

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
The Diocese of St Paul**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR 2010

Peace and Hope has been the spirit of our members throughout the last year as they spread this message with their words and their actions.

There are twenty councils in the Diocese of St. Paul with a total of 619 members for the year 2010. Participation among the members varies, with meeting attendance often being least active. All councils praise members for their willingness to assist in projects and activities even while they are still struggling to fill executive positions. Councils continue to pray for members to be open to new opportunities to serve their sisters in the League. One council devised an outline of the year that allowed each monthly meeting to be coordinated by a different member, allowing each person to get a feel for running a meeting. Personal invitation is still the best way to encourage new members to join and parish bulletins are most often used to disseminate news of their activities to their members and parish families.

Councils carry their spirituality from activities within their meetings to activities within their parishes and communities. They sponsor masses and are honour guards for deceased members; host prayer chains and participate in all of the ministries at mass; Children's Liturgy, bible studies, personal and group retreats are part of their spiritual development. Of special note is one council who distributed gifts of rosaries and pamphlets explaining how to say the Rosary to all Grade 6 students and gave Catholic inspirational books to all Grade 12 students. This was a financial challenge, but they "agreed that it was their responsibility to help promote Catholic teachings to our youth by whatever means we have available to us." As their president stated in her report, "My belief is that even if we were able to touch and inspire a handful of young minds, then our work has not gone to waste." Well done! One council donated a Catholic Bible to their local public library. Many other councils also give gifts to those celebrating the sacraments though the year. The CWL had excellent attendance from a number of councils as we joined with other St. Paul Diocese groups to celebrate our priests in St. Paul and the Year of the Priest celebration in June. Many councils report celebrating World Day of Peace with other churches in their communities. While the Diocese of St. Paul does not have a Catholic Girls' League council at this time, several of our councils support and encourage the Challenge Girls' Clubs in their communities.

Social justice issues are always areas of concern for our members. Each report that was received had at least one activity related to social justice. Letters were written to governments at all levels regarding old age security, euthanasia and palliative care, assisted suicide, human trafficking, sexual exploitation of children, pornography and abortion funding. Support was strong for the prolife activities and assistance for the needy and underprivileged thorough local Christmas hamper donations, Shoebox programs, and food drives to support local food bank organizations. Each council has their activities that they carry forth from year to year, allowing organizations within their communities to count on their support. Members help at local soup kitchens, six of the reporting councils indicate that members

sponsor children through Chalice, either personally or as a group. One donates to “Save a Family Plan.”

Fundraising was an activity that all councils used to help them support their extensive good causes. Catering funeral lunches, selling croissants, bake sales, garage sales, 50/50 draws – there are many creative ways which our ladies utilize their time and talents for fundraising. One council coordinated their Community Calendar project; another organized a silent auction in conjunction with their Valentine’s Tea. Many parishes sell religious items at their churches. Funds raised are used to support the Bishop’s Faith Formation (Seminarian) Fund, Development and Peace, palliative care organizations, local youth groups, women’s shelters, soup kitchens and needy families in their parishes. This year donations were also made to the Red Cross relief funds for Chile and Haiti as well as to help a group of youth doing mission work in Mexico. Not all donations are monetary. Several councils donated time and talents in assisting families in need with meals and emotional support; soup was prepared and served for cancer runs, donations were collected and given to assist those in need by way of the “Gift of Life” crib with donations for young mothers, “Warm Socks for Cold Souls” with gifts of mittens, toques, scarves and socks for the needy. Afghans were stitched and given to charities.

The need for education and encouragement for all members continues, not just to grow the CWL, but also to sustain and mentor our current members. Councils are finding innovative ways to try to give hesitant members an opportunity to try on leadership roles. We all need to be accepting of the differing styles of leadership that we see and allow each member who is willing to accept the challenge of leadership their chance to shine. At the same time, “retiring” members need to make themselves available as a resource so no one is left to struggle. Members always pull together when new challenges are presented; we are blessed to have so many talented and hard working women among us.

As we move forward to our new theme for 2011-2012, I can see that our Women of Peace and Hope are already well on their way to fulfilling their new mandate to be Centred on Faith & Justice. Our parishes and communities are rich for having such dedicated women in their midst.

For God and Canada,

Annette deB.
St. Paul Diocesan President