

**Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council
The Catholic Women's League of Canada**

Education and Health Communiqué #1

Mary H., Chairperson
September 2017



“Inspired by the Spirit; Women Respond to God’s Call”

Greetings! I am Mary H. and I look forward to serving as your Education and Health Chairperson over the next two years. Included with the provincial newsletter you will find some personal information about me and what I hope to accomplish during the next two years on provincial council. The areas of Education and Health are broad in scope and important areas to address in our League service. In the communiqués that I post, I will strive to provide you with information and instruction that will assist you in determining a direction and objectives for this committee in your Diocese and in your councils. There is much information and much to be passionate about. Together, we can respond to God’s Call to make a significant difference in our Alberta Mackenzie communities.

As we begin these two years together I would ask that you:

- Review the responsibilities for our committee as found in the *League’s Executive Handbook*
- Review the objects of the League as found in the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* to ensure that we continue to meet those objects.
- Review the past resolutions relating to Education & Health. The two resolutions pertaining to Education & Health passed at the 2017 National Convention are discussed in this document along with an action plan to pursue with your members.

Please be reminded that the purview for Education & Health Chairs includes the following:

- *Catholic Education*
 - I) Catholic schools and catechesis
 - II) Rites of Christian initiation
- *Literacy and continuing education*
- *Scholarships and bursaries*
- *Wellness and sickness/disease*
- *Environment*
- *Genetics*- this entails monitoring and studying the advantages and disadvantages of such scientific developments in light of the teachings of the Catholic church.

Education

We are called to action...

Municipal Elections 2017: Albertans will be given the opportunity to elect members to their local city and town councils and to serve as **Catholic school board trustees on Monday, October 16th, 2017**. An excellent document that has been put out by ACSTA (Alberta Catholic School Board Trustees Association) offering information and guidelines for prospective trustees which can be found on their website at www.acsta.ab.ca. Please encourage persons that you think would be good trustee candidates to let their names stand for these vital positions.

Plan to host a Trustee Candidates Forum at your church so that parishioners can make an informed choice on Election Day. Some questions that you may want to ask at your gathering are:

1. What is the purpose of Catholic education to you? How does it differ from secular education?
2. Publicly funded Catholic education is constantly under attack in the media and on social media. There are even organizations that are committed to ending public funding of separate school authorities. As a Trustee, what do you envision doing to ensure that the electorate and the government value and preserve publicly funded Catholic education?
3. What do you think are the most important challenges that our District is facing? What do you think the solutions to these challenges are?
4. What do you see as the greatest successes that this District has achieved?
5. As a Catholic Trustee, what do you see to be your role in working with our Diocese/Archdiocese to bring a Catholic perspective and character to the government mandates of publicly funded education?
6. What does Trustee governance in a Catholic school district mean to you?

We are called to promote, protect and preserve Catholic education by supporting our Catholic schools in providing exceptional Catholic education opportunities to Alberta families. Catholic education has a mission to serve as a teaching arm of the Church. At the Opening Ceremonies for our 2017 Alberta Mackenzie Convention, Edmonton Catholic Schools Superintendent Joan Carr stated “I encourage you as councils and as individuals to call and/or email your MLAs and let them know that Catholic education plays a vital role in the formation of the youth in Alberta, and thus in serving our society. Let them know that Catholic education matters, and that Catholic voices are united and strong!”

Each of us is given the vocation to help children and youth to know and to grow in Christ. “We need our Catholic schools to be Catholic – our teachers to embody the faith, our administrators and trustees, through their faith leadership, to show the way of Christ. We need to be Catholic. We need to be different” (reported by ACSTA).

In a paper prepared by Catholic legal counsel, Kevin P. Feehan, QC about ***The Guarantee of Catholic Education*** he concludes by stating “...Catholic denominational school rights are more than formalistic; they are living, breathing and growing in the understanding of the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church.”

In the September issue of **Albertaviews** the cover story is ***Is this the End of Catholic Schools?*** It goes on to stay “The arguments against Catholic public schools are increasingly hard to ignore” For anyone interested, I would be pleased to send you a scanned copy of the four page article.

Alberta Catholic School Board Trustees Association: In early September, I will be meeting with Adriana LaGrange, Chair of ACSTA and their Executive Director, Dean Sarnecki to discuss how the CWL can better understand and support Catholic education in our communities. It is hoped that Alberta Mackenzie Provincial President June Fuller will be able to attend as well and we will report back to you.

