



December, 2020

Christmas Greetings to All of my Dear Sisters in the League,

As we begin the season of Advent, in the midst of a global pandemic, our hearts are filled with uncertainty and fear. Not unlike, I would imagine, Mary and Joseph, she heavy with child, and setting out for Bethlehem in the midst of troubled political times to be registered in census, along with many of their countrymen. Then having to give birth in a stable – what a disappointing beginning for a King!

So we, too, have heavy hearts and many questions. Will my family be safe? Will our loved ones in long term care be safe from this dreaded virus? What about our front line and essential workers? Will there be jobs available to go back to? When will a vaccine be available? Will it be safe and effective? Will our world go back to what it was before, or will it be forever changed? And the questions go on and on, and we know that no one has the answers for us. In this time of lockdown, and with the restrictions in place, we search for other ways. Those ways are available to us, but we have to go deep within ourselves, to our faith beginnings. There are many indicators in the Bible; that Jesus said He'd be with us till the end of time; seek and you will find; ask and you will receive. I encourage you to use this Advent Season to do all those things you haven't had time for in the past, because you've been so busy preparing for Christmas. Pick up the Bible. Take advantage of live-streamed Mass; if not from your own parish, then from another. Follow faith-based webinars. Set aside time for daily prayer and reflection. Advent is a time of hopeful waiting and anticipation; it's a time to reflect and search deep within, and ultimately to experience the wonder and awe of the newborn King.

Since the introduction of my theme for Manitoba; *"The Seed that Flowers"*, I am gratified by the many ways that our Manitoba ladies have embraced it. Particularly over the past several months, I've seen how our members reach out to each other, how we demonstrate our love and caring for others in our community. I'm taking this opportunity to commend all of you for your gift of unselfish kindness, and I encourage you to keep it up – now, more than ever it's needed.

Our Annual Day of Celebration will be a virtual event this coming year, and Provincial Council is putting together a meaningful, spirit-filled day that we hope will be an enriching experience for you.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel be with each one of you and your families this Christmas Season. May She Bless You and Keep you in Her Loving Care throughout the coming year.

Best Wishes,

*Janet Brunger*

President

Manitoba Provincial Council

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada**

*Manitoba Provincial Council*

**President**

**November, 2020**



**Communiqué #5**

***Care For Our Common Home***

TO: Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils)  
CC: Provincial Executive (for information)  
CC: National President (for information)  
FROM: Janet Brunger, Provincial President

Greetings to all of my Sisters in the League! As this global pandemic continues its inexorable march of mayhem, and governments continue to scramble to salvage what they can in their respective economies, we, too, in the CWL are struggling. There is much uncertainty, there is stress and loneliness.

**But we have the gift of our rich Catholic Faith, and with the onset of Advent,  
there is also hope and anticipation!**

I have represented my Manitoba Sisters in National meetings in August, September and November, and Provincial Council has met following each of those National meetings. Other levels of the League have also done their best to maintain contact and provide support wherever they can, and for that I commend all of you! It is worth noting, however, that the struggles we are experiencing in Manitoba are the same in all provinces; sharing with my counterparts brings forward all of the same comments and concerns all across Canada.

National Council has determined that there will be AGM's held in 2021, only for the purpose of conducting necessary business, consideration of resolutions, instructed voting, and elections. Since we are required to maintain social distancing, AGM's at all levels will be by invitation only, and will be restricted to voting and accredited delegates.

If you have been on the National Website, you will be aware that implementation of our Strategic Plan is continuing, and as such, necessitating the need for instructed votes. Having been privileged to see and hear about all of the work that has gone into the strategic plan to date, I am in awe to realize the depth of planning, the attention to detail, and the sheer mountain of work that has been undertaken to date by a select group of volunteers. We owe them our respect and gratitude, and our prayers as they continue to forge forward with the overall mission of the League forefront in their minds.

