

94th Annual Diocesan Convention April 22-24, 2016

Holy Family Parish, St. Albert

Dear Sisters in the League,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Diocesan president and work with team of talented and faith‑filled Diocesan officers. I continue to learn about the league and the great gift that it represents. During the past year, I have had the opportunity to celebrate with you some significant milestones, including two very special 90th anniversary celebrations for the St. Anne of Prairies Council and the St. Stephens Council inOlds. It has been a pleasure to visit councils and be warmly welcomed. I have available a Calendar of Events for 2015 to 2017 for any of you interested in knowing about the events that we have participated in during the past year.

 Based on the evaluations we received from you, we identified Five Main Priorities for 2015 to 2017. We are pleased to report that we have been striving to include these priorities in our work in the Archdiocese on your behalf. For example, you wanted spiritual development of members pursued whenever possible at meetings and at conventions and that you wanted us to highlight the Year of Mercy which embodies our Mission statement. We listened. You impacted the choice theme for this convention. As CWL members, we are called to service in our councils, parishes, communities and through reaching out to other Canadians and to our global community. Our theme for this convention builds on the national theme which challenges us to work as one with One Heart, One Voice,One Mission, be the Face of Mercy.

We have good news to share with you as in March we welcomed our newest reactivated council, St. Stephens Lacombe who are working towards building a new Church. Unfortunately, we also have some sad news to share as the Holden Council of St. Gregory the Great have dissolved due to attrition and an aging council membership. There will be a special tribute to them at the Saturday Banquet. Their president is with us today, which is wonderful. There will be a special tribute to them at the banquet this evening.

The Mid- winter meeting was held at the St. Albert Church hall January 30. The theme was “Centering our Journey in the Year of Mercy”. We had an excellent turnout of 187 members. We were treated to a wonderful day of information and inspiration which included a workshop on the Year of Mercy by Sister Susan Scott. Our three guest speakers were powerful witnesses to Mercy in Action, Miriam Stulberg from the Marian Centre, Father Glen McDonald, the Chaplain at St. Joseph's College at the U of A. Megan Schuring from the MOSAIC Centre.

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Thank you for completing and submitting your annual reports. The work reported on your councils has been extraordinary. Presidents report they have many goals, among them are planning interesting and informative and fun meetings. Membership recruitment and retention remains high priorities. With the power of prayer and spirit of team work by council members, great things can be achieved. There are struggles in councils with difficulty filling positions in the executive, maintaining an active group of volunteers and meeting the diverse needs of members in their councils. Building relationships with your spiritual advisors has been cited as another area of concern which the Archbishop wants to work with us in addressing. **Please** contact me or any of the other Diocesan Officers when you have any questions, if you're interested in a workshop or you need to connect with someone, we are here to help you.

 During the past year, we have been called to social action on various important issues:

 Our councils embrace the Provincial Initiative for an “Independent Seniors A” and many of our councils collected signatures on the petitions provided and met with your MLAs to discuss their concerns.

 We have been writing our MLAs about the document “Guidelines for Best Practices Creating Learning Environments that Respect Diverse Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Gender Expression. We have been writing to our MPs about our concerns regarding pending legislation pertaining to Euthanasia and Physician Assisted Dying.

 I am pleased to advise that the western Canadian Catholic Youth Conference that was postponed last year will be held this year in Red Deer from September 30 to October 2. You may remember that Councils in our Diocese raised over $12,000 in support of this initiative and so it is good to see it move forward.

The Catholic Women's League is an organization with a rich history of Service for Canada. The ongoing contributions you make and the service of God and Canada are much appreciated and contribute to the quality of life for many individuals and their families. You really do make a difference and together we have accomplished great things. As we move forward, we are supported by the work of the women of our past. The work is not done, we continue to be a work‑in‑progress.

 **May our Lady of Good Counsel be your constant companion in your work for God and Canada**

 This concludes my report.

Mary Hunt