

OPENING PRAYER (June 1, 2010)

Introduction: Today we pray for what we, as Catholic Women's League members, can do as a group to promote peace and hope in our world. At conventions it is easy to be filled with enthusiasm for the work of the League when we are surrounded by like-minded people, but upon returning home that enthusiasm is sometimes hard to sustain as we go about our daily lives. Let us try today to capture that enthusiasm and "bottle it" so that we may bring it back to our home councils. Let us begin with the sign of our faith and by singing verse one of Women of Peace. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening Song: Women of Peace

Refrain: To be women of faith in times of doubt;
to be women of hope in times of despair;
to be women of peace, women of peace,
O Lord your instruments of peace.

Verse 1: Where we encounter hatred, let us bring your love,
Where hurt has been oppressive, your healing care;
Wherever there are people who are needing to be free;
Make your church an instrument of peace. (Refrain)

Leader: Let us begin by examining our conscience to see how we are bringing peace to our families, our communities, our world:

Reader 1: Within my family do my actions create or destroy peace? Do I focus too much on exterior activities that cause stress and destroy peace in my family?

Reader 2: What kind of neighbour am I? In one of her writings, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta asked, "Do I even know my next door neighbour?" Do I build or tear down fences?

Reader 3: In my council, do I respect the views of my sisters? Do I support new members who are learning about the League? Do I sometimes gossip about the actions of others?

Reader 4: When I am asked to lead, do I act humbly with the goal of uniting the group or am I so overly concerned with results that I lose focus on the journey and sometimes hurt others on the way?

Reader 5: In my community, do I extend a hand of friendship to newcomers, especially those from other countries or from different cultures? Do I reach out to those with special needs?

Reader 6: In my parish, am I a beacon of peace and hope for all those I encounter, especially our youth, the sick and the elderly?

- Reader 7:** In my province, do I offer words of encouragement to politicians who work diligently for our interests or am I ready to criticize the least mistake?
- Reader 8:** In the world at large, do I support the cause of peace and development? Do I pray daily for our world leaders?
- Reader 9:** Blessed Teresa of Calcutta said “There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than there is for food.” Do I strive to show love and appreciation to all in my life?
- Verse 2:** To heal the brokenhearted, to comfort those who mourn;
To go to those imprisoned, bringing freedom to the bound;
To be a light for all who struggle to be free;
Make your church an instrument of peace. (Refrain)
- Leader:** We have heard it said: It is better to light one candle than curse the darkness. Let us reflect on these words and light one candle as we give the response “Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.” (Light the first candle)
- Reader 1:** Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called Children of God. As with everything in our life, we cannot do it alone. We become peacemakers only with the divine help of God. To be a Child of God means that we submit to the will of God. For inspiration we reflect on the lives of women who submitted to the will of God.
- Response:** Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. (Light the second candle.)
- Reader 2:** Our beloved Mother Mary showed us many examples of her strength, yet she always answered the call of God. As a young woman she answered: “Thy will be done” when the angel Gabriel appeared to her.
- Response:** Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. (Light the third candle.)
- Reader 3:** Mary, the Mother of God, stood at the foot of the cross of her only son and she let the will of the Father be completed. She showed us how to be strong yet gentle.
- Response:** Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. (Light the fourth candle.)
- Reader 4:** Our Canadian Saint, Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys, was a strong, independent woman who left her native France to come to Canada. She modeled cooperation as she started a religious order and opened a school.

Response: Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. (Light the fifth candle.)

Reader 5: A woman of our times, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, showed us how to do the little things with great love. “We do it for God,” she said, “as beautifully as we can.”

Response: Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. (Light the sixth candle.)

Reader 6: Our CWL mentors are women of Peace and Hope. Let us think of our friends and acquaintances who have taken leadership roles in the League, especially our Saskatchewan women, our honorary life members, members of the national and provincial executives. By their leadership we have grown as women of peace and hope.

Response: Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. (Light the seventh candle.)

Reader 7: Our local parish councils offer us opportunities to grow as women of peace and hope. In our local councils we strive to serve the needs of our local parishes through small projects that make big differences. It is here that we are truly “rooted in gospel values” and make a difference every day.

Response: Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. (Light the eighth candle.)

Reader 8: Our beloved deceased members of the League have provided example and mentorship through their service “for God and Canada.” May we always remember them with love and affection.

Response: Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. (Light the ninth candle.)

Reader 9: And so we learn that to be peacemakers we are called to reach out, to mend broken hearts, to offer encouragement, to give a hug, to make someone’s day with a gesture as simple as a smile. We serve where we are planted. We are called to be peacemakers wherever we are.

Response: Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. (Light the tenth candle.)

Verse 3: In giving to the hungry, in satisfying thirst,
In welcoming the stranger, in comforting the ill;
In being those who hunger for justice and for truth:
Make us all your instruments of peace. (Refrain)

The response will be:

All: May we, as Women of Peace and Hope, let love work through us and peace work among us.

Leader: In a world becoming divided, may we, as Women of Peace and Hope, listen to our call and say "Here I am, Lord!" **R.**

Leader: In this climate of economic extremes and stresses, may our prayers of hope to clothe and shelter the disadvantaged be answered. **R.**

Leader: In our world where so much is wasted, may we learn to prepare only what is needed, and to share our bounty with the needy, the sick and the lonely. **R.**

Leader: In our world where spirituality is adrift, where materialism and Godlessness rule, may our actions open hardened hearts. **R.**

Leader: As we go forward let us remember the words of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, "Peace begins with a smile". **R.**

Let us offer one another a Sign of Peace with a BIG SMILE!