



Council Catholic Women's League of Canada

Nova Scotia Provincial Council

Past President

Communique #2

Catholic and Living It !

To: Diocesan Past Presidents: Janice MacDougall and Janet Terrio and for distribution to parish council past presidents.

cc. Diocesan Presidents: Julie LeLievre and Sandra Kline
Nova Scotia Provincial CWL Council Executive Officers
National Past President and Chairperson of Laws Anne-Marie Gorman

From: Glenda Carson, Nova Scotia Provincial Past President.

Date: October 11, 2022

My dear sisters in the League

I pray that you have had a restful and blessed Thanksgiving weekend - our annual opportunity to take stock of our blessings and reflect more deeply on the relationships we have with our family, friends, and those within our world. In this communique, I am addressing some questions and concerns that have arisen particularly from the parish councils in our province over the past two months. I apologize for the length of this communique but the questions and concerns are important and deserve thorough reflections and answers.

League Constitution and Bylaws: National past president, Anne Marie Gorman, has forwarded a communique confirming the adoption of the motions for the changes to the League Constitution and Bylaws, with the exception of the change in the League patroness to our Lady of Guadalupe. Our Lady of Good Counsel will remain as our patroness. These constitutional and bylaw changes reflect the call by members for our organization to reduce the number of executive and standing committee members. This not only puts less pressure on filling executive positions for councils but also provides opportunities for members to take on an activity or focus of a standing committee in collaboration with the chairperson. This approach could do much to draw all members into more active participation in fulfilling the League's mission and objectives.

Per Capita fee increase: This was adopted by the majority of League members. The communique circulated by our national secretary-treasurer, Marie Rackley, will be helpful to you, as past presidents, to mentor your members in understanding the need for this change and to assist your council in exploring creative strategies for addressing any challenges that arise.

Concern has been expressed that some members will not be able to afford the rise in the national per capita fee. It is very true that we have members living in poverty and on fixed incomes. Many parish councils are looking at creative ways of supporting members to address this concern. For example, some CWL members, who can afford it, are adopting a sister and paying for their membership or donating money to their council for an extra membership fee. Another strategy is for councils to offer members the opportunity to pay their membership fees in installments. The parish council would cover the membership fee and the member would pay the council back as they are able. Some councils are also looking at fundraising ideas to offer a subsidy to all members in paying for their League membership. One of the strongest and most notable qualities of the CWL is our attention to the less fortunate and vulnerable in our society. It is also important that we look inward and support our sisters to be able to continue to benefit from being part of the Catholic Women's League.

One aspect of the per capita fee that needs to be clarified is the actual change in cost. There have been incorrect messages circulating that the per capita fee is as much as \$40.00 or \$50.00. The national increase was \$12.00 bringing the total national fee to \$25.00. The most a per capita fee would be for our members in Nova Scotia is \$33.00 or \$34.00, depending on your diocesan council. Any increase above this is money collected by parish councils for their own designated use. In this circumstance, it is the parish council to determine if the extra increase above the per capita fee is required and how much that should be.

Elections: Many councils are moving into their election period. Again, the blessing is that there are fewer positions to fill: President (if no president-elect), Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three standing committee chairpersons (Faith, Service, and Social Justice). Descriptions of these new positions should have been circulated through your council president or secretary. If possible, please follow League policy and procedure in filling executive positions. They provide for future continuity in the administration of councils, help prevent member burnout, and allow for all members to have opportunities to be active participants and leaders in their councils. But it is quite understood that councils often find themselves in situations where they need to be creative when addressing vacant positions. For example, co-presidents and co-chairs have been successful strategies. And yes, we are often in need of presidents to serve another term. If the position of president is vacant following an election an acting president may be appointed by the membership (*National Manual of Policy and Procedure, pg. 109.*) Again, there is much hope that our new structure will bring more members into an active role in the work of the League and perhaps more willing to take on leadership roles. It is also hoped that more participation by members may lessen the decrease in membership through the non-renewal of memberships.

What does the League give me? This answer is very individual and rests more with the question, what can I do through and for the League? As a CWL member, you have the opportunity to fulfill your role as one of Christ's disciples through spiritual development opportunities. You can take pride in being part of one of the largest women's groups in Canada that is widely respected for its tremendous actions for social justice and charity at the parish, diocesan, provincial and national levels. The Catholic Women's League has shown itself to be visionary in responding to member needs through organizational change. The

strategic plan working groups have addressed League challenges in leadership development and recruiting and maintaining members by making the League more responsive and meaningful to Canadian Catholic women. The challenge is now for us, as members, to put this investment into good use. Another of the most beautiful and important aspects of the League is experienced when CWL members reach out across Canada in solidarity, sympathy, and compassion to their sisters in times of hardship, crisis, and grief.

In closing, I would like to share the challenge left to us by Joan Bona, Nova Scotia past provincial CWL council president and Life Member, during her insightful and touching theme development at the 2022 provincial CWL convention and AMM:

“Our new theme is Catholic and Living It! But we should also be Catholic and Loving It! Let us step forward as a unified sisterhood... and [as members] reflect on the following questions”:

Did I offer peace today?
Did I bring a smile to someone’s face?
Did I say words of healing?
Did I love?
These are the real questions.

-Henri Nouwen

God bless,



Glenda