



Facilitated by Providence School of
Transformative Leadership and Spirituality
at Saint Paul University (Ottawa)

Inaugural Cohort 2018

The Catholic Women's Leadership Foundation Board is honoured to announce the inaugural cohort 2018. Fourteen outstanding, talented women from across Canada will form for the class for the first Certificate program in Catholic Women's Leadership developed in partnership with Saint Paul University's Providence School of Transformative Leadership and Spirituality.

Thank you to all the inspiring women who applied for the program. The Foundation was humbled to have a pool of women diverse in age, experience and education from all parts of Canada who demonstrated strong Catholic values and lives of faith in service.

Ottawa, ON



Amanda Achtman lives in Ottawa, Ontario. She studied political science at the University of Calgary in her home province of Alberta, Canada. She recently completed a master's degree in philosophy at the Catholic University of Lublin in Poland. Being raised in an interfaith Jewish-Catholic family motivated her to defend freedom of conscience and religion while encouraging serious and respectful engagement with theological differences. Study trips to Germany, Poland, and Rwanda prompted her to wonder: "If dehumanization is at the core of genocide, then what does it mean to humanize humanity?"

This question led her to the humanizing philosophy of John Paul II. She spent two years tracing the steps of Poland's many saints, heroes, and martyrs while writing a thesis on John Paul II's understanding of responsibility in the light of noble lives who exemplified living in truth.

Amanda has coordinated grassroots campaigns to promote fundamental freedoms and civic responsibility through journalism, politics, advocacy, crowdfunding, videos, and events. She has participated in programs hosted by: the Acton Institute, the Tertio Millennio Seminar on the Free Society, the Hildebrand Project, and the Philos Project. She was a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Citizenship Medal and is grateful for every opportunity to contribute toward creating a more human culture.

Dartmouth, NS



Catherine Camp lives in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. She has attained her Bachelor of Commerce degree along with her Fellowship in Risk Management and Certificate in Human Resource Management. She is currently a Risk Manager with Bell Canada. She is involved with Girls Guides Canada as a Guide Leader and is the current Deputy District Commissioner for Colby District. At her parish she is the Chair of the Liturgy Committee and is active as a Mass Coordinator, on the Finance Committee, a Eucharistic Minister, a “Living Your Strengths” facilitator, a member of the CWL, Parish Pastoral Renewal Team and is a Religious Education Teacher for the past 22 years.

She says about herself “as a leader with Girl Guides I am fortunate to be a mentor to many young girls. I enjoy pushing them to learn new skills as well as encouraging and assuring them that they can indeed be anything they want while still being true to themselves. I like to be an example to the girls that you don’t have to change who you are to fit in and that they can indeed make a difference in the community and the world simply by being themselves”.

Fredericton, NB



Marlita Chase lives in Fredericton, New Brunswick. She is the Church Secretary at St. Dunstan and Holy Family Parishes. As a volunteer she has been involved in the New Brunswick Breast Cancer Network as a Board Member and Volunteer; member of the CWL; member of the Chalmers Hospital Spiritual Care Team and a Knitters Group. She attended the Atlantic Business College and completed the Business program in 1983. Since that time, she has been successfully employed in Administration, Secretarial, Clerical and Bookkeeping fields. These studies lead to a variety of opportunities to work with many Provincial Departments, Health, Supply and Service, Justice and Elections in New Brunswick.

Her Pastor, Father Bill Brennan says the following about Marlita. “She is a quiet leader. She can take on projects and move them forward to completion. She is highly respected among the parishioners and those she works with. This program will give her an excellent opportunity to enhance this “leadership” part of herself”.

Simcoe, ON



Courtney Duckworth lives in Simcoe, Ontario. She is the Program Supervisor at the Dalhousie Place Supervised Access Centre for Haldimand and Norfolk. She has a BA in Community Development. She has worked for the Norfolk Association of Community Living; as an Educational Assistant at the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic

District School Board; Volunteer head Cook at the Soup Kitchen and KinCare Family for Children's aid Society of Haldimand and Norfolk.