Newman Theological College and St. Mary's University: Please look for another communique very soon addressing faith educational opportunities in the province and scholarships and bursaries.

Health

We are called to action...

- **Lyme Disease:** In early August, an email was sent to the Education & Health Chairs in the five Dioceses reminding you to send letters of support regarding Lyme Disease to the two Mothers of children living with Lyme Disease to take with them to their meeting with Federal Minister of Health Jane Philpott. Please look at the optimistic video update posted by these two women about their meeting which you will find at www.change.org/p/minister-philpott-ticking-lyme-bomb-in-canada-fix-canada-s-lyme-action-plan-now

Canadians Concerned About Lyme Disease

AUG 25, 2017 — On August 22, 2017, the Lyme Moms Sue Faber and Jennifer Kravis met with Canadian Federal Health Minister Jane Philpott and Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer at the Public Health Agency of Canada.

We brought and personally delivered 2,700 personal Lyme Letters from Canadians coast to coast (115 lbs!) as well as a bound volume of the 12,000+ Petition comments. We also delivered 30+ years worth of research showing Lyme Disease is passed congenitally from mother to child in utero with many adverse effects.

We look forward to continuing discussions with the Minister's office as well as Public Health to work together to develop solutions to help Canadians. Please see our video update attached.

We are so appreciative of all of you who have written, signed, commented and shared. If you have signed but not yet commented, please go back add a comment. They are so powerful. Share your story about how Lyme has impacted you, or your concerns.

This is just the beginning. Our goal now is to double the number of signatures - let's work together to get 100,000 signatures and comments. The more people sign, the more we can demand serious change to help keep all of our families safe and get the care we all deserve. Thank you!

#LymeHope

- **Physician Assisted Dying & Euthanasia.** See Resolution 2017.04 ***Protection from Coercion of Conscience for Healthcare Professionals***. Physician Assisted Dying & Euthanasia continues to be of great concern and an upcoming communique will provide more updates and information. Resolution appears at the end of this communique. Please find following the web address of an

article you may find of interest <http://www.thevitalbeat.ca/news/medical-assistance-dying-rules-raise-tough-questions-health-professional>

- **Opioid Drugs:** Please see the statement made by the Canadian Conference of Bishops.
- **Child Safety Products.** See Resolution 2017.03 ***Zero-Rated Status Under the Goods and Services Tax Provisions of the Excise Tax Act for Child Safety Products.*** Resolution appears at the end of this communique
- **Prescription Drug Coverage:** In response to the ever-increasing costs associated with prescription drugs should the federal government, like other nations, be forward thinking and look at a plan to purchase drugs at the national level to lower the purchase costs associated with these drugs?
- **Alberta Organ and Tissue Donation Registry:** We hope to review of the legislation pertaining to organ donations and Operator's Licenses in Alberta...should individuals be required to opt out of the program instead of opting in to the donor program?
- **Informed Seniors Living:** Do you know what a **Green Sleeve** is? We will provide you with the information you need to prepare one. A Green Sleeve folder contains important information that follows you as you move through the health care system.
- **Angel's Cradle:** In 2013 Angel's Cradles were set up at the Grey Nuns Community Hospital and the Misericordia Community Hospital in Edmonton. This is a service that allows a mother who does not want her baby to return the baby safely and anonymously to a hospital. I have contacted Covenant Health who advised that to date this service has not been used.
- **Genetics:** An unprecedented in scope autism study has been launched with Google involving 10,000 individuals and their families that enables researchers around the globe to collaborate. Did you know that 1 in 68 children are now being diagnosed with a form of autism? More information to follow.
- **Mental Health & Addictions:** More Canadians are aware of support available for themselves and loved ones which is a positive step forward. The Lieutenant Governor's Circle for Mental Health & Addictions was established in Alberta to recognize the individuals and programs that are making a difference in our communities.

Environment

We are reminded during **The Season of Creation which falls between September 1 - October 4** (Feast of St Francis of Assisi) that it is a time when **Christians around the world are asked to pray and care for creation.** World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation

Pope Francis declared September 1 as World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation in 2015 and celebrated a special Liturgy of the Word in St. Peter's Basilica to mark its first occurrence. The Orthodox Church has commemorated the Day since 1989.

Pope Francis released a special statement for the occasion: ***"Christians or not, as people of faith and goodwill, we should be united in showing mercy to the earth as our common home and cherishing the world in which we live as a place for sharing and communion"***.

