



*The Catholic Women's League of Canada  
Edmonton Diocesan Council  
Spiritual Development Oral Report  
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Madame President,

I would like to begin by quoting from the National League Executive Handbook: “Women are called to take an active and responsible leadership role in the church’s life and mission by actively participating in League, church and community.” This quote falls under the “Role of Women in the Church” category. I share with you one of our great female women of the church! St. Hildegard of Bingen Doctor of the Church (1098–1179), was one of the great figures of her age: abbess and founder of a Benedictine convent, prophet and preacher, musician and composer, poet and artist, doctor and pharmacist. From her earliest childhood Hildegard enjoyed holy visions in which the word of God—both in Scripture and in the book of nature—was revealed to her. She presented a picture of human beings and the cosmos as emanations of God’s love, “living sparks” or “rays of his splendor, just as the rays of the sun proceed from the sun itself.” Within the cosmos, she wrote, human beings are the thinking heart, called to be cocreators with God in shaping the world. Both the cosmos and human beings, though estranged from God by sin, may through Christ find their way back to God’s original blessing. Her holistic vision has found a wide audience in recent times, and in 2012 Pope Benedict XVI declared her a Doctor of the Church. “The fire has its flame and praises God. The wind blows the flame and praises God. In the voice we hear the word which praises God. And the word, when heard, praises God. So all of creation is a song of praise to God.”

—St. Hildegard of Bingen

There are so many wonderful books available that explore women in the scriptures. [Truly Our Sister A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints](#) by Elizabeth A. Johnson, is one of them. With great confidence, she offers sophisticated and inspiring interpretations of 13 scriptural readings in which Mary appears, including refugees from slaughter; annunciation (call of the prophet); visitation (joy in the revolution of God); wine at the wedding; near the cross; and all filled with the Holy Spirit. In these activities, Mary demonstrates that she is a friend of God and a prophet speaking out against injustice. To quote St. Augustine “it means more for Mary to have been a disciple of Christ than to have been the mother of Christ.” (Sermon 72) Let us model Mary in her faithful discipleship as we commit to our national theme “Care for Our Common Home” . I know that we are all searching for ways in which we can have a positive impact on healing God’s Creation, and I offer the following simple action. Plant a tree –Scientists estimate that if we plant one trillion trees, the CO<sup>2</sup> levels around the world will drop significantly – one tree at a time! Encourage everyone in your family to do the same! Make it a family celebration with prayer and good food! Children love to see things grow and relish the thought that they are acting to create a better future. I encourage you to download an 8-page document titled “A Readers’ Guide to Laudato Si” as a source for discussion within your council, and/or in your family gatherings. Just google the title of the document and you have it at your fingertips! Finally, I urge each of you to pray often, the renewal prayer for the implementation of our strategic plan. With voices united in petition to God, we will move forward into change for our League, our church and Canada. This concludes my report.