Courtney says of herself: "Strong feelings of empathy and concern are something that I choose to turn into, as St. Teresa of Calcutta would say, "love in action" in my community. I have spent the last 10 years of my life working with people in many capacities, I have been an Educational Assistant, a Personal Support Worker and currently I work with families experiencing divorce and separation. All of these positions have opened my eyes to the many struggles people encounter every day. It has made me extremely grateful for the blessings God has bestowed upon me and has motivated me to continually strive to better my church and wider community."

Ottawa, ON



Melodie Gabriel lives in Ottawa. She has post-secondary education and is currently a Development Officer with CNEWA Canada (Catholic Near East Welfare Association). This charity has been a lifeline for the poor throughout the Middle East, Northeast Africa, India and Eastern Europe for 90 years. Founded by Pope Pius XI in 1926, and under the guidance of Pope Francis, CNEWA works for, through and with the Eastern Catholic churches to identify needs and implement solutions providing humanitarian and pastoral support.

From 2009 to 2014, she was one of the leaders of "Duc in Altum" which is a young adult ministry of the Salesian Sisters. She is a spiritual director for young women and has volunteered in the pastoral care team at her parish. She is a member of the CWL; Association of Fundraising Professionals; Spiritual Directors Apostolate in Ottawa; and is an alumnus of NET (National Evangelization Teams), who served as a missionary and staff member in Canada.

Melodie in her essay states: "When I was younger, I was quiet, shy and introverted, so I didn't see myself as a leader. However, over time I've learned that I, too, can be a leader. I've had mentors who had confidence in me – and that helped me to gain confidence in myself. Also, after reading the book "Quiet" by Susan Cain, it reaffirmed for me that introverts can be good leaders too. Speaking in front of hundreds of women at CWL National Conventions is something I never would have dreamed of in the past, but the Lord has given me the grace to do it."

Edmonton, AB



Clare Ganton lives in Edmonton, Alberta. She has post-secondary education with a Master's in Religious Education. She is currently the Director of Faith Life and Religious Education for St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic School Division based in Leduc, Alberta. She is an RCIA team leader, lector and music minister in her parish. In 2015 and 2017, she was a cast member in two musicals, "Mary's Veil" and "The Lost Apostle", which ran as fundraisers for the West Sturgeon Aging in Place

Foundation. She is currently the president of the Alberta Religious Educators Network, a member of the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta wellness resource development group, and a member of the Edmonton Archdiocese Ecumenical Advisory Committee.

In her essay she states, “As a Catholic teacher who has worked mostly with high school students in my classroom career, I am often challenged by students on the role of women in the Church which they see as being very restrictive. It is always my goal to help students see the beauty of the Church’s teachings on women, on leadership, and on service. I believe programs like the one you are beginning will help our entire Catholic community come to a deeper understanding of the importance of the female voice and the strengths that female leaders can bring to our Church and larger society.”

Whitehorse, YT



Sue Harding lives in Whitehorse, Yukon. She has a Master’s in Special Education and is a Learning Assistant Teacher (Special Education). She is the Employment Relations Chairperson and executive member of the Yukon Teachers Association; Chairperson of the negotiations committee; member of the Professional Development planning committee for the Catholic Schools in Whitehorse. She is also the representative of the Yukon Teachers Association on the Teacher Certification Board for Yukon Education; volunteer for Special Olympics, annual food drive, soup kitchen, and first reconciliation program in her parish.

Sue’s reasons for her application are stated in her essay “Canada has become a multi-cultural nation and we need strong educated leaders in our communities to fight against racism and bigotry in all its forms. I believe this program will help to build on my capacity as a leader in my community and help me to develop a communication and leadership style that will give me the confidence to take on new and challenging roles in my community, that I currently feel are out of my comfort zone. I also believe that acquiring more skills as a leader will help me to feel confident in challenging long held beliefs which are creating barriers for those in our communities that are suffering from mental health issues, homelessness and food security problems on a daily basis.”