And during these days of uncertainty, stress and discouragement, please remember to pray. We now know, or know of, people that have been impacted by Covid-19, as well as people struggling with other daily health issues. We can't do anything about it, but we can be a loving, sympathetic support for them and their family members, and we can pray for them; we all know that prayer can move mountains. And I encourage each of

you to focus each day on what we DO have instead of what we don't. Recognize the efforts of our governments trying to maintain our economy – I can't even imagine what our world would look like if we didn't have the supports in place that we have. Appreciate the crisp cool mornings and the sun that gets us started on a new day. At the same time, I am grateful for the long fall that we had – although we had some cold nights, we have very little snow, enabling us to get done the work that we needed to do. Smile at the chickadees and nuthatches, the deer and the rabbits – they're industriously going about their own business. Be grateful for the friendly voice on the other end of a phone call, just calling to ask how you are. Appreciate that someone took the time to write a Thinking of You card and mail it – what a gift! Likewise with the funny or thought-provoking email – someone is thinking of you!

May Our Lady of Good Counsel be always at your side, guiding and protecting you and your loved ones!

Janet Brunger, President  
Catholic Women's League of Canada  
Manitoba Provincial Council  
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**The Catholic Women's League of Canada**

*Manitoba Provincial Council*

**President**

**May, 2020**



**Communiqué #4**

***Care For Our Common Home***

TO: Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils)  
CC: Provincial Executive (for information)  
CC: National President (for information)

FROM: Janet Brunger, Provincial President

Greetings to all of my Sisters in the League! Just call me Doubting Thomas! Had I not seen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world, I would not have believed something like this could ever happen! The far-reaching implications that will take years to recover from, schools and churches the world over shut down, including the Vatican!, governments scrambling to salvage economies in tatters, businesses unable to survive this crisis, and the social impacts on families. Had I not seen it and experienced it.....

Because there will be no conventions this year, all business has been tabled till next year. National did advise that in the event that social distancing restrictions are lifted by the end of August, there MIGHT be AGM's held; however, we are also advised that even when restrictions are eased, there will still be guidelines – we wait to learn what effect those guidelines will have on gatherings.

However, as the strict protocols that our governments at all levels have put in place are having the desired effect, and restrictions begin to be eased and churches, schools, businesses, parks, and leisure activities begin to open up, albeit slowly, we are reminded that there is a new normal in place, and we are still to maintain social distancing, hand washing and sanitizing, and the like.

Although it's easy to focus on what we have NOT had these past several weeks, and we've all spent plenty of time pouting about what we've been missing and what we've done without, if we stop to consider, we've still been greatly blessed.....

- For the most part, we are healthy. In all the people I've spoken to, none of them have been personally afflicted with Covid-19, nor their families. Yes, we all have health issues; either ourselves or our family members, and some of them are very serious; we do not for a moment belittle that, and it is true that some surgeries had to be postponed.
- We are safe in our homes. How many times in the world's history of pandemics can we say that our homes are our safe sanctuaries?
- We have the technology to stay in touch with loved ones. We are able to use computers for connecting with family and for holding virtual meetings, we have tablets and smart phones to maintain communication, and we have telephones that we can pick up any time to hear someone's voice.
- We have grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, and other essential needs open and available to us. They have all worked very hard to ensure that we have not gone without.

- Our healthcare professionals are hard at work for all of us. Our dedicated frontline workers are very deserving of our deepest gratitude, which in many instances, come at serious personal cost to themselves.
- We have had the time to read that book that's been waiting for us, or the puzzle that we've been meaning to do – someday. We've had time to dig out corners and closets in our homes. We've had time to do that research that we've been wanting to do for some time. And we've had time to bake those cookies or try out that special lasagna recipe.
- We have prayed for an end to this pandemic, we've prayed for our sisters in the League, for loved ones near and far, for those socially and financially afflicted by the impact of this pandemic, and for many other special needs.

I encourage all of you, when and as restrictions begin to be lifted, to continue praying as you have done. I encourage you to continue to phone people who might appreciate a friendly voice on the other end of the line – it means so much to them. I also encourage you to appreciate the small things in your life – a pretty flower, a gentle breeze, the sunshine on your face, the smile of a passer-by, and the little songbird outside your window or deck. Don't ever lose the innocence of wonder and awe in this marvelous world given to us by our loving Creator!

