

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Saskatchewan Provincial Council
Annual Reports 2022

CATHOLIC
and **LIVING IT!**

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Note:

Due to the changes being made to the survey and reporting to National, Provincial reports were restricted to the Provincial President.

Saskatchewan Provincial Council President

Annual Report 2022

Connie Crichton

After two years of pandemic turbulence, 2022 was welcomed as a renewal year as councils again began meeting in person. To compile as much information as I could for my report, reports from the diocesan presidents supplemented the parish responses to the online survey which were only completed by one half of the councils in the province. While many councils were still taking time to regroup, others were resuming their work with full force.

The changes to the executive structure has been met with great enthusiasm and workshops and diocesan meetings have provided guidance in moving to the three standing committee format. This will be an ongoing initiative of the provincial and diocesan executives to provide guidance and training on working with the new structures and making members aware of the resources available to assist them. There are still challenges at all levels to fill executive positions and failure of members to take on leadership roles have proved to be a tipping point for some councils in deciding to disband. Councils have been encouraged to do what ever works for them to keep their councils active for their membership. Mentorship is key to building future leaders and we should always be looking for the potential in each of our members to take on a leadership role. New members are recruited through parish bulletins, announcements, membership brunches, and personal invitations. While new members have been recruited, more were lost through non-renewal and deaths leaving us with over 500 fewer members than in the previous year.” How do we recruit new members?” is something all councils would like assistance with. Attendance at social events brought out more members and non-members so in addition to growing our faith, serving others, and addressing the need for social justice in our society, we have to remember that girls still want to have fun!

Communicating to members through parish bulletins, emails, and phone calls allowed councils to stay connected. Almost a third of the councils use newsletters to keep their councils informed. As we still have members who do not use computers, it is difficult to share many of the resources that are available online. Use of the national and provincial websites, social media, virtual meetings, and webinars are becoming more commonly used as more members become technology connected.

The Theme “Catholic and Living It” was embraced and members responded by doing just that on a daily basis by praying and creating spiritual programs and retreats, participating in parish ministries, providing care within the parish by serving funeral lunches, and to the greater community by volunteering at centres that feed the hungry and assist those marginalized in our society. Financial support for charities continued and surpassed the amounts reported in previous years. One diocese focused on supporting a local shelter for victims of human trafficking through the IWIN project, supplying backpacks containing personal care items.

Our provincial Spiritual Advisor has reached out to the spiritual advisors in the parishes and many councils have reported they are well supported by their Spiritual Advisors. They are our most important tool that we can use in promoting the League.

Families, youth, and the sanctity of life are being supported through prayers, providing communion to shut ins, coffee parties for the elderly, nursing home visits, prayer shawls for the sick, donations and membership in Prolife groups, support of pregnancy crisis centres, financial support to youth groups, bursaries, and sacramental preparation gifts.

The topic of palliative care was most responded to by our parish councils as half of the councils participated in some way in 12 hours of Prayer for Palliative Care, $\frac{3}{4}$ sent post cards during the Campaign and a third attended the webinar provided on May 7, 2022. We will consider this interest as very positive as quality, accessible and affordable palliative care is our response to the growing trend of accessing Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD).

Councils are responding to a challenge to provide members with events or learning opportunities to further understanding and participation in “walking together” towards Truth and Reconciliation with our Indigenous sisters and brothers. The Caritas Blanket Exercise, prayer services and other events put on by other than CWL councils were also attended by our members. As we have many people of Ukrainian heritage in our province, our members were very generous in responding to financial support for humanitarian aid as well as supporting new arrivals in settling into homes with donations of household items.

Acting on resolutions has been mostly limited to the “Palliative Care” and Pornography Hurts” postcard campaigns with a few councils reporting letter writing to government officials as well. Resolutions and Legislation chairpersons are more often than not left vacant; however, councils do recognize the need for education on these topics. While parish councils understand the importance of resolutions and legislation, work is needed to keep the resolution and legislation information process an active part of the parish council activity. This will be a challenge to national, provincial, and diocesan councils to ensure these important areas are well supported though their communications and education opportunities presented now that they will fall under the broader standing committee of Social Justice.

Very few of the many new resources created by the Strategic Plan implementation committee have been utilized and many councils were not aware that they existed. Through promotion and utilization by provincial and diocesan executive members in workshops and meetings, these resources should be of great benefit to parish councils in the future.

Transition will be the focus for the next year. Prayer, outreach, listening, and training. Change is hard. It will call for sacrifices and hard work. But just as the butterfly emerges gloriously from its cocoon, so will the League of the future, through it’s hard work, become a more focused and engaging organization. All with God’s help!