Richmond, BC



Liza Jose lives in Richmond, BC. She has post-graduate education and is an Associate Director of Information Technology at the University of British Columbia. At her parish community, she is a choir director and an RCIA catechist. She is co-producer and director of “Right Here, Right Now,” an original musical production written by her family, to raise awareness on social issues. The initiative supported the International Missionaries of South Africa Nouvelle Esperance Burundi, parishes in Metro Vancouver and All Saints parish in Hayward California.

Liza states of herself “As a minority woman working in the male-dominated field of information technology (IT), I feel blessed to have had numerous opportunities to grow my career and further my education. Since arriving in Canada as an immigrant in 1995, I have worked 16 years at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in positions that ultimately support teaching, learning and research. In my search of organizations that help uplift women in society, I have found many global initiatives that offer sustainable solutions to challenges women face, most of which are non-Catholic. I am deeply concerned that this presents a challenge to our faith considering that a number of these solutions oppose our Catholic beliefs. I believe that we need to increase female leaders in the Catholic community. Female Catholic leaders will advocate for sustainable solutions to challenges women face that preserve and respect our faith. “

Toronto, ON



Veronica Ljubicic lives in Toronto and has post-secondary education in Communications and Marketing. She is currently working at Jesuit Volunteers Canada and has been volunteering with a group of young women to develop an apostolate for young workers. Previously she was the Associate Director of Young Adult Programs at the Office of Catholic Youth and the Salesian Youth Movement Coordinator at St. Benedict Parish. She is an active member of the Salesian Cooperators and Secretary of the Local Council for the Toronto Centre. She has been eagerly promoting the Magnificat Ministry to Catholic women along with PEV, WOW, DWF and Rotman’s Initiative for Women in Business.

Formerly, she worked at World Vision Canada and did training with Next Level Leadership where she learned “that when women are educated, communities flourish, peace is restored, and families are supported.

Because women are the primary caregivers of children, the sick and elderly, and those with special needs, as well as the majority of workers and volunteers in education, healthcare and social services, it is vital that they be trained well so they can together with men, mentor the next generation of leaders and become more effective teachers of virtue.“

Godfrey, ON



Anne Madden lives in Godfrey, Ontario. She has post-secondary education and is a registered nurse at the Urgent Care Centre, Hotel Dieu Site of the Kingston Health Sciences Centre. She has been a lab and clinical instructor for St. Lawrence College BScN program and is currently a preceptor for 4th year BScN students completing their consolidation in the Urgent Care Centre.

She is a provincial officer in the CWL, currently the provincial president, and past member of the national resolutions committee. She is actively involved in her parish as a lector, server, member of the CWL and parish council finance committee. Her other

affiliations and volunteer activities include the Ontario Nurses Association, Canadian Nursing Association, National Emergency Nurses Association and Emergency Nurse Certification.

Her references state “Anne and I have journeyed together as members of the Ontario Provincial Council of The Catholic Women’s League of Canada for the past ten years. I have come to know Anne well both at the provincial table and personally. She is grounded in her faith. I consider her to be a deeply spiritual woman who lives the Gospel in everything she does. Anne is a woman who readily shares her gifts of leadership in a variety of capacities but most definitely in her workplace. Being a registered nurse in a busy emergency care unit she has mentored many new nurses showing them how to tenderly care for their patients.”

Behchoko, NT



Giselle Marion lives in Behchoko, Northwest Territories, and is currently an Implementation Facilitator, Communication and Special Projects, Tlicho Government. She is a graduate of the University of British Columbia School of Law and is a member of the Northwest Territory Law Association. She volunteers on the Financial Advisory Council of the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Mackenzie Fort Smith; Parish Council, teaches Sunday School and assists with funerals.

Bishop Hagemoen says of Giselle “she is a proactive “servant leader” who loves and demonstrates a life of prayer and spiritual discipline through active support of her own Dene-Tlicho Community and the wider diocese”

Gisele states her reason for her application “I have always found my faith to be a comfort as a child, to adulthood. My comfort came from knowing strong spiritual people. With their guidance I grew up with confidence in myself and my faith. I believe through the program I can enhance my spirituality and emotional intelligence for leadership. In turn I can contribute what I have learned to the peoples of my community, workplace, family and church.”

