

CWL National Convention 2018
Winnipeg Manitoba
August 11-15
Judy Look
President –Elect

“There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.” Elie Wiesel Holocaust survivor.

Winnipeg CWL Provincial Council hosted over 600 delegates to the 98th CWL National Convention August 11-15th, 2018. What a wonderful hospitable group of women who greeted us with their smiles, hugs and generous hospitality. Most delegates arrived on Saturday and we were no exception. Registration went smoothly, then a trip around the facilities to get the lay of the land and prepare for our first excursion to the Human Rights Museum. It was a journey through time as we read, listened and thought about the development of our rights and the lack there of when power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. There were many writings on the walls and the one that spoke to me as a woman and a CWL member is at the top of this report. This reflects are story as we work hard for the rights of the people in our country. Often we are not successful but we are faithful to our mission to be of service. I thought of all the letters we have written and visits that we have made only to have the door closed on us but the door slammers know that we are vigilant and we are a voice for the most vulnerable .

Sunday afternoon August 12th called us to the resolutions dialogue with many other delegates from across the country to discuss the resolutions that would come to the business meeting. It gave us another opportunity to meet new women with whom we have a common bond. The following were the four resolutions up for discussion:

- 2018.01 Attestation Requirement on Canada Summer Jobs Program
- 2018.02 Setting a Standard for Products Marketed as Flushable
- 2018.03 Legislate Designation of Hospice/Palliative Care, Free from Medical Assistance in Dying
- 2018.04 Recognize and Legislate Rights of Faith-based Health Care Facilities

Following the dialogue we hopped on buses to St. Boniface Cathedral for the Opening Eucharistic , Opening Ceremonies and Reception. Alberta Mackenzie processed two flags, Alberta and NWT, and it was my honour to process the North West Territories Flag. There is a true sense of community as all the smiling faces greet you and you realize what an amazing group of faith filled women we are from sea to sea to sea. Margaret Ann Jacobs, National President declared the convention open and the reception that followed was wonderful with great food and members getting to know each other.

The next morning, Monday the 13th came early as we had Mass at 8 am followed by the business meeting at 9:15. Margaret Ann Jacobs began the meeting with acknowledging the peoples and lands of Treaty One. We listened to greetings from

the following women's organizations: World Union of Catholic Women Organization (WUCWO) , Ukraine Catholic Women's Organization , Presbyterian Women's Missionary Society, United Church Women Manitoba and NWT and Women's Interchurch Councils of Canada.

Then on to business with the usual presenting of agenda, minutes, roll call, etc. Following that we heard from the Military Ordinariate and Provincial Presidents as they shared the stories of their provinces.

The reports of the national officers followed. The four resolutions mentioned earlier were discussed under the individual officers report . Each resolution had much discussion with amendments being made, voted on, accepted or rejected until the assembly felt they had the best product. The final results will be in the League magazine.

A question arose about Development and Peace. Bishop McGrattan shared that an in depth evaluation of the partners of D&P is being conducted the by CCCB and once that is completed the funds collected will be dispersed either back to councils or forwarded to D&P.

Other Funds collected and dispursed were as follows

Canadian Missions \$37,039.38

Euthanasia Coalition 19,702

Development and Peace 63220.90 (On hold)

CNEWA 16,097.85

Coady Institute 27,719.82

The day ended with the New Life Members service. As a participant in the service it felt very sacramental. The Bishop blessed our hands for service and we signed ourselves with the Holy Water. As the honorary life members held their hands over us we could feel the history of our League and as the membership sang the blessing song we knew and felt the presence of God.

Tuesday, August 14th was workshop day. The morning began with Mass at the St. Mary's Cathedral followed by participating in two of six workshop. The two workshops I attended were Indigenous Issues where members were called to participate in an Indigenous Food Security Blanket Exercise and Homelessness where we had a presentation on a homeless shelter in Winnipeg and how they work at meeting the needs of their clients. Each workshop was ninety minutes long and the Indigenous Issues workshop because it was a three hour workshop squashed into ninety minutes a lot of the experience and information was lost.

Our keynote speaker in the afternoon was Archbishop Murray Chatlain, Archbishop of Keewatin-Le Pas , Manitoba. He presented twice. The first presentation was about reconciliation and the second on discerning what God wants from us.

In the first presentation he asked: "What does reconciliation look like?"

He then proposed three principles that guide the process:

- We are all part of a common humanity
- We all have the capacity to evolve and change
- We all yearn for unity and peace

He then outlined the steps in the process

1. We need to let go of our need to be right
2. We have heartfelt hope that the other will find healing
 - We pray for the other
 - We desire to understand the other
 - Knowledge is the first step in reconciliation
3. We need to be open about recognizing our own darkness
 - There is saint and sinner in each of us
 - Running from dark emotions is what sinks us
4. Patience
 - We need sacred spaces where we are being urged to stand still
 - We need to create spaces of true dialogue

He then posed the question: How can the work of reconciliation apply to us?

To help us with our answer he gave us the following questions which we discussed at our tables

- What fears and prejudices are in us that hold us back from real dialogue?
- Who could you call on to teach you more about the issues?
- What event could you attend to help you grow in your knowledge of the issues?
- What is one practical step that you can make towards greater reconciliation?

Discernment - listening to God to hear what he wants of us was the focus of his second talk. He shared with us the process he uses for himself when needing to make decisions and choices. His process is rooted in Ignatian spirituality.

He suggested to hear God we must **listen slowly**. We must actively work at this. Our ears need to be at God's mouth. In other words we need to read scripture for that's where God uses words. We need to use our gift of intelligence. We need to seek out information, make a list of ideas, consult with people that know us and then make a list of three options. We then bring those options to God and repeat them three times very slowly. Within this we are given the gift of uncertainty as uncertainty keeps us praying to God. The following is what God says to us when we go to Him :

- Let go of all things that dishonor him.
- Let go of our attachments.
- Wait. Don't rush into anything.
- God tells us all will be well.

Wednesday August 15th we continued with our business meeting which included a presentation on the strategic plan. We learned the gathering of information is over;

goals, objectives and a timeline have been set. An implementation team will be formed to get everything moving forward

Velma Harrison, Past Honorary Life member. gave a report from WUWCO as their representative had a heart attack and was unable to attend.

Rita James gave us a report on the Leadership Foundation.

Bishop McGrattan gave his final report and reminded us to stay the course. He then introduced Bishop Jensen the new national spiritual advisor.

Ann Gorman presented the theme for 2019-2020 "Care for our Common Home".

Credentials were presented with a grand total of 683 people attending convention.

Elections took place with the following results

Anne-Marie Gorman – President

Fran Lucas – President –Elect/Organization

Shari Guinta- First Vice President/Spiritual

Doreen Gowans – 2nd Vice President

Janet McLean- Secretary-Treasurer

Margaret Ann Jacobs – Past President/Laws

Pat Deppiesse Christian Family Life

Marie Rackley Community Life

Faith Anderson Education and Health

Cathy Bouchard – Resolutions

Betty Colaneri- Legislation

We had great representation from Alberta and the North West Territories. We were 75 strong at our Alberta-NWT Provincial Dinner Tuesday night. The roll out of the 2019 National Convention on Wednesday had almost all of the 75 participate. The parliamentarian Becky Kallal and guest journalist Cathy Bouchard were both Alberta life members.

Meeting was adjourned following the elections. We headed to St. Mary's Cathedral for the Closing Mass and retiring of flags and all enjoyed the Gala Banquet.

This ends my report

