

**Nova Scotia Provincial Council  
Community Life  
2018 Annual Report**

Submitted by Glenda Carson, President, NS Provincial Council for Catherine Gonsalves, Community Life Chairperson, NS Provincial Council.

This annual report reflects the annual report submissions for Antigonish and Halifax-Yarmouth diocesan councils. Reporting rates from the parish councils across the province were decreased this year. One contributing factor cited was the challenge parish councils may have in filling the community life role, reflecting the ongoing struggle parish councils are having to fulfill the many leadership roles required. Nevertheless, the councils that provided annual reports reflected significant engagement in the community life work in many areas.

**Dignity and Rights of Persons**

Members, as a whole, express understanding of the need to support those marginalized and most vulnerable by attending educational events, providing financial support and volunteering. However, there were some major societal concerns that did not receive support across the province. For example, while many councils tried to make members aware of human trafficking concerns in our society, the majority did not take such an effort.

The struggles of Indigenous women were a strong focus for some of our councils. Action included the invitation of Indigenous women to be guest speakers and lead workshops. The Antigonish Diocesan council used the Kairos blanket exercise last fall to help members explore the historical national relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Resolutions were also a point of focus for many councils in relation to requested actions for Resolution 2013.01 (Building Relationships and Partnerships with Canada's Indigenous Peoples) and Resolution 2017.01 (Implementation of the Supreme Court Decision in R.V. Gladue for Indigenous Offenders). Unfortunately, there did not seem to be a similar response by all to the Resolution 2011.02 (Children of Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women). The lowered response rate to this concern by councils is somewhat confusing given the overall positive attention to the concerns of our Indigenous peoples by our CWL councils. It is thought that perhaps the resolution was not well understood.

**2018 Canada Summer Jobs Application**

Nova Scotia members as a whole in Nova Scotia took this federal government policy very seriously, responding to the call for action from the National CWL council. Members have taken pride in adding their voice to the successful call for the government to revoke the policy.

**Social and Economic Justice**

There is strong engagement in this aspect of community Life by all councils. Members and councils are very active through the provision of financial and material support as well as volunteer hours to organizations providing services to those in need. This included, but is not limited to support for affordable housing initiatives, anti-poverty campaigns, anti-violence campaigns, emergency shelters for the homeless and those experiencing domestic abuse, parent resource and drop in centres, employment

and skills training, the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, the Wish foundation, prison ministry, school programs, book collections for children, clothing drives for adults and children, visiting the sick, providing lunch and entertainment in nursing homes, food banks, food hampers, meal programs for the poor and homeless. Financial support was also given to local community hospitals and organizations assisting Indigenous peoples, including Esk-omi Missions and Catholic Missions in Canada.

Members had opportunities to attend a workshop or seminar on topics related to social and economic justice, although the number attending varied widely by areas across the province. There may be a need for creative thought around assisting members to gain information for this important area.

### **Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship**

Many councils indicated a good understanding of the needs of immigrants in their communities. The strong voiced support for immigrant and refugee families supports that there is sensitivity to understanding the need for support for these new and often vulnerable members in our society. However, there is inconsistency in knowledge and action across the province, supporting an apparent need to encourage all members to become familiar with the immediate and ongoing needs of immigrant and refugee families. Some councils also implemented the action plan for Resolution 2016.01 Equal Access to Permanent Resident Status: An Amendment to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Unfortunately the time honoured practice of CWL members attending citizenship ceremonies and welcoming our newest citizens does not to appear to be occurring any longer in our province. However, there was strong council support for Remembrance Day services and the poppy campaign. As well, some councils support our Canadian military by wearing red on Fridays.

### **Support for Developing Countries**

Councils embraced the need for attention, from a social justice perspective, of the societal challenge presented by globalization with attention being paid to ongoing issues such as child labour, codes of conduct, trade laws and practices that all pose significant implications and economic difficulties for developing countries. This area of social concern carries an important call for CWL members to be vigilant in their monitoring of the need for governments to change policies and practices that put profits before people.

Councils continue to support many organizations in developing countries, the most common being Chalice. Operation Christmas Child and Save a Family. It is very special to note that one council have sent 254 dresses to "little dresses for Africa" over the past four years. Many councils contributed to the 1 % program for Develop and Peace for 2018. In an effort to develop awareness, some councils invited guest speakers to share their stories from developing nations.

It has been a great privilege to acknowledge the work done by our members at the parish and diocesan council levels. There are always gaps to fill and new goals for the future. But our parish and diocesan reports indicate our work within community life is strong and positive, reflecting the strong social justice foundation that is a mainstay of our organization in our province and our nation.