

## 2018 Nova Scotia CWL Provincial Convention

### Oral Report

#### Education and Health

##### Education

Dartmouth resident Catherine Camp was recently chosen as one of fourteen from across Canada to participate in the first certificate program in the newly formed (2018) Catholic Women's Leadership Foundation.

Annually, our Nova Scotia Provincial Council provides \$500.00 to a female graduate actively involved in her congregation's ministry through The Marion Hipditch-Littlepage Prize which is awarded at the Atlantic School of Theology (AST). The successful candidate for 2018 was Sister Angela Burnham; Sister Angela is a member of the Franciscan's of Halifax (FoH).

Parish councils across Nova Scotia offer annual scholarships and bursaries in amounts ranging from \$100.00 to 1000.00 dollars. Through the generous participation of Halifax-Yarmouth parish councils who provide items and sell tickets, the Halifax-Yarmouth Diocesan Council is able to offer funding through their annual Marguerite Burns and Alice Eagan Hagen scholarships. This year the Marguerite Burns scholarship was divided equally among ten candidates @ \$185.00 each. There were no applicants for this year's Alice Eagan scholarship.

##### Health

As a society, and certainly as the Catholic Women's League, we are faced with many issues that impact the lives of Canadians and our world on a daily basis. The CWL will continue to focus on Mental Health, Hospice, Palliative Care, and Medical Assistance in Dying or MAiD. To speak to these vital issues, much is happening and a great deal of information is available.

CWL members are encouraged to continue to write their local MLAs and Federal MPs to voice their concerns on these important issues. Personal letters are always more effective.

##### On the subject of Mental Health

The Huffington Post Blog of Oct 21 2016 entitled, 'Mental Illness Affects Everyone'...states that good mental health is essential to healthy relationships, good life choices and in handling the everyday roller coaster of life. This problem however is one that is often overlooked in the community and the workplace. Did you know that in 2016, approximately 60% of adults, and almost 50% of youth, ages 8-15 with a mental illness receive no mental health services.

Depression is the most prevalent mental health problem in North America. Mental illnesses are more common than cancer, diabetes, heart disease, or arthritis. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, depression is a major cause of disability, absenteeism, and

productivity loss among working-aged adults. The top reasons for workplace employee assistance calls are typically related to mental or emotional health, relationships, family and children, and stress and/or anxiety disorders. These disorders affect people from all walks of life regardless of age, gender economic status, or ethnicity. I will share with you today, that over the past few years, I have suffered my share of depression and can attest to just how debilitating it can be.

One another point...it is reported that 1 in 4 persons are affected by a depleted mental health condition...I look out among you today with the certainty that some of you understand exactly that of which I speak.

Concerning Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)

Locally, The Federation of Catholic Physicians' Societies 10th annual conference fostering the dignity and sacredness of human life was held in Halifax from May 31st to June 3rd 2018..

In a recent, email from Vulnerable Persons Secretariat and forwarded from National Chair Fran Lucas; a 'did you know' portion states that Medical assistance in dying is available to every Canadian who meets the requirements of the law. On the other hand, only 16% to 30% of Canadians who die are reported to have access to hospice, palliative care, and end-of-life services. Statistics such as these should speak volumes to the need to continue to have our united voices heard.

***Old age alone shouldn't be considered a justification for physician-assisted death.*** While responding to a controversial report of a married couple in their nineties who died together by medical assistance in dying (MAiD) in Toronto in March of this year, Globe and Mail reporter Tom Koch, in an article dated 9 April, 2018, in which he raises critical questions concerning setting a "dangerous precedent" that would allow offering an early death to aging patients who dread their own fragility, rather than supporting them to face those fears and adapt to the new conditions of life.

Many resources are available to educate us further on mental health and or Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)

I would encourage Parish Council presidents, and/or Education and Health Chairpersons to invite informed speakers to further advance our knowledge on these subjects.

This concludes my report.

Sandy Mellish,

NS Provincial Chairperson, Education & Health