

Ottawa Diocesan Catholic Women's League
September 2011
Communique #1
Christian Family Life Chair
Nancy Skipper

A Christian Family Life offers all many opportunities to be “Centered on Faith” and “Centered on Justice”, opportunities from prayer, to taking action, and to being of service. Central to families and our faith is the sanctity of life. We are called to pray for all issues related to the sanctity of life, from the end to abortion and the defeat of bills proposing the legalization of euthanasia. We are called to pray for our sisters and families who have been emotionally impacted through their decision to end the life of their unborn. We are called to pray for all involved with the process of making into law euthanasia. We are called to action through drafting letters, making phone calls, and signing petitions to all levels of government stating our views and concerns regarding the sanctity of life.

We are blessed to be able to be involved with the Forty Days for Life; “*40 Days for Life is an international campaign of prayer and peaceful witness outside of the world's abortion mills to highlight and defeat the scourge of abortion in our time. There have now been four coordinated 40 Days for Life campaigns in Ottawa, beginning in the autumn of 2008 until now. These efforts have mobilized people of faith and conscience in 240 cities across all 50 of the United States, five Canadian provinces, plus locations in Europe and Australia. Thousands of lives have been saved! After so many years of legalized abortion, many people of faith are experiencing a renewed sense of HOPE. This 40 Day campaign begins September 28 and lasts until November 6*” (From the Forty Days for Life Ottawa website)

We are also blessed to be involved with Life Chain; “**LIFE CHAIN:** *An annual pro-life event (Canada & U.S.A.) to prayerfully protest the deaths of millions of unborn babies through abortion. Sunday, October 2, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. People will gather at 11 locations: Castor & Concession, Russell; St. Joseph & Orleans Blvds; Bank & Hunt Club; Montreal Rd & St. Laurent; Vanier Pkwy & Montreal Rd; Bank & Nepean; Ottawa Hospital - Civic Campus; Merivale & Meadowlands; Hazeldean & Eagleson; March & Dunrobin Rd, Martin & Ottawa, Almonte. Info: Campaign Life Coalition*”. (From Archdiocese of Ottawa Friday Fax)

As well, we are blessed to be able to be involved with COLF and the chance to attend lectures. “**CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION FOR LIFE AND FAMILY (COLF):** *2011 Message to Families "Families, did you know? Love is calling your children" offers a look at Christian vocations and help for parents, teachers, pastors and catechists to challenge the young, who are so often in search of meaning and ideals. Available online (www.colf.ca)*” (From Archdiocese of Ottawa Friday Fax)

“**END-OF-LIFE COMMITTEE:** *In collaboration with Saint Paul University, Centre for Ministry Formation is offering a session with Sr. Nuala Kenny, A Christian Perspective on Suffering and Pain at End of Life. Tues., Nov. 29, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. at Saint Paul University Amphitheatre. Registration & payment in advance: send name, contact info, parish/organization plus \$20 per person to Pastoral Services, Archdiocese of Ottawa, 1247 Kilborn Place, Ottawa, ON K1H 6K9. Seating is limited; please register early.*” (From Archdiocese of Ottawa Friday Fax)

To speak of a Christian family means we embrace all vocations including married, single, consecrated, or ordained. We embrace our separated and divorced families, our youth (who represent our future), our seniors (who hold wisdom), those family members who are sick or disabled, and widows and widowers. We embrace our homeless family.

All families need to be supported; with the best support coming through love and prayer. We are called to action in the form of supporting the engaged, sponsoring youth programs, participating in courses for elder care, assisting with transportation, organizing workshops for families and celebrating our priests, those vowed as sister and brother, and those whose vocation is to be single. There is so much we can do, so many ways we can be of assistance, so many ways to support all our families. Something we do well is to volunteer. Check out the “Volunteer Roundup” in the Ottawa Citizen. Did you know the Ottawa Family Cinema is run by volunteers? Here is an opportunity to help families have time together by watching family movies at an affordable price. Ask your priest how you can help the many families in your parish community. Perhaps the donation of gift certificates for gas or for the drug store. Have you considered celebrating family during National Family Week which is celebrated during the week leading up to Thanksgiving? It is a time where the positives and the strengths of family are celebrated.

But what of those families who are suffering through crises? How can we support them? Letting them know they are not alone is vital! Supporting services and bringing those in crisis to services such as Serenity Renewal for Families (Helping Families Build Happier Healthier Lives) can be a lifeline. Waupoos Farm can bring rest and relaxation for families in need in the Ottawa region. This can be the only chance for a family to have a holiday. You can make that happen! Our native sisters and brothers invite us to be a part of Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health. With a clinic, with programs for community issues, health issues, mental health issues, with a youth program, and with a program for homelessness, Wabano needs your assistance. Give them a shout and ask how you can help.

We are very blessed to have a bishop who wants to assist the many organizations whose only ambition is to help others. He helps accomplish this with the “**ANNUAL ARCHBISHOP’S CHARITY DINNER: On Wednesday, October 26, 2011, Archbishop Terrence Prendergast will once again host his Annual Archbishop’s Charity Dinner at the Hampton Inn Ottawa and Conference Centre. The Archbishop has designated three important local charitable organizations as the beneficiaries of this year’s dinner: Catholic Family Services Ottawa, Catholic Centre for Immigrants Ottawa and The Waupoos Foundation. These organizations provide support services including education assistance, employment searches, counselling, or a holiday destination for families in need.**” (From Archdiocese of Ottawa Friday Fax)

We are called to pray for our priests. The diocese has ten seminarians beginning at or returning to St. Augustine Seminary in Toronto. Find out who they are and pray for them by name. Perhaps you can assist them financially as the cost of going to university rises. We have been blessed to have learned about the Bishop Pappin Scholarship Award where seminarians are assisted.

Our homeless family is in need of justice. The former leader of the NDP, Jack Layton knew and wrote about this. To better understand the plight of our homeless family, please read “Homelessness” by Jack Layton. To have a better understanding of our homeless sisters, please read “All Our Sisters: Stories of Homeless Women in Canada” by Susan Scott.

However you support families, do so with joy and love. Do not forget to celebrate your family!