Prince Albert Diocesan Council President

Annual Report 2022

Priscilla Wakelin

Annual Report 2022

This last year was a herd year in our diocese with 3 councils considering dispending. We had one council choose to become inactive, one chose to dispend some of the members have since joining other councils. And the other has decided to continue for the next while to see if the new structure of the league will help their small council. As for the possibility of a new council in Big River, this is on a hold for now. as the person who was helping them has been taking care of a sick family member. I have tried to reach out but they wanted to wait until her return. I will continue to keep you updated. Now on to some of the positive things happening in our diocese. Our councils have been very busy over the past year. Many spiritual Bouquets have ben sent out this year some to National for the Popes intentions. some for the Ordination of Tai le to the priest hood. Many prayer services held for the world day of prayer for Palliative care and the world day of prayer. Some of our parishes held faith prayer services at the church and over zoom meetings on a regular basis. Most of our parishes sent out the postcards for Palliative care, and joined the webinar for palliative care., Dignity of care. Some have been downloading the new resources from national.

During the years many items have been collected and distributed to many projects, some of these are food for the food banks throughout our diocese. Still more items collected and sent to La Range, for refugees of Ukraine. Shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. There were also. Household items were collected to furnish tiny homes on the reserve. collections for the Door of hope. And Teen Challenge, and Teen Aide. a child was sponsored to go to a local summer camp. Also collected items for children for bags for the Love program that are given to children that are removed from a home for the first time by Social Services. There was also many bursaries and volunteer work in schools helping with acuties and prayer services as well as reading with students.

One of our smaller parishes started a CWL page on Facebook. there were fun nights, teas and other social and fun gatherings. An Arise conference was also held and helped sponsored by CWL. Gratitude post cards have continued to be filled out and given out not only to CWL members but in communities as well. CWL bookmarks were given out on Mothers Day. Put on a Christmas pageant at senor center in Duck lake. Many members continue to invite ladies to become member of the league by personal invitation. Membership growth is still a struggle but we continue to preserver and try to light the fire for the league for members current

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Regina Diocesan Council President

Annual Report 2022

Janette Rieger

This was the first year that councils were asked to complete one comprehensive annual survey per council, instead of the reports for each standing chair and executive position. As a result, one survey result was compiled and sent to each diocesan president; it fell to the president to compile the report, but some executive members were able to assist with the report. I thank them for their assistance. – Janette Rieger

Written by: Janette Rieger, President; Linda Maddaford, Organization; Claudette (Cookie) Jacques, Education & Health; Agnes Smith, Spiritual Development.

President

January 2022 started with 67 paid councils from the previous year and ended with 62 paid councils. Four councils disbanded and did not pay fees in 2022 – St. Stephen in Kamsack, St. John the Baptist in Dysart, Immaculate Heart of Mary in Claybank, and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Val Marie. Holy Family in Radville did not pay their fees in 2022. In addition, St. Mary's in Regina also did not pay their fees in 2022 or in 2021 so they were not counted as one of the paid councils at the start of the year. Several councils disbanded during the year including St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Stockholm; St. Mary's, Churchbridge; St. Stanislaus, Ituna; and St. Anthony, Regina. These councils did pay their fees for 2022. The total council count at the end of 2022 is 57 councils that are considered paid and active. One council paid their fees in 2022 but wishes to be considered as 'inactive' – Holy Angels in Pangman. There were 2,271 paid members for 2022.

The Regina Diocese has 9 regions. The chairpersons of each region represent the councils of their region at diocesan executive meetings. Unfortunately, 3 of the regions do not have a chairperson, so that means that the 27 councils in those regions do not have representation at the diocesan meetings. In other words, almost 50% of the councils are not represented. In the Regina Diocese, 25 of the 57 active councils completed an online Annual Report Survey which is almost a 44% completion rate. Regarding a return to pre-pandemic activity, the vast majority have not returned to their full activities. Only 36% claim to be back at 100%.

There were many responses to what excites respondents about the structure and the future of the League, but most were that there will be smaller executives in the future. Many councils have trouble filling the positions. With a smaller executive at all levels, many commented that there will be fewer communiques to go through, which they see as a positive. Some commented that they are unsure about the changes and how it will affect their councils.

The councils are preparing by reading the information handed out from the various levels, and by attending regional workshops. As president, I presented 3 regional workshops in the fall in Estevan, Southwest (in Swift Current), and Our Lady of Peace (in Assiniboia) where I discussed

some options as to how to get members to join committees or to be involved with projects. Most councils have not personally reached out to the diocesan or provincial levels for more information.

The councils are working with the theme Catholic and Living It! by being very involved in their parishes, praying the theme prayer, and using the logo. Most comment that they are using the theme by the way they live their lives and share their faith.

Most councils are blessed with spiritual advisors who offer mass before the meetings, attend meetings, give guidance and reflections, give reports, and who promote the League in the parish. Most spiritual advisors are supportive of their council's endeavours and activities. A few councils have a spiritual advisor who has several parishes or who doesn't live nearby, so it is difficult for them to be involved in the meetings.

At the end of 2022, the Diocesan Council was made-up as follows:

Past-President – Yvonne Bachelu
President – Janette Rieger
Organization/Pres-Elect – Linda Maddaford
Secretary – Claire Verret
Treasurer – Viola Joel
Christian Family Life – Lynda Thul
Community Life – Yvonne Jalbert
Education & Health – Cookie Jacques
Spiritual Development – Agnes Smith

The positions of Corresponding Secretary, Communications, Resolutions, and Legislation are vacant. Vicki Mayer did hold the position of Communications until November when she resigned for personal reasons. I thank her for her service.

