



Nova Scotia Provincial Council Catholic Women's League of Canada Provincial President Communique #4

Care for Our Common Home

To: Janice MacDougall, Antigonish Diocesan President; Janet Terrio, Halifax-Yarmouth Diocesan President (for distribution to all parish council presidents)

From: Glenda Carson, Nova Scotia Provincial President

Date: April 28, 2020

Dear Diocesan and Parish CWL Council Presidents,

I pray that you are all staying safe and healthy. As I write this communique, there are snowflakes coming down making it difficult to believe that we will be shortly be in the month of May. Spring will come, however. That is a certainty in our very uncertain times. It is just having a bit of a struggle that seems a consistent theme for our year 2020. Following are just a few items that I would like to bring to your attention.

Doing council business during gathering restrictions: There have been requests from presidents for direction on how to make council or executive decisions outside of a regular meeting while still complying with our National Constitution and Bylaws and Policy and Procedure. Situations are arising that require a decision from the membership before the council can meet at a regular meeting. This is not a dilemma unique to Nova Scotia – councils across Canada are having similar concerns. Kim Scammell, our national executive director has provided the following information on how to proceed if decisions are required from the membership at a time when the council members cannot meet in person.

The current National CWL constitution and bylaws only allow for business meetings to take place in person and there is no direction for voting except in person at a regular business meeting and recorded in the meeting minutes. This has been a major challenge for some councils to proceed with needed business.

Recommended approach: a president may reach out to members by teleconference, email or telephone, provide information related to the matter at hand and ask their “opinion” regarding the action needed. If it seems that the majority would “vote” in favour at a general meeting, then it would be possible to proceed with the action. At the next official meeting, there would be a motion to ratify the decision undertaken.

This would occur for any business for which a motion is required. It is important that the president is certain of support from the membership and that members are able to make a fully informed decision when making their opinion known, including an opportunity for discussion.

Council interpersonal communication: just as we miss our human connections in our everyday world, so we are missing our connecting with each other during our regular CWL meetings. It is often at council meetings that members share discussion, resources, prayers, petitions and special bits of news and information. With the loss of our ability to meet together, some members are sharing this type of information by email to council members without the knowledge of their presidents. Please encourage your members to always connect with you before sharing information to other CWL members on your council list. This ensures that the privacy of personal contact information for council members is respected and protected, will help to prevent duplication of information, provide for consistency and help to ensure that the items being shared reflect the core values and principles of the CWL as an organization.

National Council Administration: the national office is closed but the staff are working from home and are processing membership fees as efficiently as possible. So please forward your council's membership fees if you have not already done so.

During this time it is more important than ever to keep you eye on your mail and email inbox for information coming you way. Much activity with the League continues. The parish spring mailings have gone out and communiques from our committee chairpersons continue to flow from the various levels of our organization. The national policy and procedure manual has been updated and the spring League magazine has come out with a wonderful portrayal of our history. Please ensure your executive officers and council members are aware of information as it comes to you and encourage your committee chairpersons to do communiques and reports for their standing committees as they normally would. I appreciate it is more challenging to get information to your members right now, but the effort carries the benefit of encouraging member engagement and leadership development.

Our Lady of Good Counsel Feast Day Celebration: I wish to thank our provincial spiritual advisor, Fr. Patrick O'Neill who made it possible to celebrate Our Lady of Good Counsel feast day as a province by broadcasting Mass through his Facebook site. I would also like to acknowledge Andrew Doyle for his beautiful music, Jessie Parkinson, our provincial spiritual development chairperson for the Prayer of the Faithful and Sandra O'Connell, our provincial council treasurer and Janice MacDougall, Antigonish council president for venturing out to support the liturgy. This adventure by distance had an amazing response with around 300 people viewing the Mass during the livestream and a total of over 1300 attending when the recording was viewed. It also speaks to power of creativity and the positive outcomes that can occur. I am sorry that the memorial aspect of the service traditionally held by many parish councils for their deceased CWL and family members was not possible. Please consider a gathering for a future celebration with an Iconic Mass for the Blessed Virgin Mary during which the remembrance ceremony can take place. Just connect with your spiritual advisor once you are able to meet again.

Support and Outreach: I wish to thank the many members who are reaching out to those in their council who are living alone or are infirm, reflecting concern that their sisters may be experiencing increased loneliness or needing assistance. I am also still receiving messages of prayers and support from our CWL sisters across Canada in relation to the shooting tragedy that occurred in our province. All of this shows how we shine to support each other when facing adversity and the degree of love and caring that exists within our organization.

Of late, our diocesan councils are ever present in my mind as we would now be joining together for their annual conventions. This again brings home the degree to which the rhythm of our CWL activities have been disrupted, albeit temporarily. We all need to find ways to stay connected, pray together and support each other at all levels. You have received information from our Education and Health Chairpersons on participating in the 12 Hours for Palliative Care taking place next week. Perhaps this could be a start to encourage your council members to look at a special way of being together in prayer and reflection.

Lastly, please keep in your prayers the community of Fort McMurray, Alberta who are living through terrible flooding right now. They were just experiencing recovery from the horrific wildfire that occurred in May of 2016 and have been struggling with economic challenges beyond that presented by COVID-19. Our CWL sisters across Alberta recited the Divine Mercy Chaplet as a support to us as we reconcile the terrible shooting tragedy we just experienced. It is now for us to return the love.

In closing, while we all desire that our lives return to normal as soon as possible, it would be wonderful if some of the positive aspects of our current way of being continue and the spirit of creativity remains with us. Let us continue to pray and reach out to each other. Please take care, stay safe and stay connected (at a safe distance of course!) You are always in my heart and prayers.

Our Lady of Good Council pray for us!

God bless,
Glenda