



# The Catholic Women's League of Canada

## ALBERTA MACKENZIE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

### CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE ANNUAL REPORT 2013

The following report is a compilation of all the work we have accomplished over the past year.

#### MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

Daily prayers and Masses are offered for marriage and family life during this often stressful time. Councils offer crucifixes and religious articles to mark significant wedding anniversaries. At least one council honored a specific couple on World Marriage Day. Many councils are involved in marriage preparation courses, engaged encounter and marriage encounter weekends as well as Retrouvaille.

Councils also support crisis support centres. Many councils participated in the National Pornography Hurts Postcard Campaign. Councils held discussions on Human Trafficking concerns. Many councils host special events in their parishes such as parish suppers, Fathers' day brunch and family movie night among other events. Councils give gifts and/or meals to families with new babies. Visits and prayers for families experiencing illness or in palliative care are ongoing. To help with spiritual growth, women's wellness weekends, retreats and financial help is offered to Familia which allows women to grow in spirituality. One council reports offering a Mothers' Morning Out for many years. Another council developed a family retreat that included children 12 and older. Parents and youth are encouraged to attend sacramental preparation together and parents stay for the class and attend all retreats. Councils keep members informed about the Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF). Many councils report giving financial support to families in need; some have a free clothing bank for needy families and many, many councils reported financial and physical support for families during the floods in Alberta in June of this year. Prayers were also offered for these victims. Financial support is also provided to MaterVCAre International and Natural Family Planning organizations.

#### SANCTITY OF LIFE

Councils continue to work diligently in support of the sanctity of life. They offer prayers, novenas and candlelight vigils. Many councils report keeping current with issues concerning abortion, pre-natal screening for sex selection and euthanasia and wrote letters to their members of parliament on these issues, as well as petitions have been circulated regarding amending Section 223 of the Criminal Code to have a proper definition of a human being. One council donated a Nativity Scene to the Festival of Trees in support of Palliative Care and another council attended the Alberta Progressive Conservative Convention in Calgary in October to make pro-life issues known. CWL met with representatives of Covenant Health to assist in planning for Angel's Cradle, a last resort for parents who feel they cannot keep their newborn babies. Councils participate in March for Life, 40 Days for Life, Defund Abortion Rally and pray outside abortion clinics. They also walk and carry posters on Respect for Life Sunday, sell Mother's Day roses and share information from the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition. Members are encouraged

to attend the Project Rachel concert. Councils hold memberships in pro-life organizations and provide financial support to these groups as well as to the Catholic Near East Welfare Association.

#### MINISTRY TO YOUTH, DISABLED, SENIORS, WIDOWED, SEPARATED, DIVORCED Youth

Councils provide Bibles, pins, corsages, awards and scholarships to mark receiving of sacraments, achievement in academic and religious programs and graduations. Members assist with Children's Liturgy and Sacrament preparation and one council has a Student Encouragement Fund for students who go on retreats or pursue education for personal spiritual growth, another had a special speaker for the invited youth at their prayer breakfast and yet another has developed a Saints of the Month newsletter, encouraging youth to look at their patron saints as their role model as well as for guidance and inspiration. Councils donate to breakfast programs at local Catholic Elementary/Junior High schools and sometimes provide clothes for students who may require them during the school day. Members act as leaders for the Catholic Girls League and are involved in other youth groups in their community. Support is also given to Catholic camps, NET ministries, Teen-Ed and pilgrims to World Youth Day in Brazil.

#### Seniors and Disabled

Councils take communion weekly to seniors at the local seniors lodge, provide large print missalets and attend Mass at the lodge. Many councils have Prayer Shawl ministries and give these to sick members of their parish. Councils provide transportation to community members when necessary, send sympathy, get well and Christmas cards and cookie baskets, in addition to financial aid to sick, shut-ins and bereaved in the community. An honour guard is provided for deceased members and councils cater and serve funeral lunches. Many members volunteer at seniors' homes and hospitals as well as with Meals on Wheels. Some of the different services provided included providing a wheelchair for a disabled person; a seniors drop-in once a month; a birthday party for seniors in January; and, one council reported meeting at the seniors lodge to allow older members to attend meetings.

#### VOCATIONS

Councils pray each Sunday at Mass as well as at meetings for an increase in vocations. A Spiritual Bouquet was sent to the former National Spiritual Advisor on the completion of his term. Councils adopt a seminarian and pray for him and give financial support when possible. Other councils report providing transportation for their priest when necessary, inviting the parish priest to share meals with members, hold food drives for priests and religious. Councils volunteer at reception/dinner for priests of the diocese before the Chrism Mass. Most councils report giving a financial gift to their spiritual advisor/parish priest.

I congratulate everyone on continuing our work for God and Canada and supporting the concept of human life from conception to death. It is amazing how much work we can accomplish with God's help. "Be the hands and feet of Jesus" is a concept we obviously believe in and strive to obey.

*Shirley H.*

Christian Family Life Chairperson  
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council