The regions were made-up as follows:

Esterhazy – Donna Sugden
Estevan - vacant
Moose Jaw – Lynda Thul
Our Lady of Good Counsel – Judie Williams
Our Lady of Peace – vacant
Southwest – Rachelle Johnson
Regina – vacant
Weyburn – Camille Goski
Yorkton-Melville – Elaine Hornung

Treasurer

Donations were given to the national voluntary funds of: Catholic Missions in Canada, Catholic Near East Welfare Association, CCCB Palliative Care Kit, Coady International Institute, Development and Peace, and the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition. In total, the 25 responding councils donated to these and to other charities to a total of \$42,811.00, or an average of \$1,712.00 per council. Having said that, a few of the councils did not make any donations in 2022 so the actual average per donating councils would be higher. One issue was that some councils did not hold fundraisers, which affected donations.

Past President

Some councils do not have a past-president but the ones that do appreciate having someone to guide the council with their knowledge, organizational skills, and experience. Also, some past presidents are still on council in other capacities. Their knowledge of the League has been valuable to the current president as well as having someone available to give a second opinion.

Most councils keep their archives in the church or hall. The majority of items archived are photos, newspaper clippings, funeral cards and obituaries, minutes, and financial statements. Some councils keep annual reports from their chairpersons and summaries of council activities. One council keeps the updates from the child that they sponsor through Chalice.

The vast majority of councils do not have a history book. The councils that do have a history book keep photos with some councils keeping binders and booklets that were compiled for anniversaries. One council reported having a very comprehensive history book. The history books have not been sent by one council to national office, but one council reported that they would send it if requested.

Nineteen past-presidents were not able to present information from the Constitution & Bylaws at a meeting, while 6 were able to do that. Fifteen councils do not have a parish council policy manual. Most of those councils do not feel they need one and are not planning to develop one; only a few councils are planning to develop one. Ten councils do have a policy manual and half of those say it needs updating, especially as the restructuring of the League takes place.

A few of the past-presidents contribute by helping wherever needed, helping the other chairpersons or filling vacant positions, helping with fundraising, standing in for the president when she is not available, and helping with the planning of regional meetings.

Spiritual Development

The councils assist members in their communal and personal prayer by using a variety of prayer styles, spiritual programs using resources from the national website's strategic plan, retreats, days of reflection, online spiritual webinars. Councils assist members in their growth in the Catholic faith mostly by sharing information from Catholic sources. To a lesser extent, other equally used methods are websites, online communities, courses, programs, workshops, and guest speakers.

One council used guest speakers and one used websites to keep up to date on the role of women in the church and the appointment of women to positions in the Vatican. Seven councils used other methods, which were not listed.

Councils have supported women and men discerning their vocations by promoting the CWL Bursary Program, prayer for vocations, and donations for the education of priests. Councils have supported parishioners in the lay formation program through prayers and encouragement. Councils have supported seminarians going into the priesthood. One council supports Camp Lemieux where vocations begin as the camp is very Catholic. Prayer cards with a prayer for priests on one side

and a prayer for vocations on the other side are made available. One council supports youth in their separate school with donations and prayers for the MyGen Youth Rally which is held annually.

Organization

Many councils do participate in annual membership drives. For some councils it means contacting the current members by a variety of methods. Other councils reach out to potential new members by personal invitation, emails, texts, phone calls, bulletin announcements, presentations in the church, displays in the church foyer, show CWL videos, hand out CWL pamphlets, membership brunch, and Christmas party.

One council sends out information packages to all member in the fall with some fun items inside and the invitation to renew. Another council hands out the renewal forms to each member so that the forms and membership fee can be placed in the collection plate in the envelope provided. And yet another council places an envelope in the Sunday collection envelopes marked 'CWL Membership' in the November section. Several councils have now set up e-transfer so that members can pay using this method.

CWL information sessions for members include the sharing of communiqués, articles from the League Magazine, and regional workshops. Many councils make use of bulletin boards in church to share information, photos, and upcoming events.

For information sessions for prospective members, some councils have a new member form and package available for handout. Many council members have personal conversations with prospective members. Some councils hold a fellowship events or socials where non-members and women from other denominations are invited to attend. At these there are spirituals, lectures, games, music, and food. One council featured a slide show about what their council does in the parish and that resulted in two new members.

The majority of councils (84%) did not invite their counterpart from the diocesan level of the League to provide information and League development. The question was asked as to what resources/assistance is needed. The responses included regional meetings or workshops, ideas for membership recruitment, a spiritual program that could be used at each meeting, prayer services, League development where regular members learn to share about the League, ideas for small councils, and how to inspire members to participate. The ones mentioned the most were membership recruitment, and a spiritual program and prayers to use at meetings.