In the letter instituting the Day for the Catholic Church, Pope Francis said, “The annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation offers to individual believers and to the community a precious opportunity to renew our personal participation in this vocation as custodians of Creation, raising to God our thanks for the marvelous works that He has entrusted to our care, invoking His help for the protection of creation and his mercy for the sins committed against the world in which we live.” (from Vatican Radio) Please find following a link to the video of the Pope’s address:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/2/?ui=2&ik=19d59efeef&view=att&th=15e3368656f7cfc&attid=0.1&disp=safe&realattid=1577164238429880320-local0&zw>

For more information and ideas for celebration visit the website: [seasonofcreation .org](http://seasonofcreation.org) or visit the Catholic Global Climate website

- **Water Quality**

Did you know that Canadians have the second highest per capita water consumption among G7 countries... what are we doing with all that water? An average Canadian household uses about 26,500 litres of water per month. We will explore this in future communiques.

It has been said that the wars of the future will be fought over water. Each one of us can find ways to conserve water resources used in our household for drinking, bathing, cleaning, gardening and though our use of electricity which may come from hydro-electricity generation.

- **Air Quality**

- Announcement of \$40 Million for Technology Research for Methane Reduction in Alberta. An example of an approved project is ZKO Oilfield Industries who received \$2.8 million in funding to demonstrate an in-pipe turbine generator that uses flowing gas to generate electricity, which is then used to power chemical injection pumps, eliminating a large source of methane venting in natural gas production.
- You may ask why the fuss... well methane is a huge component of natural gas. It also happens to be super potent for the atmosphere with 84 times the global warming potential as carbon dioxide over a 20 year period and Alberta generates a lot of methane from oil and gas activities. Let your MLAs know that you consider this a valuable investment in protecting the air we breathe.

- **Climate Leadership**

- \$35 Million has been set aside for First Nations and Metis communities in Alberta to fund various programs including the Alberta Indigenous Solar Program, Alberta Indigenous Energy Efficiency Retrofit Program, Alberta Indigenous Green Employment Program and Alberta Indigenous Community Energy Audits Program
- School Rooftop Solar Program. In response to suggestions made by students, \$9 Million is being invested in rooftop solar programs. Schools often have sizable roofs. They also consume a significant amount of electricity each day to generate enough lighting, heat and air conditioning to create comfortable learning conditions.

HEALTH & EDUCATION RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE 2017 NATIONAL CONVENTION:

2017.03 Zero-Rated Status Under the Goods and Services Tax Provisions of the Excise Tax Act for Child Safety Products

Whereas, the cost of child safety products listed in the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act is subject to the goods and services tax provisions of the Excise Tax Act; and

Whereas, the federal government has the authority to identify certain goods and services as being zero-rated for the goods and services tax; therefore, be it

Resolved, that national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in 97th annual national convention assembled urge the federal government to grant zero-rated status for regulated child safety products under the goods and services tax provisions of the Excise Tax Act.

Action Plan

1. Write letters to the federal government requesting the removal of the federal portion of tax from child safety products.
2. Invite a guest speaker to educate members on the requirements for the child safety Products.
3. Hold a fundraiser for a local young mothers group to purchase safety products for those in need.
4. Study the list of products in the Canada Safety Act and ascertain if any other products should be listed as well.
5. Educate the public on the provincial rebate for child safety products.
6. Continue to monitor this issue.

2017.04 Protection from Coercion of Conscience for Healthcare Professionals

Whereas, under the Criminal Code of Canada, healthcare professionals do not have protection from being coerced into referring for, or performing procedures that are in opposition to their charter rights of freedom of conscience and religion; and

Whereas, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognizes and upholds the right of conscience, religion, thought and belief of all citizens, including healthcare professionals; therefore, be it

Resolved, that national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in 97th annual national convention assembled urge the federal government to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to be consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by making it an offence to coerce healthcare professionals into referring for, or performing procedures that are in opposition to their charter rights of freedom of conscience and religion.

Action Plan

1. Write to the Prime Minister and Attorney General with copies to your local member of parliament urging them to make it an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada for healthcare professionals to be coerced into performing or referring patients for procedures that are in opposition to their conscience.
2. Educate members and the community on the importance of healthcare professionals' right of conscience.
3. Find ways to support healthcare workers who will not perform procedures that are in opposition to their conscience.

I invite you to contact me with any information, ideas or questions that you might have pertaining to Education, Health & the Environment so that inspired by faith, together, we can make a difference in our Alberta Mackenzie communities...

For God and Canada,

Mary Hunt, Standing Committee Chair
Education & Health
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council
The Catholic Women's League of Canada