**Community Life Standing Committee Chair’s Report**

**96th Annual Diocesan Convention April 21, 2018**

**Normandy Room, Fort Saskatchewan**

Madam President,

It is impressive to see all the work being done by the Community Life Standing Committee Chairs in the Edmonton Diocese. They continue to diligently work on the Dignity and Rights of Persons, Social and Economic Justice, Refugees, Immigration, and Citizenship, along with many local and international charities.

When discussing the Dignity and Rights of Persons, most councils were not aware of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which remains as relevant today as it was on the day it was adopted in 1948. The Secretary-General of the United Nations states that the commitment of the United Nations to human rights stems from the Organization's founding Charter. The international community has a duty to uphold and defend these rights. Let us ensure that those people who most need their rights protected are made aware that this Declaration exists - and that it exists for them. Let us each do our part to make the universal rights a living reality for every man, woman, and child, everywhere. I encourage councils to become familiar with the Declaration.

In a Communiqué from the National Chairperson of Community Life, Betty Colaneri, she states that on March 19th, a motion was put forward to remove the value attestation in the Canada Summer Jobs application forms. The vote was defeated by a 207 to 93 margin. Many organizations and leaders in faith communities across Canada have expressed their concerns about this "values test". It contravenes the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees the freedom of religion and conscience, of thought, belief, opinion and expression, as well as equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination. More than 1400 applications have been denied, compared to 126 in 2017. We need to continue to write letters to our MP's, the Honourable Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Patty Hadju, and our Prime Minister expressing our concern. See my display table for a copy of the Communiqué.

Our National President, Margaret Ann Jacobs released a letter to all members of Catholic Women's League regarding the 1% Program voluntary funds that are donated to the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. After being made aware that the Bishops in Canada are withholding the Share Lent campaign funds for CCODP, the National Council has decided to withhold the 1% funds. Copies of her letter can be obtained at my display table or online on the National Website.

I want to end with a quote from Pope Francis: Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor.

This concludes my report. Are there any questions?

Respectfully submitted,

For God and Canada

Patti Heck

Community Life Standing Committee Chair

Edmonton Diocesan Council