

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Ottawa Diocesan Council
Provincial Convention Report
July, 2017

Madame President,

It was my honour to attend the Ontario Provincial Convention in Thunder Bay as your diocesan accredited delegate. It was a wonderful experience. I could write pages but I will only have a chance to share a few of the things that happened during the convention. Over 200 members from across the province attended. We were so proud of Onagh as our diocesan president and voting delegate. Her report was given on self-control, a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and how it has been present, during the past year in our diocese and in her life.

Monday and Tuesday we began with mass. Bishop Colli spoke about being open to the surprises in our lives and that even at this convention, surprises/gifts will be provided from the Lord. He invited us to be grateful for the surprises in our lives.

We were so fortunate to have as the keynote speaker His Eminence Gerald Cardinal Lacroix, Archdiocese of Quebec, Primate of Canada. He was an engaging speaker, very down to earth, friendly and very easy to listen to. He spoke on "Amoris Laetitia" – The Joy of Love", the apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis. He discussed the struggles of Catholic women in today's world. He challenged us with four words/attitudes for women to embrace.

- 1) To be welcoming and to be good listeners – do not judge or ignore.
- 2) To accompany others – take the time to walk with each other – meet them where they are.
- 3) Learn how to practice discernment – listen to God and what He is asking of you.
- 4) Integrating – help others find their place through welcoming, listening, discernment and accompanying Christian community – this includes EVERYONE.

He left us with the message that God loves us unconditionally; women are equal in dignity, the Church values us the way we are and God's mercy is boundless. He stated that "women will save the world". We need to collaborate in evangelization. You can read the whole excerpt on the provincial CWL website.

The quilt that Onagh brought to the convention from St. Basil's parish was gifted to an Indigenous grandmother/elder, in Thunder Bay. The woman who received our quilt wore it for the whole day, after the presentation on Tuesday. She was very touched to receive it.

Tuesday was devoted to "Walking in Spirit with our Sisters". It was a very moving ceremony which consisted of the blankets/quilts from each diocese being presented; a drumming and procession around the outside of the hotel, a Sacred Circle and Smudging Ceremony. Water, which was brought from each of the communities attending the convention, was poured into glass containers which were then taken

to the convergence of Lake Superior in the east end to be presented to McIntyre Floodway, to bring healing to the waters (as per Indigenous custom) where so many Indigenous youth ended their lives. Before this, we took part in a ceremony where we took the name of a missing or murdered woman off a tree branch and replaced it with one earring. This was to symbolize that they will never be forgotten. (I have mine on my fridge so I will remember Rose from Manitoba, each day). Jodie Porter a CBC reporter from Thunder Bay gave a report on missing and murdered youth in the area. The stories were heart-breaking and very difficult to listen to. She left us with the message that there is still lots of work to do in understanding the issues and being part of the solution. The Truth and Reconciliation report calls us to action. The whole day on Tuesday was so moving and it brought many of us to tears.

The Ottawa delegation attending (14 strong) were so proud that the resolution from Holy Spirit Parish Council, concerning the Gladue Report, was passed, at the convention and would go forward to National. More information will follow concerning what happened at the National Convention.

The provincial elections for the next two years were held and we couldn't be prouder to have elected as president-elect/organization chair Colleen Randall, from St. Bernard's Parish and elected as a chairperson, Joanna Sisk (our past-president) who will be the provincial community life chair. We will be well represented.

There was time for lots of fun and two highlights that I would be remiss not to mention. Monday evening there was a "walk through the ages"; a fashion show which reminded all of us of what was "in" throughout the past 70 years (as we were celebrating 70 years of CWL in Ontario). Ottawa had the years 1964-1967. We had a blast, to use a word from the past. From glamorous to miniskirts, to sweater sets, to pill box hats, we were a sight to behold. Joanna Sisk led us around the room as one of the Beatles (we still aren't sure which one) to "Twist and Shout". We had so much fun. A band took over with music from the 50's, 60's and 70's. We had a great time. The other highlight was also on Monday; we were to wear something red to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday. We had t-shirts with cut out red t-shirt material in the shape of the Canadian Flag glued on to the front. We formed the Canadian flag and had our picture taken which ended up on the CWL Ontario Facebook page, and now graces our own website for the remainder of the year.

In closing, I would encourage everyone to attend at least one provincial convention. I have attended four provincial conventions and it is a time to renew old friendships and make new ones. It is a time to meet women from other parishes and dioceses, all living out the same League mission – "women rooted in gospel values, working for God and Canada". *Women Inspired by the Spirit, Responding to God's Call*. You won't regret it!!!

This concludes my report.

Rosanne Nadon,
1st Vice-president, Community Life Chairperson