

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council
Spiritual Development Communiqué #3 – October 2016

The Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy is slowly coming to an end. I hope many of you were able to make a pilgrimage to a Holy Door and if not there is still time. I believe Pope Francis initiated this extraordinary year as a wake-up call reminding us that we are to be people of mercy; a people who are quick to recognize the needs of others and act upon them. He also gave us this gift to remind us that we are sinners and we are in need of mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation. The call to pilgrimage was to give us an opportunity to examine our own lives and make the necessary adjustments in our relationship with God and with others .

This year was our first cup of tea. We were reintroduced to what it means to be a person of mercy and as we begin to sip our second cup of tea we are now called to make mercy come alive in our hearts, our homes and our councils.

The easiest way to do this is by giving life to our Sacraments. As you all know a sacrament is an outward sign, instituted by Christ to give grace. When we examine this definition we see that it is not to be only an event happening in the confines of our church buildings, but a way of life. Our lives are to be that outward sign to everyone we meet and through that encounter they should feel the presence of Christ. As we begin to sip our second cup of tea, let's make Eucharist our focal point. Let us begin to see Eucharist as two fold ... the big "S" sacrament when we go to celebrate Mass at the church ... the small "s" sacrament as we live it out in our daily lives.

The big "S" sacrament Eucharist (Thanksgiving) is the gathering of God's family at the altar or the table in the Church where we listen to God through the words of Jesus and his apostles; we eat His food, His body and blood, and we become what we eat so that we can leave the Church to help build his kingdom.

The small "s" sacrament is when the family of God lives, works and plays outside of the church building – when they gather for meals at home, have coffee with friends, have lunch with co-workers. As Jesus shares His story through the Gospels at Mass, let us share our stories with each other at these various tables. Let us make our meals a small "s" sacrament as we remind ourselves that God is ever present and we call on Him in a special way to bless us and our food (sometimes in the silence of our hearts). Let us listen carefully to each other's stories as God speaks to us through them. Let us be prepared to have tables of peace so forgiveness is necessary ... no unkind words, criticisms or gossip. Let us use these tables to build up one another so we can be sustained not only by food but also by the emotional and spiritual support of one another. As we finish these meals, let us give thanks to God for all of our gifts. Let us remind ourselves that soon we will be joining the greater church family on Sunday where we will "live" the big "S" Sacrament by listening to God's words and sharing in

His body and blood and leaving there to become what we eat. The following quote taken from the National Spiritual Development Chair Communique #1 illustrates what it means to give life to our sacraments by living them daily:

"I leave you with the following quotes from His Holiness, Pope Francis on the occasion of the ordination of St. Teresa of Calcutta. May she continue to be a guide for the world.

'Today, I pass on this emblematic figure of womanhood and of consecrated life to the whole world of volunteers: May she be your model of holiness!

She was committed to defending life, ceaselessly proclaiming that 'the unborn are the weakest, the smallest, the most vulnerable.'

For Mother Teresa, mercy was the salt which gave flavor to her work, it was the light which shines in the darkness of the many who no longer had tears to shed for their poverty and suffering.'

May Our Lady of Good Counsel guide us,
Jacqueline N.

The Month of November – Memorial for Deceased Members

Most councils who have deceased members have some form of Memorial Service which they use in their council. I have posted to the provincial website <www.cwl.ab.ca/Prayers.html> a Memorial Service for Deceased Members that I adapted from the national website. You may want to look at it and use it this year. One important aspect of it is sharing stories of our deceased members. It is important that we keep their memories alive.

Action:

Use the new annual reporting form as a guide to your Spiritual Development Programs

Check out the Provincial and National websites for updates from this standing committee.

Check out the Diocesan Websites for the latest activities that your members might like to attend.

Read *Amoris Laetitia – The Joy of Love* – the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis that Father Penna talked about at the CWL Provincial Convention. It is important that we become familiar with our church teachings so that we can integrate them into our sacramental way of life.

Have a very Christ-centred month.

Judy L.

CWL ABMK Spiritual Development Standing Committee Chairperson

Retreat Houses in Alberta

Most of these retreat houses have presentations on current topics so please check out their websites.

FCJ CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTRE

Website: <www.fcjsisters.ca/fcjcentre/retreats.htm>

Order: N/A **Phone:** 403-228-4215

Location: 219 – 19th Avenue SW, Calgary, AB T2S 0C8

Distances: Calgary – 2 km / Edmonton – 300 km / St. Paul – 492 km

Retreat Types: Private, Directed, Guided

MOUNT ST. FRANCIS RETREAT CENTRE

Website: <www.mountstfrancis.ca/>

Order: Franciscan **Phone:** 403-932-2012

Location: Box 430, Cochrane, AB T4C 1A6

Distances: Calgary – 42 km / Edmonton – 337 km / St. Paul – 528 km

Retreat Types: Private, Guided

SANCTUM RETREAT

Website: <www.sanctumretreat.ca/>

Order: N/A **Phone:** 403-722-3101

Location: Box 550, Caroline, AB T0M 0M0

Distances: Calgary – 174 km / Edmonton – 232 km / St. Paul – 423 km

Retreat Types: Private, Guided

PROVIDENCE RENEWAL CENTRE

Website: <www.providencerenewal.ca/>

Order: Sisters of Providence **Phone:** 780-430-9491

Location: 3005 – 119 Street NW, Edmonton, AB T6J 5R5

Distances: Edmonton – 13 km / St. Paul – 211 km / Calgary – 291 km

Retreat Types: Guided, Private

STAR OF THE NORTH

Website: <www.starofthenorth.ca/programs.html>

Order: N/A **Phone:** 780-459-5511

Location: 3A St. Vital Avenue, St. Albert, AB T8N 1K1

Distances: Edmonton – 16 km / St. Paul – 190 km / Calgary – 320 km

Retreat Types: Guided

WAY OF HOLINESS

Website: <www.wayofholiness.net/>

Order: N/A **Phone:** 780-865-4055

Location: Hinton, AB T7V 1Y4

Distances: Edmonton – 287 km / Calgary – 528 km / St. Paul – 464 km

Retreat Types: Private, Guided, Directed, Group