

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council
Spiritual Development Oral Report
Convention 2016 - June 4, 2016

This past year, I have had the opportunity to get to know the Alberta landscape as 148 names were entered into the *Book of Life*. I also had the opportunity to be introduced to new saints as I discovered how different the dioceses were in choosing names for their churches. Of course St. Mary, St. Joseph and Sacred Heart are very common, but other than those, the dioceses are a virtual who's-who of saints.

Spiritual Development Chairs have been called to have a new focus since Pope Francis has come on the scene. He has challenged all of us to see our religion as a Way of Life - one that we live 24/7. This challenge has come to us in three documents: the apostolic exhortation *Joy of the Gospel*, the encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the proclamation of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy.

All three are a must read for spiritual development chairs as well as all members of the League if we are going to grow in faith and become evangelizers.

The CWL theme *One Heart, One Voice, One Mission* has embraced Pope Francis' call to evangelize. It too calls us to have a relationship with God and each other. It has asked us to be **One Heart** which is the heart of mercy and compassion, speak with **One Voice** which is the voice of Christ, and have **One Mission** that is building the kingdom of God.

The strength of our committee is prayer and it is the foundation under all other committees of the League, and so our spiritual development chairs call our members to pray The most recent request of us to engage our members in prayer was in the 12 Hour Vigil for Palliative Care and I report that at least 16 councils organized vigils.

Pope Francis wants each one of us to strengthen our prayer life in order to strengthen our relationship with God, so he has invited all of us to make a pilgrimage to one of the Holy Doors in our area. To go through a Holy Door means we have reflected on our life, acknowledged that we are sinners in need of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, come to the table to be nourished with His body and blood, and once through the Holy Door, to go out and tell our story with great joy.

Pope Francis wants us to remember that Christ built his church on relationships. Often we hear that the first Christians were called People of the

Way because they lived a different way of life, a life that had relationship at its core. They didn't care about their numbers ... they told their story ... and when people heard the story and saw how that story had changed their lives, they wanted to be part of it.

The next year my plan is to promote our relationship with Christ through living the sacraments. The Sacraments are a gift to us and they are to be lived. Yes we celebrate them in our Churches but how do we live them 24/7. The Sacraments are the visible face of all the works of mercy; they are an outward sign of Christ bringing His presence to what we do. When we consciously bring His presence, we change, because his presence brings great joy. We need to be people of joy if we are to convince others that God is alive and well, and that he lives deep inside of us.

In conclusion, I want all of us to remember that this is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it - because we are called to be part of the greatest story ever told ... the story that God loves us in spite of our sinfulness and He wants to walk hand in hand with us as we work out our faith journey through The Catholic Women's League of Canada.

This ends my report.

Judy L.