

REGINA DIOCESAN CWL PRESIDENT  
ANNUAL REPORT 2017  
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I received the results of the presidents` surveys for the diocese of Regina noting that 35 were submitted out of a possibility of 72. Out of the 72 councils we have 3 that are inactive and several with very few members. Three councils reported that they do not have a president. Thank you to all who submitted their survey. The percentages I cite are based on the 35 surveys that were submitted. I sense some frustration with this process and note that the number of responses is less than last year when 40 presidents responded compared to 35 this year. I am hoping that National CWL will continue to try to make this online reporting more user-friendly. Since this is only the second year, I am sure there are improvements that could be made.

**Inform the Membership:** The sources of most of the **information** that councils use are National communiques (96%), the Canadian League magazine (97%), and diocesan newsletters (75%). The National website is used by 68% of respondents.

Palliative care (90%) and physician-assisted dying (65%) were the top **current national priorities** acted on by councils. Limiting access to pornography concerned 45 % and conscience rights of healthcare providers was acted on by 32%. Warning labels on food and drug products was acted on by 48%. Councils were also concerned about other national priorities such as the refugee crisis, home care, GST on child safety products and Canada`s Food Guide.

**Methods used to introduce these topics** included setting aside time at a general meeting to discuss and take action (65%), engaging the standing committee chairperson (39%), and 6 (19%) councils arranged for a speaker on the topic. Participating in 24 Hours for Palliative Care was one action that several councils took.

**Foster Open Communication:** Most councils(55%) reported that they meet monthly with their spiritual advisor and 84% reported that their spiritual advisor is supportive of the CWL. Those who did not feel that their spiritual advisor was supportive gave reasons such as, he doesn`t attend meetings even when asked, has very little time to commit to us, doesn`t care to get too involved.

**Preside at Meetings:** Most presidents use the following resources to help them preside at meetings – Executive Handbook (65%), National Manual of Policy & Procedure (61%), council policy and procedure handbook (55%), Constitution & Bylaws (52%), and Robert`s Rules of Order(19%).

**Signing Authority** – Presidents use their signing authority for banking documents, cheques, letters and petitions. One president mentioned signing for a lottery license.

**Provide Active Leadership:** Presidents are very busy representing their council at (church functions (97%), regional meetings (90%), funerals (81%), diocesan meetings and conventions (68%), World Day of Prayer (68%) and special masses (52%).

President's cost to attend the diocesan convention was covered 100% by 52% of councils, 3 councils paid 50%, 4 paid 25%, and 4 did not subsidize. No president was subsidized to attend national convention and 8 presidents were subsidized to attend provincial convention. 5 were subsidized to attend workshops and 7 to attend conferences. I think this shows that councils are willing to pay to educate their leadership and we need to encourage this.

Some council presidents have **initiated new policies** such as updating their funeral protocol, expense policy, and year end reporting. One council updated the requirements for their bursary application, donations for parish expenses, and fund-raising activities.

Most of the presidents reporting (81%) **have read the Executive Handbook and understand the duties of their executive team** and report that **it has assisted them in the responsibility of overseeing the operations of their councils**. A few who answered **no** indicated that maybe it would be a good idea to use it in the future, one said they are running their council the way they always have, and another said she was too busy to do it all.

Half the councils reporting said they **provide an annual summary of the council's activities to all members** by an oral report at the annual meeting. About 32% do not provide an annual summary. Others report to their members via e-mail, newsletter or written report, and parish bulletin.

For the question asking about **other committees other than standing committees** there were a variety of responses indicating that these councils are busy. Committees are struck to look after annual events such as teas, bazaars, social events, visitation, scholarship or bursary, fund-raising, catering, donations and anniversaries. Those councils indicating no extra committees are likely to be very small with elderly members.

**President as Official Spokesperson:** The three top issues that presidents spoke about are palliative care (61%), council social events (51%), and membership (48%). Other topics such as euthanasia, indigenous issues, mental health, pornography, pro-life and refugee issues, and scholarships were also spoken about.

The majority of councils (55%) do not **use League letterhead** when corresponding outside the League while 45% do. Most councils (81%) **ensure that they reference only the membership total for the council they represent in all external correspondence**.

**Summary and Final Thoughts:** Presidents reported that the **former past president, immediate past president** and **current executive** were of the most assistance when they assumed the role of president. Some had help from the secretary or the treasurer or a life member. A few had help from diocesan executive or a personal mentor.

**Greatest challenges in transitioning into role of president:** the top three challenges were **keeping members interested (55%), recruiting (55%), and not having a full slate of officers (39%)**. Other challenges that resonated with presidents were finding the time to do the job, public speaking, inexperience, amount of paperwork, and trying to please everyone.

90% of presidents appreciate having a **National theme and/or logo** in order to focus their activities.

There were many positive responses to the **sharing of your activities** question. Some small councils are still very active in their church and community activities. They find ways to make

things work, such as rotating the role of president and holding meetings fewer times a year. Some presidents are very proud of their councils and the things they are doing to recruit members and retain them, such as publishing a newsletter at the beginning of their membership drive to inform and invite new members. Another president is pleased that her members are taking an interest in letter writing and petitions. Another is pleased with the fund-raising they do to support palliative care, a refugee family, and Chalice. One president believes that the League is an amazing way to serve Catholic women.

The less positive comments include difficulty serving because of lack of active members, aging members, apathy, and members having to take a larger role in fundraising to keep their parish going leaving less time to work for CWL. One president noted the difficulty in filling out the online form because there was no link to the survey from the CWL website. She said that it was too hard to find the survey and that the technology side of our organization has to become more accessible and user-friendly.

Compiling this annual report for the 2017 year has been an enlightening experience for me. As diocesan president I am encouraged that presidents are doing their best, sometimes under frustrating circumstances, to keep the work of the Catholic Women`s League alive in their parishes. By participating in the annual survey, they are acknowledging that the scope of the League goes beyond their own parish. One president even stated that she appreciated the national and diocesan support that she receives. Most councils also noted that National keeps their councils focused with a National theme and logo. While leading the League at all its levels involves challenges and changes, we can move forward confident that we will be ‘inspired by the Spirit’ so that we can ‘respond to God`s call.’

This concludes my report.