Christian Family Life

Councils undertook a great variety of initiatives to support marriage and families such as giving gifts to newlywed couples, including crucifixes; giving baby gifts when children are baptized such as white stoles, baby afghans, and celebrating special wedding anniversaries. In addition, donations were given to organizations that support families, and donations given to families in need. Information was provided about marriage and marriage counselling, abortion, and assistance was given to schools.

Many councils support the sanctity of life by holding pro-life memberships, both by the council and personally. Many councils participated in Life Chains, the March for Life, and 40 Days of

Prayer for Life during Lent. Donations are given to organizations that support young mothers with baby clothing. Additionally, some parishes not only donate items but they have a Spiritual Adoption program where people pray for an unborn child for 9 months. Many councils hosted 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative care. Councils have masses said and pray for life issues. Awareness was raised on MAID (medical assistance in dying) and letters were written to MPs and MLAs on this and other pro-life issues. Some councils use the CWL postcards that are available on palliative care.

The youth are supported in the parishes with financial donations towards things such as scholarships; school of religion and other youth programs in the parish; giving gifts to celebrate conferral of sacraments; sponsoring someone to attend the MyGen Youth rally, World Youth Day, and summer camps; and awards at schools and festivals. Councils help with children's liturgy at mass, catechism, and training the youth to become altar servers, hospitality ministers, and to be involved in parish events. Some councils support the youth outside of the parish by being prayer partners at the MyGen Youth rally, and by helping local schools with snacks and lunches. Members knit and crochet toques, mitts, and scarves which are donated to local charities. One council organizes and finances the Catholic Girl's League in their parish.

There is quite a variety of outreach and ministry provided to others in the parish. Many councils visit the sick, the home-bound, and other people in need in their communities with delivery of communion to some. In addition, masses and prayers are offered, and phone calls made to support shut-ins, the sick, and people in need. Some councils hold Honour Guards at funerals and help with the funeral lunches. One council holds an online rosary.

Religious vocations are supported and promoted by prayers – for vocations, priests, religious orders, and seminarians. Donations were given to the Archbishop's Appeal, a seminarian, and a religious order. One council hosted a fall regional meeting and the guest speaker was Shannon Novak, who spoke on the Spiritual Motherhood of Priests.

Community Life

Members were questioned as to whether they participated in the 2nd National Truth and Reconciliation Day in 2022. One council had members that participated in a prayer service with Indigenous groups and another council has members who are teachers that participated in the activities at their school. A few councils had mass said and some councils discussed it at their meetings. Some members attended events as personal attendees, not CWL members. One council voted to send \$130.00 per year, for 5 years, to Truth and Reconciliation Day.

The Food Bank Project was not directly supported by many councils, however that is because many parishes have food donations as a project in which the councils participated. Councils did not attend the webinar on human trafficking presented by Joy Smith. Several councils raised funds, gathered donations, collected or bought household items and clothing for Ukrainian refugees. Some of the donations and assistance were coordinated through local people with connections to Ukraine, where the money was sent directly. Only 3 councils reported using the Development and Peace – Caritas Canada brochure, available from national office, to promote projects supported by the League. And only 2 councils accessed the Catholic Near East Welfare Association brochure, also available at the national office.

Education and Health

Councils assisted Catholic education in their parish or community by purchasing bibles, gifts for children celebrating sacraments, and supported local Catholic schools with awards to students. Bursaries and scholarships were provided. CWL members help with sacramental preparation, catechism, children's liturgy, and weekly seminars regarding different issues in our faith. Appreciation is given to teachers and educators in various ways such as thankyou notes and donating coffee and muffins. One council supports a Catholic Girls League, and others provide lunches for youth gatherings at weekend workshops.

CWL bursaries and scholarships include post-secondary scholarships, musical festival and proficiency awards, and girls' sports camp scholarships. Students are made aware of the National CWL scholarship as well as Saskatchewan's social justice award along with the Coady Institute and any high school grad scholarships offered by Local CWL councils.

Four councils participated in the Mental Health postcard campaign. Seventeen councils participated in the Palliative care postcard campaign. Five councils participated in the webinar on palliative care on May 7th, 2022. Eleven councils participated in the 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care. Six councils educated members on the League's partnership with Blood Services Canada. Three councils planned actions for World Water Day. No councils planned action for Earth Day in April, nor Earth Action Initiative in September 2022. CWL members helped the environment by recycling and not using disposable cups and dishes at events. One council worked with our Catholic Girls' League to plant and maintain flower beds around the church property. Awareness of the issue is being raised.

Communications

Overwhelmingly, most councils rely on email as their primary method of communication. But other methods are used as not everyone has reliable internet, especially in rural areas. Information is also communicated via meetings, parish bulletins, phone calls, and regular mail.

The most popular method of social media used is Facebook, which is used by a several councils with either their council's Facebook page or the parish's. Almost all of the councils who responded to the survey also use the national CWL website. The reasons for accessing the website are quite diverse: general information, research, communiqués, spiritual components (prayers, prayer services, ceremony booklets), news, resources, forms, membership information, ordering materials, learning about the Strategic Plan, reading the League Magazine, and for staying up to date. One comment was that the website is not user-friendly.