May Our Lady of Good Counsel be always at your side, guiding and protecting you and your loved ones!

Janet Brunger, President  
Catholic Women's League of Canada  
Manitoba Provincial Council

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada**

*Manitoba Provincial Council*

**President**

**February, 2020**



**Communiqué 3**

***Care For Our Common Home***

TO: Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils)

CC: Provincial Executive (for information)

CC: National President (for information)

FROM: Janet Brunger, Provincial President

Greetings to all of my Sisters in the League! As we have now entered the Season of Lent, my wish for each of you is to experience renewal and growth in your journey of faith, to culminate in the joy of the resurrection at the end of these 40 days.

95 Ladies enjoyed an inspiring, uplifting Day of Celebration on February 8<sup>th</sup> with our own Fr. Paul Bringleon facilitating. The theme of the day was Care for our Spiritual Home, and included quiet time for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament before reconvening back in the Parish Hall to summarize the day. We received many positive comments on the day. Thank you to all who took the time out of your busy lives to participate!

In keeping with our National Theme, *Care for our Common Home*, and following last year's very successful H.U.G. Project, the CWL National Centenary Project for 2020 is calling for all Diocesan Councils to plant a tree. However, we in Manitoba would like to go one step further and ask each Council to consider planting a tree on your parish grounds. We are therefore asked to plant a tree, take a picture of the tree planting event, or yourselves around the newly planted tree, and send this picture in to your Diocesan President. She will compile all these pictures and forward them on to National Office, before July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. Those pictures will then be displayed at the 100<sup>th</sup> Annual National Convention in Montreal in August! The significance of planting a tree is that the roots are entrenched in the past century while the branches are reaching into the future!

Also in keeping with our National Theme, I am pleased to announce that we have compiled approximately 6,000 plastic bags thus far for the Bag-Up Manitoba initiative! Many thanks to all for participating in this very worthwhile project and for keeping plastic bags out of our landfills! I'll collect at all conventions this year. Naturally, if you have a school in your community that's collecting plastic bags, I encourage you to send them there, but let me know how many bags you're giving, so that we can include those numbers in our total.

The Over 18 DVD is available to all CWL Councils for showing. There are also handouts available for photocopying. We encourage each Council to discuss possible times and dates that will work in your own parishes, and reach out to me for the DVD.

Thank you to all who participated in the Annual Report process – this is the most effective way to inform the next levels of the League of your activities and challenges. Having just returned from National Meetings, I can say that National council celebrates your victories, and does hear your concerns, and are actively working for solutions.

And now for some homework! Our membership continues to decline, both in our province and nationally. I would like to hear from each Council what you think we should do to recruit new members. Never mind if you've tried it and it doesn't work in your own parish, and never mind if you think it's a great idea but you can't get the support of your own Council to do it – we would like to hear it. Please send me an email or call me to offer your suggestions – I'd like 2 or 3 ideas per Council. We'll brainstorm with these ideas around our Provincial table, and perhaps we can come up with some solid recommendations.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel be always at your side, guiding and protecting you in everything you do, for God and Canada!

Janet Brunger, President  
Catholic Women's League of Canada  
Manitoba Provincial Council



December, 2019

Christmas Greetings to All of my Dear Sisters in the League,

Greetings to each one of our members in the League! What an incredible, vibrant Sisterhood we have in the Catholic Women's League! I never cease to be amazed at it, and feel truly blessed to be a part of it. Every day something comes over my e-mail, or my phone will ring – someone needing information or wanting clarification on something, and I smile and offer a prayer of thanksgiving that I'm so privileged to be a part of this wonderful organization. With the Advent season very soon to culminate in our celebration of the Birth of Christ, and with all of the stress and activity that goes along with our preparations for Christmas, we need to remember to step back and take time for ourselves amidst all of the noise and just spend some quiet time with the Lord, away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

In my most recent Communique, I introduced my theme for Manitoba; *"The Seed that Flowers"*. There are many ways that we can all plant seeds that will flower and ultimately bear fruit; something as simple as a smile, a hug, a touch, or a phone call; or it can be a plate of freshly baked cookies or a bag of groceries. Remember our shut-ins – do they need a ride somewhere or someone to go to the store to get the supplies they need? All of these acts are so small and insignificant to us, but they mean SO MUCH to the recipient! These small gestures will go a long way to create a community of caring, a network of sisterhood that's really lacking these days, particularly in our urban communities. We never know what challenges and struggles another person is dealing with on any particular day, and the smallest act might just mean the world to someone else.

