



Community Life Annual Report 2020
Submitted by NS Provincial Council Chair,

Care for our Common Home

This annual report reflects the annual report submissions for Halifax-|Yarmouth and Antigonish Diocesan councils. Even though the receipt of annual reports from parish councils was lower than those received in 2019, we appreciate the councils who took the time to prepare their reports in these very uncertain and stressful times. One challenge that parish councils may have is filling the community life role as well as other leadership roles. Nevertheless, the council reports provided significant engagement in the community prior to Covid. Most parish councils have now come to a standstill to meeting in person and limited to serving their parish and communities. Anyway, let us stay hopeful and grateful for the blessings we have and reflect on our lives and how we can improve it and stay engaged as we go forward.

Social and Economic Justice

Generally, there is a strong engagement in this aspect of Community Life by all councils. However, due to COVID-19, councils this year supported their communities with health and safety in mind. Most councils were still able to support those in need. Prior to COVID, a few councils had shower for the homeless shelters, Transition House and Women's Centre. Some donated cash and gift cards to their local food banks, soup kitchens, St. Vincent de Paul, Share Christmas to name a few.

Wellness checks were made by members regularly via phone/emails etc and councils sent out get well and thinking of you cards to the sick and shut In CWL members. Many councils sent out Christmas cards to their shut ins. Majority of councils were active in supporting organizations caring for those in need by offering prayers, financial support and volunteering for school programs, clothing drives, affordable housing initiatives, employment and skills training, anti- poverty campaign, restorative justice programs, emergency shelters for homeless and those suffering domestic abuse.

Due to COVID-19, councils did not celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day. Orange Shirt Day, prison ministry and restorative justice programs were put on hold.

This year, promoting Catholic Near East Welfare Association was only supported by a low number of councils. World Day of Peace was Septembers 21 which councils did not celebrate together but offered individual prayers.

November 15 was declared as Day of the Poor by Pope Francis and was celebrated by many councils. Some members got involved in the parish activity in filling back packs with requested items which was donated to a foodbank. Many members donated Christmas gift items to the needy in their community through their church community. Many took the opportunity of knitting for the homeless. Councils are generally active with seniors in their communities. However, due to Covid restrictions, they could not entertain nor provide them with treats. However, some members in the council provided

masks for seniors. They also made aprons and masks for their healthcare workers. Financial support was given to organizations assisting indigenous people including Esk-omi and Catholic Missions in Canada.

Even though Councils were not meeting in person since March, assistance for organizations engaged in caring for the marginalized in their community was met financially and prayerfully. Covid-19 limited physical contacts but could not take away from members to seize opportunities to display the caring trait of the CWL.

Dignity and Rights:

Human Trafficking, a crime and growing curse across Canada which has devastating impact on some of Canada's most vulnerable people remains below the public radar. For years the League has played an important role in bringing awareness about Human Trafficking as a growing crime across Canada.

Most councils are aware of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - UDHR. Some councils have discussed Bill C-262 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

They support those suffering from homelessness, incarcerated, poverty, human trafficking, bullying, domestic violence and indigenous women. Efforts toward educating members with regards to Indigenous Women, and laws against Human Trafficking are encouraging, more of an emphasis needs to be put on an invitation to disseminate this knowledge to members. However, the topic of Bullying and Racism – two hot topics that affect a larger portion of the Canadian population today are sadly neglected.

Some councils observed February 8, 2020 as International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking. Councils reported they took part in the day with prayer, lighting candles, saying the Rosary and sharing the news that the Nova Scotia Government announced it is combatting Human Trafficking with financial support for the next five years.

Developing Countries:

A low percentage of councils are aware of conditions of child labor in developing countries and the implications of trade laws and practices in the global economy. A majority have used their voices to encourage the well-being of people before profit margins, and to further encourage governments to facilitate these changes.

Councils offered support to Operation Christmas, Chalice, Canadian Red Cross, Operation Eyesight International, Pennies for the Poor, Save a Family Plan and Sleeping Children Around the World.

The League celebrated the first National Day of Prayer for Christians in the Holyland on September 21. It was also offered for Beirut, Lebanon who suffered immensely from the great explosion that occurred there. Members prayed individually or in small groups as restrictions permitted.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the League was able to support the Pieta Bhavan project in Kerala, India which provided safe drinking water with the replacement of the well roof.

Funding was also given to support the children in the Diocese of Adigrat, Ethiopia by providing lunches at school. Parish councils are encouraged to continue supporting projects in developing countries where the need is immense.

Immigration, Immigrants and Refugees:

Immigration is viewed as an important factor for maintenance of our population, its growth and labour needs. So, the Atlantic Immigration pilot program helps employers in Atlantic Canada to hire foreign skilled workers retain international graduates who want to stay on in Atlantic Canada after they graduate.

A considerable number of councils have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of Immigrants and Refugees living in their communities in terms of employment services, ESL courses, financial assistance for food, rent, customs, countries of origin and number of immigrants. While there appears to be a working knowledge of terms understood by the report participants [foreign worker, immigrant, refugee], there was a non-participant rate in actual Citizenship Ceremonies – again this being attributable to the unusual restrictions of Covid 19 during 2020.

Remembrance Services

Councils supported the Poppy Campaign but did not participate in Services at the Epitaph, There was a 50/50 support of Canadian troops by the wearing of Red on Fridays.

Canada Summer Jobs

The Federal government released the electronic application for those organizations who were applying for funding to support students during the summer months. The deadline was January 29.

Development and Peace

D&P Campaign 2019-2020 is titled: "FOR OUR COMMON HOME" derived from pope Francis' Encyclical Laudato Si'

Link to prayer For 'Our Common

Home https://www.devp.org/sites/www.devp.org/files/documents/materials/devpeace_fall2019_prayercard_en.pdf

Diocesan community life chairperson recommended that we watch a documentary on Netflix called **Kiss the Ground**. It provides us with hope for the future for our earth's environment.

Marie Rackley, National Chairperson reported in her Communique #16 that in late August our National President received a letter from Most Rev. Richard Gagnon, President of Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops informing that the League could reinstate its 1% program for Canadian Catholic Organization for D&P (CCODP). Parish Councils can now collect and submit 1% of all revenue earned to the National Fund for CCODP.

It became more than evident that Covid-19 has put an extreme pressure on every facet of participation by the individual Councils. While indications are strong that Members' desire to be a contributor for the many avenues to assist in the hardships of society, their resources are limited – financially, geographically and age-related. Their love and caring for fellow members of their communities – both local and global – is to be commended and without a doubt, all are looking forward to the time when it is safe to have contact once again with each other, and to be working together for God and Canada.

Respectfully Submitted

Catherine Gonsalves