Just over 1/3 of the councils have a newsletter. Fifteen councils of the 25 are not aware of the resolutions relating to inappropriate internet use and the behaviour associated with it. Finally, 96% of the councils (24 out of 25) distributed the League's 'Pornography Hurts' postcards!

Resolutions

The vast majority of the councils do not have a Resolutions Chairperson, and the few that do have combined it with Legislation. The biggest issues for councils regarding this standing committee is that they do not have a chairperson, often because their executive and council is

small, and that there is no interest in this standing committee. Also, some members won't become involved with this standing committee because they feel it is a big and difficult job and will be time-consuming.

Only a few councils have used resources such as the Resolutions Guide, the Resolutions Supplement, or others. Three councils reviewed the 2022.01 Resolution – Enact Federal Legislation to Reduce Food Loss and Waste. One council (St. Joseph – Indian Head) did submit a resolution, Child Labour in Mining Mica, which was passed at the diocesan and provincial levels but was not brought to the floor at the national convention. However, it did raise awareness and another council is making their members aware of this issue. No members are interested at this time to receive specialized training in resolution development.

As the Resolutions standing committee will be phased out nationally in 2023, most councils replied that they will continue to monitor any resolutions that are passed and will promote them with their councils. A few councils indicated that they are unsure as to how they will proceed and will be looking for more information to come out regarding this issue.

Legislation

Most councils report that their members have some level of knowledge regarding issues being discussed by the federal government. This number declines slightly for knowledge of provincial issues and declines slightly again for knowledge of issues at local levels. Only about half of the councils have some knowledge about the National League's position papers located on the national website. Almost half of the councils are not aware of these.

Regarding Federal Bill C-230: Protection of Freedom of Conscience, 5 councils are very aware of this bill while 18 have some knowledge. The number of 'very aware' councils rises to 11 for Bill C-7: Medical Assistance in Dying, and 14 councils have some knowledge. Not one council reported 'not aware' on this issue. Resources used to remain informed on current federal and provincial legislation include mailings from government representatives, forums, and documents. Eleven councils replied 'other' but unfortunately there was no space to indicate the methods used. Councils did not indicate that they are monitoring or acting upon any other pieces of legislation.

As the Legislation standing committee will be phased out nationally in 2023, most councils replied that they will continue to take action on items as directed by other levels of the CWL, or as individual members show interest and raise awareness. They will also be looking to the national website for direction. Councils replied that it is important that the League continues to lobby government and keep them accountable. One council commented that it is unfortunate that this standing committee is being taken away because it was how the elderly members of their council who attended the meetings received their information on current legislation issues.

Councils were asked for recommendations or suggestions that may be helpful to monitor legislation with the League. The replies included posting issues on the national website, specifically with a dedicated area for legislation, and to email pertinent information and communiqués directly to council presidents and secretaries.

Strategic Plan

The Organization section of the Parish Annual Survey asked specific questions about the awareness and implementation of the Resources and Programs that have been developed and rolled out under the National Strategic Plan. For each of the 17 Resources below the question was posed:

The Strategic Plan has been implemented and almost \$1,000,000 has been invested in helping parish councils. But, for the League to be successful, parish councils must participate in some way in the programs that are developed. Please indicate which of the following programs your council has implemented.

Strategic Resource	Implemented Yes %	Implemented No %	Not Aware %
Welcome Program	48	48	4
Diversity Ad, Calendars, Postcards	40	40	20
Social Justice Calendar	4	72	24
National Faith Day	4	64	32
Catholic Social Teaching Resources	0	80	20
Care for God’s Creation Model	8	68	24
Prayers & Spiritual Program Model	24	60	16
Pamphlet: Social Aspects of Councils	0	60	40
Workshop on Creating Prayer	0	72	28
Dignity & Rights of Workers Module	0	64	36
Balance Meetings Poster & Post Cards	0	60	40
Newsletter Template	24	56	20
Misconceptions Workshop	0	60	40
Joy of Leadership	4	68	28
Catholic Social Teaching Institutions	0	68	32
List of Retreat Centers	0	68	32
Life & Dignity of human Person Module	4	64	32

From these resources the ones we are most interested in implementing are; Welcome Program 36%, Prayers & Spiritual Programs Workshop 32%, Life & Dignity of the Human Person 20%, with Care for God’s Creation and Joy of Leadership each receiving 16%. The second resource garnering the most interest to Implement were; Catholic Social Teaching, Newsletter Template, and Misconceptions Workshop each receiving 12%.

Comments on changes to the League’s structure and future were very positive. Most councils were glad to be reducing the number of standing committees and the number of reports to generate and read from National, Provincial and Diocesan. Some councils were waiting until 2024 to move to the new structure and planned to use this year to increase their knowledge and make the necessary preparations. Councils also noted and looked forward to a stronger focus on our goals and objectives rather than paperwork.

