2014

57 councils reported

Sisters in the League

Presidents are a diverse group of dedicated women who work diligently to meet the needs of their parish councils. They have set goals for themselves in the areas of meetings, education, membership, communication, spiritual development, council and community work.

A great deal of work, planning and care has gone into parish councils meetings. Presidents try to meet members needs by being organized, so to run meetings efficiently. They plan to start meetings on time, keep them centered, interesting and informative and no more than 2 hours. Presidents mention the importance of making an agenda and following it while allowing time for discussion and decision making. Some presidents mentioned that meeting times and locations are planned to meet the needs of aged and disabled members. Sometimes afternoon meetings are held in the cold weather and darkness of winter.

There was a strong focus on Education for the President and training and development of council officers and members. Self development involved studying the Constitution & Bylaws and being familiar with the Manual of Policy & Procedure. Presidents noted that attending a Catch the Fire development day was important and also looking host one in their council or area. They want to give encouragement and guidance to members who have taken on executive roles and develop skills so that they can feel capable and fulfilled when taking on new responsibilities. An important goal is Informing and educating members about initiatives at various levels of the League.

Membership renewal and welcoming of new members is a challenge to councils. Presidents report that they would like to increase membership, invite young women to join, and keep the members that they have. We need to discover how to meet the needs of the women in our parishes and meet and welcome them at every chance we have. Talking about CWL helps with membership but showing them that we are joyful, prayerful and fulfilled and serving will say a lot more. Using ACTIONS and being VISIBLE may achieve our membership goals.

Improved communication through, email, phone calls, parish bulletin announcements, parish websites, and personal contact with the goal to increase attendance of members at meetings and activities and keep members who are unable to attend meetings informed about the CWL.

Membership recruitment & retention, encouraging attendance at meetings and activities continues to be a high priority with the executive in parish councils. Many methods of communication with members have been used and personal contact is mentioned as well as being visible in the parish and community. Some councils emphasize that spiritual development, praying for each other, and working together to increase numbers will make them spiritually stronger. They mention the importance of bringing accurate information to meetings and keeping accurate minutes and treasurer reports. Some councils want to stay active for as long as they are able.

Parish council programs are too numerous to mention in this report. Our councils no matter what size are active in parish, community and spiritually. We are truly blessed by the work of so many League sisters.

Filling executive positions in councils continues to be a challenge for many. Education and leadership development are vital to having members be willing to accept positions on the parish council. Some councils who do not have standing committee chairpersons will work together to cover all that needs to be done in areas of concern. **God calls ordinary people to do extraordinary jobs.** One council reported, "We have had an awesome year - We are revived and alive," what a wonderful goal to achieve, may all councils experience it.

The out-reach to councils through the Parish Buddies initiative has been appreciated as it connects the Parish council to Diocesan council, offering guidance, and support. Some councils mention that they struggle to keep going as CWL. Support and direction from Spiritual Advisors are essential, however some councils struggle with lack of support which causes difficulties in the council. Councils are evaluating what is important to their members and in some councils that means a greater emphasis on spiritual development, new ideas for fundraising and revitalizing current members. Councils are looking forward to the coming years, having a strong enthusiastic executive.

At our Mid-Winter meeting last February we announced the recipients of our Gala Celebration Funds. Donations were made to Angel Cradle (Covenant Health), Back Porch, Edmonton Pregnancy Crisis Centre, Edmonton Pro-Life, the Palliative Institute, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Welcome Home and the YESS (Youth Empowerment Support Services). We were pleased to hear that St. Vincent de Paul has purchased a cube van to aid with their delivery and pick-ups.

Diocesan Council supported the Faith, Fun & Fitness Run/Walk in support of Newman Theological College by purchasing, preparing and serving hotdogs for the participants in this important fundraising event.

A presentation was made at our Fall Meeting in Rocky Mountain House about the Western Canadian Catholic Youth Conference to be held in Red Deer in October 2015. There was great interest in supporting the conference and a goal of \$10,000 was set and councils were asked to pledge and contribute and we are close to that goal. Some of our ladies have also expressed an interest in volunteering at the conference.

It has been a pleasure to visit Councils and attend Zone meetings this past year. Council Anniversary celebrations were very special to attend, St. Matthew CWL, Edmonton, 40 years; St. Albert CWL, St. Albert 50 years and Lloydminster 90 years. These councils celebrated their history and looked forward to the years ahead.

The President's role is a learning experience where one is called upon to use her gifts and help to develop the gifts of the members. May God bless you for sharing your gifts with your sisters in the League and support and encourage you as you work in your council, parish and community for God and Canada.

Respectfully submitted,
For God and Canada
Gwen Elliott
Diocesan President

