



# The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Archdiocese of Edmonton

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL, PRAY FOR US

## CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE ANNUAL REPORT 2014

47 councils reported

Sisters in the League

I am happy to report on the activities that fall under this standing committee that were done by our Councils and your Diocesan Council.

### **Marriage and Family**

Councils support marriage by recognizing anniversaries, helping with marriage preparation classes, encouraging members to attend Marriage Encounter, and promoting Natural Family Planning, and providing financial support for NFP organizations and Marriage Encounter. Support for families is provided by helping families by providing babysitting for mother's group, immigrants or refugees, putting on family oriented events and helping out at parish picnic or after mass with hospitality. Many Councils also support families in their faith journey by helping with sacramental preparation, giving gifts to newlyweds, those being baptized, receiving First Communion, Confirmation, or those coming into the Church at Easter. Financial support is provided by one Council for Familia and Kids for Jesus and by several Councils for Materncare International, Marriage Encounter and Natural Family Planning organizations. Members from several Councils answered the questionnaire in preparation for the Extraordinary Synod on the Family and their input was forwarded to National CWL. The upcoming World Meeting of Families being held in Philadelphia in September 2015 was promoted at meetings of the Diocesan Council.

### **Sanctity of Life**

Councils are very active in this area by praying novenas, writing letters, signing petitions, having membership in prolife organizations, providing financial support for organizations which may be local, Edmonton based, provincial or national. In addition, there were many individual CWL members and Councils who took part in local events and events in Edmonton such as 40 Days for Life, the Alberta March for Life or attended prolife presentations. One Council had a prolife display from Priests for Life at their parish, another had a prayer session and an information evening for public, and a few had speakers from Edmonton Prolife and the Back Porch. Much of this year's activities were focused on euthanasia/assisted suicide. A few Councils sold candles to support the National March for Life, roses on Mother's Day to support the Edmonton Pregnancy Crisis Centre, or prolife calendars on behalf of the Knights of Columbus. At our Diocesan Convention, we had talks on assisted suicide/euthanasia and on palliative care as well as a display from Priests for Life. Members have been encouraged to volunteer with local prolife agencies which are greatly in need of more volunteers. Diocesan Council distributed portions of the Gala Fund to Angel Cradle, Palliative Institute, Edmonton Prolife, the Back Porch, and the Edmonton Pregnancy Crisis Centre. We also allocated money from our Gala Fund to help the Edmonton Archdiocesan Office of Life and Family to implement Project Rachel for post-abortion support but work on this remains stalled.

## **Ministry to Youth, Disabled, Seniors, Widowed, Separated, Divorced**

*Youth* – Many Councils have members involved in sacrament preparation, children's liturgy or supporting religion programs in schools. There is also support given to youth groups, NET Ministry, and 8 Councils continue to run the Catholic Girls' League. Financial donations were given by several councils to our Catholic camps (Our Lady of Victory Camp and Camp Encounter) and to the Youth Empowerment & Support Services (YESS) which supports homeless youth. Some Councils offer scholarships or bursaries for high school students. One Council offers prayers and masses for young members who are discerning vocations or life callings. Gala funds were also donated to YESS. At our Diocesan Fall Meeting, we heard about plans to have a Western Canadian Youth Conference in Red Deer Oct 2015 and encouraged Councils to donate to this. By the end of the year, we were very close to reaching our \$10,000 goal.

*Seniors/Disabled* – Many Councils support seniors and disabled by giving them rides, assisting with shopping, bringing communion, or visiting with them. Some Councils plan teas, birthday parties, and other activities in their local lodges or hospitals. In many of our smaller Councils, most of the members are seniors so CWL activities are planned to help meet their needs.

Mentally and physically disabled are supported by one Council by sponsoring a L'Arche dinner and dance and another has members involved with the Lo-Se-Ca Foundation. Diocesan Council was represented at the L'Arche 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala held in the fall.

*Widowed/Separated/Divorced* – Support for those who have been widowed was common in many Councils. Support is provided through prayers, visits to recently widowed, or having a group that gets together. One Council hosted a supper and speaker for widows while another had a guest speaker who lost her husband at a young age and invited women of the parish to attend.

## **Vocations**

Many Councils reported praying for vocations in their parish at masses, CWL meetings, special novenas, and holy hour and benediction. A few Councils mentioned that they made sure to be welcoming and supportive for all youth who may in the future discern their vocation to the priesthood or religious life. Our Diocesan Adopt-a-Seminarian program for those studying at St. Joseph Seminary remains popular. In Fall 2014, there were 47 who requested to be adopted and each one was matched to a Council. There were 5 Councils unable to adopt this year but will be given the opportunity to adopt next year. Councils who adopted seminarians kept in touch with them, invited them to CWL or parish events, prayed for them, and some supported them financially. One parish instead of adopting a seminarian supported their Deacon spiritually and financially. Several Councils donated to St. Joseph Seminary and Newman College and a few supported religious communities such as the Carmelite Monastery or their priest. St. Joseph College and Newman Theological College Foundation's 'Faith, Fun, Fitness Run/Walk' is supported by some Councils who enter teams into the Run/Walk and also by Diocesan Council who provided and cooked the hot dogs for the participants and volunteers.

Respectively submitted,  
For God and Canada  
Jean Ashdown