Another council commented: I’m not sure the Restructure excites us – but it seems to be a step in the right direction. As you can see from the center column, the highest percentage of councils report Not Implemented followed by one third of councils reporting they are Not Aware of these

resources. We have some work ahead of us. But your Diocesan, Provincial and National levels are here to hear you and to help as we move forward, Catholic and Living, Walking Together, For God and Canada.

Strategic Plan

The second portion of the Strategic Planning Initiatives questions were quite general in nature but will help the various levels determine areas that need attention.

Of the 25 responding councils, only 2 had a spiritual retreat in 2022 that was at least 2 hours in duration. An average of 4.4 non-executive members per council helped with planning or organizing an event or project in their councils. About half of the councils are 'usually satisfied' with the level of communication received from each of the national, provincial, and diocesan councils, with an average of 20-32% being 'always satisfied'. The level of satisfaction is lower for the regional levels. With no opportunity to indicate why they are unsatisfied; I speculate that part of the problem is that many of our regions do not have a chairperson.

For the positions on the council, most councils indicate that around 50% of them are filled by appointment. Unfortunately, many of the positions, including Christian Family Life, Community Life, and Communications report over a 50% vacancy rate; Resolutions and Legislation each report an 80% vacancy rate.

One council reported visiting a federal government representative in person, with none at the provincial or municipal level; no councils contacted any level of government by phone. Much more activity was done by letter with 12 councils contacting a federal government representative, 3 councils contacting provincial, and 2 council contacting municipal. By email, a few representatives at each level were contacted.

Two-thirds of councils are participating in ecumenical activities with the majority being United, Lutheran, Anglican, and Evangelical denominations. The activities were usually of a faith/prayer and a social nature, with a few being of a service nature. The participation happened once in 44% of the reports, but 5 or more times in 22% of the reports. Interfaith interactions are minimal.

Almost half of the councils report having no members under the age of 35, with the other half of the councils reporting minimal numbers in the under-35 age bracket. Not one council reported having more than 5% of their membership in this age brackets.

Members were asked how often they reach out for advice to the various levels. About one-third of councils reach out to the Diocesan level monthly (24%), semi-annually (36%), or annually (28%), while only a few councils (3 councils or 12%) never reach out.

For the Provincial level, 72% of councils never reach out, 24% reach out annually, and 4% semi-annually.

For the National level, 76% of councils never reach out, 12% reach out each of semi-annually and annually. (This refers to the National Executive.) For the National Office, 48% of councils never reach out, 28% reach out annually, and 24% semi-annually.

Summary

There were 2 final questions. The first one asked if this streamline annual report survey was easier to complete than in previous years. Overwhelmingly, the answer was 'yes'! Some commented that even though it was discussed as an executive, it was easier to go through. Some executives gathered in person and some worked together over the phone. Some completed the paper copy first and then inputted it later.

Suggestions for improvement included:

- next year some councils will be using the new standing committees of Faith/Service/Social Justice, while other will be using the current format for the last time. Allowances will have to be made for this.
- perhaps each person who has knowledge of a certain area would be able to access their section online instead of one person completing it all.
- one person found that their comments were not saved when they had to return to finish the report at a later time, so all of the comments had to be re-done.
- if you cannot have dollar signs or decimals in the boxes when requesting dollar amounts, please indicate that. -some councils still have trouble accessing the survey online, but once they were able to do so, they were able to complete it.
- a new president was confused by the terminology of 'Parish Council Report' as she thought it referred to her Parish Pastoral Council. Perhaps the letters 'CWL' could be inserted between 'Parish' and 'Council' to minimize confusion.

The final question asked if there was anything else that they would like the national board to know. Some individual comments are:

- members are concerned with the costs associated with restructuring and are unsure that the restructuring will actually increase League membership and participation.
- it is a challenge to get new members.
- it is a challenge to get members to take a leadership role, especially president.
- there is too much reading for the president to do; information should be streamlined. A newsletter could be sent with each chairperson having only a few items to report.
- could there be an annual calendar of CWL events for the members? This would give a bigger picture of potential up-and-coming events.
- could more ideas to support and include women from other cultures be given. -there needs to be more work done on Evangelization in the Spiritual Development component of the Strategic Plan. -help is needed to get younger women involved.
- the Strategic Plan has implemented too many changes and overwhelmed the grassroots members.
- councils are struggling since the pandemic and they feel that the National council and organization has unrealistic expectations for councils.
- councils are struggling to stay active and there are no young people.
- some rural areas are struggling to keep all of their clubs, schools, and organizations going, so they are doing the best that they can.

Saskatoon Diocesan Council President

Annual Report 2022

Audrey Zimmerman

The response rate to the annual report survey increased substantially this year with 60% of the Saskatoon Diocesan councils completing the survey. Most of the reporting councils have returned to pre-pandemic activity. Naturally, councils who are still paused did not complete the survey.

