

72nd Ontario CWL Provincial Convention Report

July 13 to 17, 2019

I was very privileged to represent the Ottawa Diocesan CWL Council at this year's provincial convention. As a diocesan accredited delegate I was able to sit amongst fellow accredited delegates from across the province.

This was the largest attended convention in 72 years with 425 delegates attending.

On Saturday I attended the Murder Mystery dinner. It was the first time I had participated in such a dinner.

Sunday morning Diana Baines took four of us to downtown Kingston. We could only window shop as stores did not open 'til noon. Two of us decided to go down to the water and people watch. We had lunch and then went back to the hotel for the Resolutions dialogue. We then prepared for the opening mass at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception. After the mass and welcomes from dignitaries, we walked to the school nearby for a reception. After the reception Nancy Grimshaw and her husband Bill gave me a tour of Kingston and showed me where he and Nancy had met many years ago. As we were driving through the downtown I saw a huge sign with our provincial president Anne Madden on it, on the side of the hospital. Anne is a nurse there.

Every morning we were gifted with a continental breakfast prepared by parish councils from the Kingston diocese. The food was delicious and varied day to day. We never left hungry. A couple times during the convention a number of our Ottawa members got together in Diana's room for some snacks, beverages and fun conversations.

The Monday session began with mass in the ballroom. Our keynote speaker was Professor Hazel Markwell from St. Paul University in Ottawa. She was part of the Catholic Women's Leadership Course. She spoke on the environment, *Care for our Common Home* and how it relates to homelessness and bioethics from Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si*.

The provincial executive gave their reports over the course of the day. On Monday evening we went for our diocesan dinner at the Lone Star Texas Grill restaurant. Thirty of us from Ottawa enjoyed a lovely meal and good conversation.

On Tuesday we began the day with mass. The diocesan presidents gave their reports during the day. They spoke on a word that related to our national theme *Care for Our Common Home*. We went through the four resolutions and all passed with little discussion. Having the Resolutions dialogue on Sunday made the resolution process move quickly this day. Today's keynote speaker Marilyn McLean spoke about the Kingston Street Mission. This mission is non-profit, completely volunteer run and donation based. Marilyn told us of how whenever things were

needed, they would miraculously appear. The mission is a place of friendship, warmth and is a safe haven. The banquet was on Tuesday evening. The meal was good, finishing with a fine dessert. The evening ended with entertainment by "The Clerical Crew." It was a group of four priests who played guitar, sang and told jokes. It was a fun laugh-filled way to end the day.

Wednesday started with a prayer service. An update was presented on the National Strategic Plan. The elections were held prior to the closing mass. All positions were filled except for Recording Secretary. I felt very proud that Colleen Perry became our Provincial Catholic Women's League President. She is from St. Bernard's parish here in Ottawa. Colleen will be our provincial president for the next two years.

Archbishop Terrance Prendergast celebrated the closing mass at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. He installed the new provincial officers after the mass. Colleen looked so happy during the installation. Her mother and father were there for this special time in their daughter's life.

After the mass we returned to the hotel for lunch. After lunch our Diocesan President Lynn Lavictoire had a post-convention meeting. Once that finished, Lynn, Janet Seward and I headed home. We reminisced on our days away and the wonderful times we had. This was the fastest convention ever for me. It felt like we had just arrived on Saturday and before I knew it, it was Wednesday and we were heading back home. It was so nice to see other CWL members from throughout the province. I can always remember the faces but not the names. Thank goodness for name tags!

I recommend everyone attend at least one provincial convention. Once you do, you will go to many more. Many new friendships will be made.

I am looking forward to next year's provincial convention in Kitchener.

Take care and God bless.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa Psutka, Ottawa Diocesan Education and Health Chair

