Prince Edward Island Provincial President’s Written Report

The members of the Catholic Women’s League (CWL) on Prince Edward Island have enjoyed a very busy year. We have 33 local councils and a very active Provincial Council Executive who organize many faith-filled, learning and social events.

Parish councils focused on the national theme “Inspired by the Spirit Women Respond to God’s Call” and on mental health. This was accomplished through retreats, guest speakers, and the sharing of personal experiences. The Provincial Executive approved seven subsidies to assist parish councils with workshop costs associated with these priorities. All workshops were very successful and usually engaged several neighboring councils and other community members.

Members used a variety of ways to add spiritual development to their meetings and personal lives: some councils started their monthly meetings with Mass; others included prayers for deceased members, prayer lines and the rosary before weekday masses or during the months of May and October; many members attend Mass on the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel and pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Councils participated in Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, World Day of Prayer, Mary’s Way of the Cross during Lent, prayer groups and supported Mass for Shut-ins.

In March, the Provincial Executive delivered four area meetings in four regions of the Island.  Three executive members delivered the various parts of the three hour meeting: spiritual, business and the leadership development workshop which included practical topics such as conduct at a meeting, tips for members, effective meetings, motions, sample minutes, treasurer’s report and sample convenor reports and some meeting challenges (sample of issues that might take over a meeting agenda). These meetings were very positive, had many members in attendance and we received many wonderful comments.

Our 96th  Provincial Convention was held on May 4/5, 2018 in Charlottetown and we had a large number of members in attendance. We featured several powerful guest speakers: Sr. Phyllis Gallant spoke on the theme “Inspired by the Spirit Women Respond to God’s Call”, Dr. Heather Keizer spoke on “Healthy Boundaries, Healthy Relationships” and National President Margaret Ann Jacobs engaged the members in a strategic planning exercise. Spiritual enrichment activities Mass, the crowning of Mary and deceased members ceremony, open discussions, and opportunity to renew friendships and make new ones were important part of the agenda. More than $1000 from the Mass collection was given to Catholic Missions in Canada.

I began my president’s role at the end of the Provincial Convention and established two priorities for my two-year term: leadership development and communication. Much work was done on this during 2018 and this continues in 2019.

On September 22th we joined with the Knights of Columbus for the Annual Rosary and Pilgrimage to the Canadian Martyrs, held yearly at St. Peter’s Church in Seven Mile Bay. After a very meaningful service, refreshments were served in the basement. Money collected during the Mass was donated to Birthright.

We held two very successful fall conferences: September 29 at St. Patrick’s in Fort Augustus and October 13 at St. Mary’s Holy Family in Kensington. Sixty members attended each of these fall conferences. Members enjoyed presentations on cancer and mental health, euthanasia, and mental health. We were very fortunate that Alex Schadenburg from the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition was on the Island in late September and he gave a powerful presentation on euthanasia. Members were brought up to date on the new CWL strategic plan: the core purpose, core values, mission statement, envisioned future, the goals, critical issues, strategies and objectives that will guide our work in the future and assure a continued and more vibrant Catholic Women’s League.

Our 33 local council Presidents across Prince Edward Island are part of our Provincial Council Executive and they were invited to attend either the November meeting in Kinkora or the January meeting in Charlottetown. An important part of the agenda was the leadership workshop where these topics were covered: The Leader in You and Discerning a Call to Service.

Communications is an important part of The Catholic Women’s League. Emails and letters were sent often to local Presidents and Executive members to keep them current on initiatives, events, critical issues, etc. Each Executive member calls three Presidents to find out if they have any concerns or need any help. We also sent out communiques in August, November and February; each of our Executive members prepares a communique on their position or standing committee. We circulated a newsletter in December which highlighted activities happening in our councils across PEI. I encourage members to also check our Provincial website and the national website as well for valuable resources.

Some Executive members and I had the opportunity to attend many local councils’ special anniversary celebrations this year in Corpus Christi, St. Lawrence/St. Theresa, St. Felix, St. Cuthbert’s, St. Paul’s and St. Peter’s, Seven Mile Bay. Our CWL members are so proud of their local councils’ history and their contributions “To God and Canada”.

Members remained active in parish life as well as within the community and further afield. They generously shared financially, giving to local hospitals, hospice/palliative care, food banks, St. Vincent de Paul, PEI Catholic Girls Bursary, Missions in Canada, Development and Peace, parish youth, needy families, to name a few. Some members wrote letters to their Members of Parliament and the Prime Minister to voice their concern with the attestation requirements for the 2018 Canada Summer Jobs Program, as well as Bill C- 404, An Act to amend the Assisted Human Reproduction Act.

I want to thank Bishop Grecco (Charlottetown) and provincial spiritual advisor Fr. Brian MacDougall for their prayers and guidance. I also thank the Provincial Executive and all members for their continued support and friendship. May Our Lady of Good Counsel continue to bless members and the League.

Shirley Pierce

Provincial President