Presidents

The vast majority of parish council presidents are willing to embrace the changes to the League's structure. Phrases such as very hopeful, very promising, and very excited were used by several presidents. They were hopeful that the new executive positions will be easier to fill and reporting will be streamlined. In preparation for these changes most councils discussed the new structure at meetings and several have already changed their leadership to the new structure. Less than half of the councils reached out to the diocesan or provincial executive members to address questions about the changes.

Our national theme Catholic and Living It prayer was used by many councils at regular council meetings. The theme cards were distributed all members. One president nicely summarized the theme: "It is not so much a change in what we do, but a recognition and celebration of why we do it."

The support of the Spiritual Advisor is very valuable to councils. Celebrating mass for the CWL and giving a message at the monthly meeting was appreciated by the presidents. One president communicated with her priest before and after the council meetings and also sent him the meeting minutes.

Councils reached out for advice to the diocesan level more often than to the provincial or national level.

Secretaries

The council secretaries all keep the membership up to date with special events and most read the monthly minutes at each meeting. Most secretaries do not send the members a quarterly report of activities, feeling that the monthly minutes are sufficient. One secretary also completes a monthly newsletter, while another has taken on the duties of the Communications Standing Committee, reflecting the new League structure.

Treasurers

Several councils lamented the lack of fundraising activities due to the pandemic. Despite this, councils were able to support both the National Voluntary Funds, their parish and other charities close to their hearts. The reported total donations to all charities was \$64,421, with an average council donation of \$2,685. One council was able to donate over \$10,000 to charity last year. Knowledge and support for the National Voluntary funds was not universal. This may be an area where future education could focus. The increase in per capita fees caused some members to

leave the League. Councils who pay the membership fees for their most senior members have also found the increase a challenge.

Past Presidents

Being past president is not the same as being a 'retired president'. The ladies listed many council activities that they are directly involved with, such as filling in for the president when she is unavailable, helping with nominations and suggesting guest speakers. One past president described the position perfectly: "I am the president's right hand." That's what mentoring is all about. Council archives, which included pictures, membership lists, the Book of Life, etc. were kept in a variety of places. A few councils have a history book. None of the councils sent a copy of their history book to the national office. Almost half of the reporting councils have a policy manual and several councils indicated that they are in the process of writing one.

Spiritual Development Standing Committees

Assisting CWL members in their prayer life is a vital part of the Spiritual Development Standing Committee. All councils used a variety of prayer styles and spiritual programs, retreats, days of reflection and on-line webinars. One council was able to hold two spiritual retreats (two hours or more in duration) during 2022. Another council held one retreat. One council has a 'Pilgrim Mother' project: a statue of Mary was placed in member's home for a period of time and then moved on to the next member's home. One third of the councils kept their members up to date on issues surrounding the role of women in the church. The majority of councils support men and women discerning their vocation through prayer. Financial support was also given to seminarians, and organizations such as Catholic Outreach, Face to Face and NET ministries. Two thirds of the councils participated in activities with other Christian denominations. Most often these events were faith or prayer based. Service, social or Social Justice projects were also undertaken by a few councils. One council participated in a one-time activity with a Muslim community. The diocesan executive organized and funded the refurbishing of a Grotto dedicated to Mary located on the grounds of the Queens House of Retreats in Saskatoon.

Organization Standing Committees

The strength of the CWL lies in its members. All but one responding council held a membership drive in the fall. Several innovative ideas for recruiting members were reported. A lady's brunch, a membership tea, quilt display, a Sunday brunch, pancake breakfast and a lady's luncheon were some of the activities reported. Personal invitations to join the League were also made to any and all perspective members. New members were given written materials and questions were answered personally. One president is in the process of developing a welcome book for new CWL members.

Members were kept informed about the League during monthly meetings. They were also encouraged to use the national website to learn more. One council read national communiques at meetings. Most councils did not invite their diocesan counterpart to provide information about the League to their council. When asked about what assistance and resources the councils are looking for, the responses were split fairly evenly between prayer services, membership recruitment and League development. Interestingly, five councils felt they did not require any assistance at this time.

The majority of executive officers and committee chairpersons were appointed as opposed to being elected. Several councils mentioned struggling to fill executive positions. Councils engaged an average of two non-executive members in the planning, organizing or hosting of an event or project. One council had fifteen members help with a project. More than half of the councils reported having a few members under the age of 35.

Christian Family Life Standing Committees

This standing committee encompasses ministry to God's people in all walks of life. Support for marriage took two forms: cards, or small gifts to acknowledge of milestone wedding anniversaries and prayer cards or a crucifix for newly married couples.

Vacation bible school, sacramental preparation programs, training altar servers, a family retreat, and sponsoring Face to Face ministries were some ways councils supported the spiritual growth of children. Councils provided gifts for children receiving sacraments of initiation. Baptisms were supported with bibs and prayers cards.

The sanctity of life from conception to natural death is very important to the CWL. Most councils were members of Pro-Life Saskatchewan. Other advocacy initiatives included Pro-life signs, attending the March of Life or Life Chain events, donations to Teen-Aid, and signing petitions supporting palliative care. One council supported the Saskatoon Pregnancy Options Centre by holding a baby shower to gather donations for the centre. Twenty councils participated in the palliative card postcards campaign. One council plans to host the Horizons of Hope Workshop in their parish in the future.

