

Article in the Stittsville News

by Claudette Langdon,

Holy Spirit Parish Council President

The Catholic Women's League of Canada at Holy Spirit Parish in Stittsville Succeeds with Resolution to Improve the lives of Indigenous Women in the Correctional system.

This August 9, 2017 a resolution worked on by the members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, at our Holy Spirit Parish, was voted on and passed by the members present at The Catholic Women's League of Canada 97th Annual Convention in Charlottetown, PEI.

A council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada was activated at Holy Spirit Parish seven and a half years ago, and our members became concerned in February 2016, that Indigenous women were vastly over-represented in Canadian prisons. Although Indigenous women make up only two to three percent of the country's population, they represent 35 percent of the incarcerated female population in Canada.

The Holy Spirit Council Resolution Committee, chaired by, Jo Young and her team (Shirley Bernier, Mary White, Nathalie Phipps, Claudette Langdon, Pauline Foley and Louise Beggs), drafted a resolution entitled "Full implementation of the Supreme Court's Gladue Decision (1999) for Indigenous Women". It was presented at the 94th Ottawa Diocesan Convention, voted on and passed on April 29th.

The resolution was then presented by the Ottawa Diocesan President, at the 70th Ontario Provincial Convention in Thunder Bay, where resolution team member, Louise Beggs, spoke to it, and after considerable discussion and amendments, it was passed on July 11.

The Chair of the Ontario Provincial Resolution Committee of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, then presented the amended resolution to the 97th Annual National Convention in Charlottetown, last week. After more discussion, the resolution "Full implementation of the Supreme Court Decision in *R. V. Gladue* for Indigenous Offenders" was voted on and passed on August 9.

(It can be viewed at <https://www.cwl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Convention-2017.01-ON01-Gladue-Ontario-Provincial-Council-August-9-2.pdf>).

A delegation from The Catholic Women's League of Canada National Council, meet annually with the federal government in Ottawa. They will present this resolution to the federal government at their next meeting.

This was a multi-level effort of members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, which took 18 months of hard work. Holy Spirit Resolution Committee is proud to have presented the first resolution to come from the Ottawa diocese in over 10 years. The Catholic Women's League of Canada, has a membership of 83,000 women across the country.