Brantford, ON



Megan Misner lives in Brantford, Ontario. She has post-secondary education and is a Medical Affairs Coordinator/Research Assistant. She has been a Human Anatomy Outreach Facilitator at the University of Guelph; University of Guelph Catholic Ambassador, Multi-Faith Resources Team; Youth Ministry Leader. She has also been involved in the Peace Committee as Co-Chair which required collaborating with eight campus groups and Chair of the Syrian Refugee Fundraising Committee.

Ania Krysciak, Catholic Campus Minister states in her reference letter that “Megan has a deep faith and a generous spirit. She is always willing to help, and she does so with a smile and a great deal of personal integrity. Megan is straightforward and honest in all her interactions. She deals directly with people, expressing herself in a clear, concise

and non-judgmental way. This is one of her greatest strengths and contributes to her friendly and gentle manner. Megan holds herself to very high personal standards. Having worked with university students for almost 19 years, I notice when a student distinguishes herself. Megan always does. She has that rare ability to see what's needed in any given situation. One quick look in her direction when you need help, and she clues in right away and responds. This is a skill that you cannot teach someone. It's more than just an awareness, it's the perception of a need, the willingness to take the responsibility for it upon oneself, the cognitive ability to figure out what to do, and finally the resolve and know-how to actually do it."

St. John's, NL



Alison Power lives in St. John's, Newfoundland. She has post-secondary education and is the Executive Director of the St. Patrick's Mercy Home, a long-term care facility which is part of the Regional Health Authority, Eastern Health of Labrador and Newfoundland. She is a member of St. Patrick's Mercy Home Board of Directors, Foundation and Auxiliary; Ethics, Mission Effectiveness and Pastoral Care Committees; Regional Senior Leadership Committee; Quality and Safety, Ethics and Resident Family Council.

She states in her essay her reasons for her application as "I have a genuine desire to make a difference in my community and place of work. I continue to receive an overwhelming amount of support and sense of trust from the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy. Their support provides me with the inspiration to embark on learning opportunities that will enhance the education and skills required to fulfill their leadership expectations. "

Summerland, BC



Michelle Robertson lives in Summerland, BC. She has a certificate in Youth Ministry studies and is semi-retired. Michelle has worked in Youth Ministry for the past 25 years, serving as the Campus Ministry Coordinator for St. Thomas Aquinas High School in North Vancouver as well as a parish coordinator. She is the Development and Peace Chairperson for the Diocese of Nelson; volunteered with her students at the "Door is Open" soup kitchen in Vancouver and has travelled with her students on several mission trips. She has served on the Advisory Board for the Office of Justice and Service and the Liturgy Committee for the Archdiocese of Vancouver. In her parish she has served as a lector, catechist, Youth Ministry coordinator, and member of the parish counsel.

Her Department Head in his reference letter states that “Michelle has a strong faith and most importantly a deep, trustful, and tender relationship with our Lord. As our school’s campus minister, Michelle went beyond simply organizing Masses and prayer services. She was one of our spiritual examples of our school and whatever work she was involved in, she was sure to reference her love for Jesus. It was no surprise, therefore, that many of our students flocked to her for spiritual and personal counsel. Hundreds of students will testify that she was one of the reasons why their faith was strengthened. Even to our staff, Michelle did not hide her faith under a bushel basket but rather was transparent, not in a boastful way, but in a sincere and candid way. Michelle was also a role model and she emphatically insisted that all our school programs, sports, arts, and service, had our faith as its unifying and central core. This is because Michelle does not just believe the Gospel in her heart, she understands that Christ has commissioned us to plant and nurture the roots of it so that it can grow in our society and touch the hearts of every person in our world. And whether this work appears hopeful or discouraging, this does not stop her from letting Jesus move her will towards this work, and this is because she loves and trusts Him so very much.”