Reaching out in ministry to others is a vital role of the CWL. Several councils have a prayer shawl ministry. In recognition of Mother's Day one council purchased flowers for the dining room tables at the local nursing home. Another council promoted awareness of national Seniors Day, October 2, 2022. The many other ways our members helped the needy included food hampers, providing funeral lunches, volunteering at a thrift store or the CWL Clothing Depot, visiting the sick and elderly, get well cards, sympathy cards and a council prayer chain.

Community Life Standing Committees

Standing up for the dignity of all people throughout the world is an integral part of the CWL. Many councils participated in the Food Bank Project. Some found it helpful in building community. One third of reporting councils had members who attended the webinar on human trafficking presented by Joy Smith. Several councils supported the IWIN backpack initiative to support survivors of human trafficking. Two councils held Red Sand services, which highlight the tragedy of human trafficking. Half of the councils had an opportunity support Ukrainian refugees in various ways. One council sold ribbons in support of Ukraine and raised an impressive \$2258.00. One council had an on-line presentation from the Elizabeth Fry Society and then held a successful parish wide collection of personal hygiene products for the group. Most councils have yet to order the Development and Peace Brochure or the Catholic Near East Welfare Association brochure from the national office. Less than half of the responding councils participated in activities on September 30, National Truth and Recognition Day. Of the councils that did report participating in events two attended a walk, three held a mass while others prayed for reconciliation that day. One council had eight members attend a major TRC event at Mosaic Stadium in Regina. Two councils made financial donations to TRC funds.

Education and Health Standing Committees

Several councils taught sacramental preparation classes for children receiving first communion and confirmation. One council provided a luncheon for their sacramental program. Councils were also involved in masses for high school graduates. Over one third of the councils provided a bursary or scholarship for local high school graduates. Some councils also provided bursaries or prizes to their local music festival.

One third of the reporting councils participated in the mental health postcard campaign. Half of the councils had some form of participation in the 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care, however less than one third had members attend the webinar on palliative care. Education on the partnership with Blood Services Canada occurred in a few of the councils. Environmental issues were not a priority in 2022.

Resolutions Standing Committees

Speaking out to our governments on issues, while a daunting task, has always been a part of the CWL. Only one council reported that they had a dedicated Resolutions Standing Committee Chairperson. Four other councils had a combined Resolutions and Legislation chairperson. Obviously, one of the biggest challenges for this committee is the lack of leadership and interest in an area that seems overwhelming to many members. Organizing and paying a speaker was also cited as a challenge. Very few councils accessed any resources to develop a resolution. Two councils did discuss Resolution 2022.1: Enact Federal Legislation to Reduce Food Loss and Waste. Most councils contacted the three levels of government by letter, email or phone call. One council visited their member of parliament in person. With the phasing out of this committee most councils plan to look to national resources and all executive levels of the League to stay informed.

Legislation Standing Committees

Most councils had some knowledge and awareness of issues being discussed at the federal and provincial level, with fewer councils aware of local government issues. They also had some knowledge of National League issue papers. Two thirds of the responding councils were very aware of Bill C-7 Medical Assistance in Dying. There was a bit less awareness of Bill C-230 Protection of Freedom of Conscience. Mailings from government representatives was the resource used most often for councils to remain informed on current legislation. Three councils used the LEGISinfo website.

One third of the councils had monitored or acted on federal or provincial bills. Going forward councils plan to use the Social Justice Standing Committee to monitor legislation. Several councils also plan to rely on information from the national, provincial and diocesan executives to stay informed. One council suggested that the legislation focus should be streamlined to avoid efforts being spread too thin.

Strategic Planning Initiatives

The Strategic Planning Committees have produced many resources to help parish councils. In 2022, the *Welcome Program* and the *Prayers and Spiritual Programs* modules were both implemented by just over one third of the responding councils. The other strategic plan resources were used by either a few councils or have not been implemented yet. Half of the councils are

most interested in an information session on the Welcome Program. Almost one third indicated an interest in the *Joy of Leadership* Module.

The Annual Report Survey

A full two thirds of the councils found the revised survey easier to fill out. Some councils even said it was fun! A few councils felt they were not able to completely share their council projects and achievements. The large number of opened-ended questions did make collating the survey report a bit more challenging. Honouring the comments made by councils while also striving to be concise is a balancing act. All comments were read and taken into account for this report.

Final Comments

Decreasing membership, aging membership and the increase in per capita fees were concerns that councils wanted to share with the national board. One council mentioned the idea of eliminating diocesan councils as a cost-cutting measure.

One council shared this: *We do not have members who want more workshops and modules, we have members who are happy with our local activities and our ability to raise funds for charities. Another council struck an optimistic note: We do the best we can. With the help of Our Lady of Good Counsel we will hopefully go forward for God and Canada*