Our Annual Day of Celebration will take place on Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020, at Christ the King Parish Hall, 847 St. Mary's Road, Winnipeg. The theme of the day will be "Care for our Spiritual Home", and our own Fr. Paul Bringleston will be leading us through a very inspired, spiritual day. We are also thrilled to be welcoming our National President, Anne-Marie Gorman, to our midst for the day.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel be with each one of you and your families in all that you do during this Christmas Season. May She Bless You and Keep you in Her Loving Care. And finally, I pray that the coming year will bring you and your loved ones much love, happiness, health and prosperity.



**The Catholic Women's League of Canada**

Manitoba Provincial Council

**President**

*Manitoba Provincial Council*

November, 2019



**Communiqué 2**

***Care For Our Common Home***

TO: Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils)

CC: Provincial Executive (for information)

CC: National President (for information)

FROM: Janet Brunger, Provincial President

Greetings to all of my Sisters in the League! We have experienced a very different Fall this year, with the excessive rainfall, followed by that Thanksgiving week-end wallop of heavy, wet snow. Our farming community has certainly been challenged, as most, if not all of them still had crops in the field. We offer all of them our compassion and support during these very difficult times.

Within the CWL, there are many events ongoing. Many Councils hold end of the year fundraisers at this time, and it's a busy time of year for everyone. In regards to that, I have a couple of updates to provide:

1)

Women's Interchurch Council of Canada – Fellowship of the Least Coin and World Day of Prayer –

*“The Fellowship of the Least Coin (FLC) is a worldwide ecumenical movement of prayer for peace and reconciliation. Christian women around the world meet and pray with each other. Through this, they are reminded to live a forgiving life with others. “Least coins” are given with each prayer, yet the movement is focused on prayer and reconciliation rather than money. Anyone who wishes to join makes a commitment to spend time in prayer whenever she has a strained relationship with another person, and to uphold in prayer others who are victims of jealousy, hatred, violence and injustice.”*

Some time ago, we became aware that there were some questions surrounding these programs, and reached out to the National Office and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops for guidance. The response is that we are responsible to vet the organizations we support, and having done so, we have the autonomy to support - or not support - whomever we wish. For clarification, any monies collected for or in regards to World Day of Prayer is used for Canadian Charities, which have been vetted and agreed upon by the WICC Board. It is

recommended that Councils do not put the funds collected through their Councils' bank accounts; rather, collect the donations and forward them on to WICC. Monies collected at Council level for Fellowship of the Least Coin goes outside the country and we (or WICC Canada) have no control over how or where the money is used. Having said that, any Council that has money set aside from Fellowship of the Least Coin collections is encouraged to send it in, since this money was collected for a specific purpose, and we in the CWL do not have the authority to change the direction of this money.

CCODP 1% Program – Since the CCCB does not have the time and resources to vet all organizations, it is strongly recommended once again that Councils vet the organizations they support, prior to sending in their money. CCODP is supported by the Catholic Church, and our 1% program is part of that.

We are entering year 2 of the Strategic Planning process undertaken by National Office. It's well underway, and we have long surpassed the 1,000 hour mark. For the benefit of future generations of the League, we will all be called upon to do our part. It's been mentioned in Crystal Reiter's communique, but I'll say it again – if any Council is interested in a presentation of the Strategic Plan, it's available and we would love to come out to present it!

Our National Theme, *Care for our Common Home*, is entering its second year. To that end, we are all encouraged to be mindful of, and to undertake initiatives to care for our land. Many Councils choose to adopt a highway in their area, others will set aside a day to clean up river ways or neighborhood parks or green spaces. Still others will plant trees and/or beautify their yards or church properties. Anything that you can do to reduce our carbon footprint will ultimately generate a return that will benefit our Earth.

