



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



**Christian Family Life Chair
Health & Education Chair
Community Life Chair
Joint Communiqué
December 15, 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

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” – Matthew 25:35-36

What a perfect example of Christian Community Life! Jesus, during his ministry on earth set the stage for us and He would not ask us to do anything that we are unprepared for. That is why each of us has been equipped with special gifts from God to share with others, in our homes, in our churches, and in our communities. How we choose to use our gifts is up to each one of us however we should not forget the reason why we received them.

As we reflect on the past, society has witnessed a multitude of changes, from the industrial revolution, space travel to the “Technological Revolution”. Our governments have promoted and supported innovation. They have also provided their populous with social programs to ensure all citizens receive their basic needs. This has given us ample time for other activities such as entertainment, sports, recreational activities which includes gaming.

The inventions and social programs were created to make life easier for all people. But with the changes, what has happened to Christian Community Life? At one time social programs were provided by the church and community. It seems that we are drifting farther and farther away from the Christian understanding of community, and furthermore, our parishes and Catholic organizations are not immune to this drifting.

When we think back on the history of the Catholic Women’s League in Alberta Mackenzie, we have to admire the work that Katherine Hughes did for the immigrant women that were coming into Edmonton. She provided them with food, shelter, and clothing and helped them get employment. Unforgettable work was done by incredible women of faith with strong beliefs in social justice and service. Ardis Beaudry Honorary Life Member and one of our own, was a woman of strong faith who advocated for women throughout her life. She was very dedicated to the Catholic Women’s League and was a founding member of WIN house, and was involved in the sheltering movement for over twenty years, providing safe haven for victims of domestic violence. Isn’t that what is requested of us?

In today's society, where everything seems to be provided for those in need, and we do not worry about having to help anyone because others will do it, what has happened to our sense of community? Christian community begins in our baptism when we are welcomed into the family of the church. Our first experience is our family where we are nurtured, we learn to relate and we learn to love. In this community we grow in our faith witnessed to us by our parents and we soon realize that we are to be active participants by taking responsibility for the community. In our earlier years we are in formation learning about God and what it means to be a child of God. We learn that our sole reason for existence is to love and serve God and end up with Him in eternal life. As parents we are called to pass on our faith to our children so they too can be formed and begin to live an authentic Christian life.

We also learn that this community extends beyond the doors of our homes. Part of the community is our church where we again are nurtured, learn to relate, and learn to love. As in our homes where we have learned responsibility we soon see that the church community requires the same care. Members are called to be active participants by giving of their time and talent. We are called to play a role in its well being such as a choir member, Eucharistic minister, or a member of one of the many groups, all that are vital to the life of the Church. From the moment of our baptism we are called to live in a Christian Community.

Although media has always influenced family life, parents still have the final say on what to read and what to watch, whether it be on TV or movies. But today with the availability of technology it is often too much to stay on top of everything. Because of this there appears to be more emphasis on our living and conforming to a secular society than there is on living as a child of God. God is somehow lost in the busyness of our lives. Vocations have taken second place to careers, sacraments have taken second place to activities; formation is put on the back burner and the needs of the community have taken second place to the needs of the individuals and there just is not enough time to have a day of "rest".

As human beings our dignity and worth comes from being a child of God, but to understand that, we need to have a place where that is nurtured. It needs to be a place where formation can take place...the kind of formation that focuses on the human and not the machine. It needs to be a place where person to person communication takes place; where ideas are shared and healthy debate occurs. It needs to be a place where God is very present in words and actions. This place is called HOME! This place then reaches out to the church and school with the same sense of purpose...when all of that is addressed then a bit of society can creep in.

Activities such as gaming, social media, television and other sources of entertainment can be part of it as long as everyone knows that it is an activity that you chose to participate in and not your whole essence of being.

As quoted in the first and second part of this three part communiqué: "To have healthy families there needs to be a balance in activities." Those activities include the physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects of our being. We need to be intentional in our daily lives in both our family and community. Our day needs to be rooted in faith, service and social justice.