



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



**PRESIDENT
Communique #9
DATE: November 1, 2021**

TO: Diocesan Chairpersons
CC: Provincial Executive (for information)
CC: National President (for information)
FROM: Judy Look, President Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

Vote

My dear sisters it's time we have a chat while enjoying a cup of tea and reflecting on the League. Many things have happened since our last chat. Presently our councils are busy with in person or virtual meetings; all are gearing up for membership drives and annual reporting and apart from a few councils who have voted on the notice of motions councils are engaging in debate on yes and no votes. Members are called to examine the Catholic Women's League through the lens of the national executive notice of motions. We as individual members through the voting process at the council level will decide the future of the League.

For several years the members believed the League needed to be updated to respond to the current reality of the times. In 2017 as a response to the concerns the national executive held a town hall meeting with the result being a 5-year strategic plan to address the issues of the membership and the future of the League. Members were recruited to develop a plan and more members were recruited into working groups to flesh out the plan and then more members were recruited to help implement the plan. There was a buzz throughout the organization. Times were changing. Then along came COVID. Nobody was prepared for it. It infiltrated our lives as nothing before. It hit us in the place we most valued that being our relationships as it locked down families, shut down churches, and the economy. It played with our minds. Exhaustion and negativity began to creep into the society and the League as well.

The League continued to work at all levels helping its members to stay connected and working on the 5-year plan. The national executive sent out a budget and notice of motions which included an increase in per capita fees. The budget reflected our current reality - it was costing the League more money to run; the notice of motions reflected the changes members were seeking, and the substantial decrease in membership was impacting income. Then came the reality check that the League would be insolvent by 2026 if there was not a substantial increase in income. It was like COVID. It seemed to come out of nowhere and the blame game came into play. Well, if they would have done this or that or whatever differently we would not be in this situation. Absolutely correct! Isn't that the story of all our lives if we would have just done things differently! No matter how much we talk around it the current reality for the League is a projected insolvency if we do not

have an infusion of income that can only happen by growing our membership and a per capita fee increase. We have had substantial time to mull over these realities. We are now called to vote. We are now called to ask ourselves what the League means to us. These are tough times for most members as COVID has taken its toll but through it all we have had the League as an anchor. Being a member of an organization of faith filled, like-minded women who want to make a difference in the world by bringing the presence of Christ to it has helped this journey in COVID. We have never been afraid of challenges as our strength comes from the God in whom we place all our trust. We are part of a group of women who make a difference in our communities as well as the world. We are part of a voice reflecting a culture of life challenging the culture of death throughout our country. Faith, service, and social justice are part of the conversation at our meetings not only for our community but nationally and internationally. We share our faith with women who recognize the power of God in their lives. We are Chosen Women of the Lord. Now we must ask ourselves how much is all this worth? Do we want to lose the League because we are angry about a per capita fee increase? An increase of \$12 is a lot of money but is our League not worth it? Yes, this increase will be a challenge for many women and many councils, but challenges have never slowed down our creativity. For women who can't afford the increase possibly their council could start a fund to help subsidize memberships. If the council is too small to entertain that idea maybe it can be twinned with a larger council who could divert some of its fundraising efforts to help their sisters in need. Isn't this what we do when we see others in need? We do fundraisers to help others; should this not apply to our sisters as well. Perhaps a member would be willing to adopt another member's membership fee as part of her corporal work of mercy. Presently many of our members are not receiving the League magazine due to its availability only online which was a cost saving measure. Yes, the League magazine connects us from coast to coast to coast and so there was great disappointment from the women who weren't internet connected. Yes, it is disappointing not to receive a hard copy but maybe the shut-in or internet deprived members could be helped by a council member running off her copy and giving it to her or maybe even better setting up a visit to share and read the copy together. The most important ingredient in staying connected is being physically present to one another and as COVID begins to lessen this is now possible. As we sip our tea, we agree the League has many challenges before it, but insolvency should not be one of them. If we weather this storm let us use our collective wisdom to make sure it never becomes an issue again. Let's work together so we can be part of the future where our voice will continue to be heard throughout the church, country, and world. Let us have an honest discussion rooted in faith, service and social justice about our future that begins *I love the League because* and let us all remember that everything we do is to be for the honour and glory of God.

Have a great November as we celebrate our saints and remember all of our CWL sisters, friends, and family who have been called home.