In keeping with the National Theme, as president of Manitoba Provincial Council, I have chosen for my two-year theme, *"The Seed that Flowers"*. Many Councils are struggling, with declining membership, aging, and other priorities. We can all extend a hand – we can make a phone call, drop in for coffee, offer a ride, welcome our sisters to Mass, events, or meetings. All of these small gestures will create harmony, community and connection. The small seed that we plant will reward our efforts with beautiful flowers that become a sisterhood of sharing. Likewise, the small acts of service that we give for the beautification of our communities will convert to Care for our Common Home. Will you join me in this endeavour? – Will you reach out to someone today?

May Our Lady of Good Counsel be always at your side, guiding and protecting you in everything you do, for God and Canada!

Janet Brunger, President  
Catholic Women's League of Canada Manitoba Provincial Council

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada  
Manitoba Provincial Council**

**President**

**September, 2019**



**Communiqué 1**

***Care For Our Common Home***

TO: Diocesan Presidents (for information and forwarding to Parish Councils)  
CC: Provincial Executive (for information)  
CC: National President (for information)  
FROM: Janet Brunger, Provincial President

Welcome to September! It is with anticipation that we ramp up our activities for another fruitful year in the CWL! We look forward to fundraisers, workshops, and growth.

In reflecting on the upcoming planned activities and all that it takes to ensure success, I can't help but think about what goes on behind the scenes; all of the planning, collaboration support, encouragement, teamwork, hard work, and usually, a generous measure of fun and good-natured ribbing! And drilling further down, I wonder; What qualities make a good President?

- A good President can work well in a team environment, and she can delegate. I've found that people WANT to do a good job; if you give them the opportunity to make decisions and offer your support along the way, you'll find that they'll do their utmost for the League.  
*By delegating, you are empowering others.*
- A good President will also look for gifts in others, and draw upon those same gifts. Most people will not volunteer to do something they've never done before, for fear of failure; however, with encouragement and support, they'll tap into whatever resources they have on hand; aka, their gifts, and the result will be a successful endeavour!
- The President has the ability to set the atmosphere and create a happy working team – if she is relaxed, positive, cheerful and confident, chances are that her team will be as well.
- And finally, a good President, by collaborating with her team, has the ability to stay focused and to make good decisions for the benefit of the League. There is a lot of information coming down from other levels of the League, and by staying abreast of current affairs in the League, the community and the Parish, she will be tuned in to critical and upcoming events and will be working with her team to establish priorities.

So there's really no magic about being a President; with technology today, she really just needs to be on the other end of her email and she needs to filter information through the necessary channels in a timely manner. Depending on what level of the League she's serving at, there will be a need for sub-committees to oversee as well.

Although there is a level of dedication required, without fail, I've always found that the benefits far outweigh the commitment. I strongly encourage everyone to not be afraid to take that step, as you will find that you've learned and grown within the League with the experience of being a President. Never be afraid that "I can't do as good a job as so-and-so" – Everyone has their own style and their own gifts to bring forward, and that's precisely what makes the League as rich and unique as it is!

Conventions are also a marvelous way to tap in to an incredible amount of information the League has to offer. From Diocesan to Provincial to National Convention, you will come away uplifted and re-energized, with a renewed enthusiasm to continue the work of the League in your own Council. Our National Convention in Calgary this summer was amazing, with a lot of information shared and friendships made and renewed!

Upcoming is Winnipeg Diocesan's Fall Meeting & Workshop on October 5<sup>th</sup>, to which everyone is invited, hosted by Notre Dame Parish in Selkirk, MB; and St. Boniface Diocesan Council's Day of Reflection, hosted by St. Anne Parish Council in St. Anne, MB, on October 19<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to seeing many of you there!

Wishing each of you Many Blessings during this beautiful time of year!

Janet Brunger  
President  
Catholic Women's League of Canada  
Manitoba Provincial Council