



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



**Christian Family Life Chair
Health & Education Chair
Community Life Chair
Joint Communiqué
November, 2021**

TO: Diocesan Christian Family Life; Health & Education; Community Life Chairpersons, Diocesan Presidents
CC: Provincial Executive (for information)
CC: National Chairperson of Christian Family Life; Health & Education; Community Life (for information)
FROM: Celine Berlinguette, Provincial Chairperson of Christian Family Life
Gerda Hazenberg, Provincial Chairperson of Health & Education
Theresa Hickey, Provincial Chairperson of Community Life

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, teaches us the following:

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” John 10:10

The CWL is working on a renewed purpose under the three foundational pillars of Faith, Service, and Social Justice. The central focus of our lives is our **faith**. As baptized children of God, our faith sets the parameters for our lives. In this, second of three communiques, I would like to discuss with you the effects of video gaming on health and wellness.

Celine Berlinguette, our Provincial Chairperson of Christian Family Life, quoted the following in the first communique: “To have healthy families there needs to be a balance in activities.” When individuals, from young children to seniors, spend excessive time in front of a screen, that balance is very much disturbed and can lead to several unhealthy consequences. Obesity is one of those consequences. Childhood obesity is on the rise. One in four Canadian adults are currently living with obesity (<https://health-infobase.canada.ca>). Our bodies are made for moving and doing. We are called to live our lives with our whole being, not just our minds. Wholesome living is active living.

Mental health, rising substance abuse and suicide rates are currently very much in the news. Loneliness and social isolation have impacted our seniors, who are denied visitors, as well as our children, who could not play with their classmates. The pandemic with all the anxiety, losses and restrictions on our daily lives, as well as the changing economy which includes job losses and a higher cost of living, have

impacted our mental capacities. These numerous anxieties increase tensions within our families and could be filtered down to even very young children.

How are we to deal with all these pressures within our families? Is escapism an answer? Video gaming offers us an escape from the realities of daily life. We can immerse ourselves into a virtual reality. However, often these virtual realities are filled with violence and death. How is this going to help us deal with actual life realities? Would our time not be better spent in prayer, learning more about our faith, meditation and quiet reflection? How about going for a hike with other people or family members? Physical activity has a huge potential to enhance our wellbeing. Even a short burst of 10 minutes' brisk walking increases our mental alertness, energy and positive mood. Participation in regular physical activity can increase our self-esteem and can reduce stress and anxiety. (www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

Wellness involves the physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects of our being.

During this pandemic technology has proven to be a wonderful gift to our society. People learned to communicate within families, workplaces, and educational settings in so many ways. Our screens have become classrooms, churches, offices and family gatherings. However, screens cannot replace physical movement or social interaction.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:2

As Catholics, we are asked to live our lives with courage and the certainty that God is with us every step, every day of our lives. Let us not be distracted by engaging in activities on our devices but let us remain focused on the reality that we are indeed children of God.

Stay tuned for Part 3 which will discuss the effects of video gaming on Community Life!