

Nova Scotia Provincial Council
Spiritual Development Annual Report
January 1st – December 31st 2016

One Heart, One Voice, One Mission (Together We Serve)

This year our National Office prepared a new format for annual reportsonline. These electronic forms certainly presented some challenges for councils. Having said that, I have also heard some very positive feedback. Change can be good for us! Although reports were decreased this past year, I am sure that once we all become familiar with this new way of reporting, more councils will use it.

I would like to thank my Diocesan counterparts for their very well written annual reports. The reports that Elaine Sponagle, Antigonish Diocese (19) and Carol Pottie, Halifax – Yarmouth Diocese (14) received certainly show all the wonderful work that is going on in our councils. Even though only 45% of councils reported, I know that all councils are very active towards Spiritual Development within their communities. My hope is that as we become more familiar with the electronic reporting, we will hear from more councils as to their marvelous works. Thank you to those councils who reported. The information included in my report is a summary from both Diocesan reports for the year 2016.

Spiritual Growth of Members

Councils studied the theme in many ways: reflections at meetings, prepared prayer services, invited guest speakers and held retreats. One council hosted an annual Diocesan Retreat Day at Our Lady of Grace Monastery. Another council, during the “Year of Mercy,” focused on one of the Spiritual Works of Mercy at their monthly meetings.

Liturgies and programs were organized by councils over this past year. Some of these included scripture reflections, praying the rosary, masses, Stations of the Cross, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, novenas, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, musical rosary each Monday during the month of May and many councils held 12 hours of prayer for Palliative Care. One council reported they studied some of the *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si*. Councils celebrated the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel, April 26th, with mass or a luncheon. Another council, on Our Lady's feast day, recited the Rosary of St James, the Saint of Mercy. It is a rosary that is sung and recited.

Members have attended retreats, both parish and diocesan, Life in the Spirit retreat weekends, cursillo movement, Women's Weekend of Grace and one council held a retreat to conclude the Year of Mercy with Benediction and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Anointing of the Sick.

Study of Catholic Teaching

Councils promoted courses and programs such as Catch the Fire, the ALPHA Program, bible and faith courses, 33 Days of Morning Glory, RCIA and lay formation programs to contribute to the faith enrichment of council members.

When developing liturgies and spiritual programs, members use catholic websites such as the National and Provincial CWL web pages, Catholic Digest and WUCWO websites. Members also use the CWL Prays Booklet, CWL Ceremonies Booklet, The Word Among Us magazine, Living With Christ missal and Prayers & Workshops for Women of Peace and

Hope.

Role of Women in the Church

Council members are very active in their parishes: they serve on Diocesan and Parish committees, Parish Pastoral and Finance committees. One member is registered for the Lay Formation Program in the Antigonish Diocese. Some members have also worked with the NET Team in their area. Others have done studies of women in scripture.

Evangelization and Mission Assistance

The CWL of Canada officially supports Catholic Missions in Canada as its primary missionary outreach in Canada. Six councils reported supporting ESK-OMI Missions. Some councils contacted Catholic Missions in Canada and assisted them by selling calendars, donating money and collecting warm winter clothing. One council held a purse and scarf sale to support the missions. Other causes supported by councils include Samaritan's Purse, Christmas Daddies, Velma's Dream and Our Lady of Grace Monastery.

Lay Ministry

League members served in various ministries in their parishes: ministers of the Word and Eucharist, Hospitality, choir/music, catechists, sacristan, Rel. Ed Coordinators, visit shut-ins, volunteer at Hope Cottage, decorating and cleaning the church. Members organized masses and socials for seniors during Lent, administer communion to the sick & shut-in and visit the sick in their homes and nursing homes. Prayers are said at funeral homes, serve as honor guards at funerals and provide food and host funeral receptions for parishioners.

Ecumenism and Interfaith Endeavors

Councils continue to reach out to women of other denominations or faith by: initiating joint prayer services, inviting women to council meetings and inviting women to social events. Members also participated and promoted awareness of World Day of Prayer in March, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January, WUCWO Day in May, Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada and the Fellowship of the Least Coin.

Conclusion

There were 129 deceased members reported for 2016 and their names were placed in the Book of Life: seventy-one for the Antigonish Diocese (two of whom were Life Members) and fifty-eight for the Halifax-Yarmouth Diocese.

This report brings an end to my first year as your Provincial Spiritual Development Chairperson. I want to thank our President Peggy MacNeil and all of the Executive for all their help this past year. It has truly been a wonderful and rewarding experience witnessing all the marvelous works the Catholic Women's League is doing. May Our Lady of Good Counsel continue to guide and bless us as we continue our journey into our new theme **Inspired By The Spirit, Women Respond To God's Call.**

Respectfully submitted
Mary ten Brinke