



Care for our

Common Home

2020 ANNUAL REPORTS

Antigonish Diocesan CWL Council

April 24th, 2021

Table of Contents

President Annual Report	2-3
Spiritual Development Annual Report	4-5
Education & Health Annual Report	6-7
Treasurer Annual Report	8-9
Christian Family Life Annual Report	10-11
Communications Annual Report	12-13
Community Annual Life Report.....	14-15
Secretary Annual Report	16-17
Legislation Annual Report	18-19
Resolutions Annual Report.....	20-21
Organization Annual Report	22-23
Past President Annual Report	24-25

Please Note:

All reports are intended to be shared with appropriate parish council chair.

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Antigonish Diocesan Council**

President

Annual Report: 2020

of councils reporting: 23 of 39

Sincere thanks to the 23 Parish Presidents who completed the annual reports (60 % participated)

All of the 23 councils who participated in this survey reported that they have a president chair.

Thanks to each of you for saying yes, for your service & your dedication!! Of these:

- 13 presidents have held this position in the past
- 10 are new to the role of president
- 8 have been League members for over 25 years
- 4 have 11-15 years of service in the League
- 2 have been League members for 16-20 years
- 2 have 21-25 years of membership in the League
- 1 president is very new to the League with 1-5 years of membership

Age groups for the 23 presidents who participated are: (10) 65-74, (7) 55-64, (4) 45-54 and (2) 75-84

The top resources reported as being used for sources of information are:

(18) National Communiques, (17) Diocesan Newsletters, (17) Provincial & Diocesan Websites, (17) *The Canadian League*, (16) National Website and (13) Parish Bulletins.

Close to 73% of parish councils have acted on the League theme "Care for Our Common Home"; which is excellent, especially considering the arrival of COVID-19 & the necessary health restrictions! They reported regular meetings were held in January, February and March, prior to gathering limitations and lockdowns taking effect. Fourteen of the twenty-three councils discussed or acted on the "exclusion of medically assisted dying in palliative care/hospice facilities". Six councils discussed and or acted on the rights of the unborn child, under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The top resources being used by presidents to help preside over meetings are:

Council P&P (13), Constitution & Bylaws (12), Executive Handbook (12), Roberts Rules of Order (10), and National P&P (7). One council reported that they depend on the experience of members and past presidents. Of the 23 councils who participated in the survey, only 5 do not have a parish policy & procedure manual. *If your council would like assistance in preparing one, PLEASE reach out to the diocesan executive for help!*

19 of the 23 presidents who participated in the survey reported they are a signing officer for cheques that are issued. The expenses to attend diocesan & provincial conventions are covered by their council, for most presidents. 18 of the 23 presidents provide the council membership with an annual summary of activities to the members by way of oral report, email and or newsletter.

Over half of the parish presidents said their spiritual advisor is invited, and attends the monthly council meeting; 21 of the 23 feel they are supported by their spiritual advisor. One parish is currently without a priest. Presidents expressed that they feel very well supported by the past president, current and former executive members, life members, and personal mentors.

All positions face challenges. Presidents cited issues with technology, trying to keep members interested, not having a full executive, feeling overwhelmed and undertrained, amount of paper work, meeting expectations and recruiting as their top challenges. COVID-19 certainly threw a wrench into the plans for 2020! Without regular meetings, church services, conventions and gatherings, parish presidents and their executive tried to be creative in thinking about ways to keep connected with members. They concentrated on what “could” be done **instead of** what “couldn’t” be done. Most presidents reported that completing the survey was easier than in previous years! A couple of women struggle with members not being open to changing the way things have always been done, and unwilling to support change. Let’s pray that all members will support change, because change is good, and it is coming as the League strives to make changes at all levels. ***Many councils prayed together but apart, phoned each other, wrote cards and dropped off notes of encouragement, offered help to others and reached out just to say hello!!***

When asked if the national theme and or logo was helpful, 18 of the 23 presidents said “yes, it gives the parish council a focus point”. When asked if the national theme should be changed every two years, 90% of presidents responded favorably, with only 10% expressing “it is not a good idea”.

Now for the “most proud” and “best” section of this survey!!

Presidents are amazed at the togetherness, cooperation, dedication, support, encouragement and the number of projects that were able to be accomplished, despite COVID-19!! They reported that members continue to work very well together, that CWL is a gift to the parish and community, and they are really missing the members in their councils! Some were delighted that they were able to do some of the projects they always did or make changes and did something COVID friendly! CWL sisters are like family to many! As diocesan president, my heart is overflowing with JOY!

Final thoughts

Preparing this report, has been a blessing and an eye opener ~ together, but apart, our members continued to work for God and Canada, while respecting the restrictions required to keep our province and country safe! To say I am a very proud diocesan president, is an understatement. Like last year, reviewing the many pages (17) was daunting, but informative. The cancellation of meetings, events and conventions at all levels was sad but necessary. It makes me think that CWL and life, as we knew it, will be a source of fond memories, as we move forward, aware that some of the changes we faced in 2020, will be our new normal. I look forward to continuing to “***Care for Our Common Home***” while “Caring For Each Other”.

The Diocese of Antigonish is blessed with each and every CWL member ~
Let’s continue to help build the League, by inviting all women, 16 and over, to “come care with us” ~
Our Lady of Good Council ~ Pray for Us!

This concludes my report.

Janice MacDougall, President, Antigonish Diocesan Council

**Catholic Women's League of Canada
Antigonish Diocesan Council**

Spiritual Development

Annual Report: 2020

of councils reporting: 15 of 39

Fifteen of thirty-nine councils reported for a participation rate of 40.5%. Of these, 14 councils have a Spiritual Development Chair; 8 of which were elected and 6 by appointment.

Activities undertaken to learn more about our theme "Care for our Common Home" were diverse. They included:

- Speaking on the theme at meeting
- Making donations through Chalice and Development and Peace
- Water pledge forms were completed by members
- Switching to glass mugs for refreshments from single-serve and Styrofoam products
- Read articles from The Canadian League magazine
- Planted 2 holly bushes in parish churchyard and plan to plant a tree for 100th anniversary
- Postings on Facebook of Pope Francis' Laudatio Si
- World Day of Prayer
- Presented videos on the care of God's creation and 5 webinars on climate change
- Recited the prayer and discussed the meaning of the theme
- Offered meditation on the family home, prayers for the sick and for people to return to church.

Of the 15 councils reporting, 13 spend at least one-third of the business meeting on spiritual growth programs and activities of members. The other two councils stated that they didn't spend the allotted time. Due to the overall age of members and the fact that they don't like to stay out too late, they shorten the spiritual growth program.

Councils have organized liturgies and programs for their members.

These include:

- Workshop taken from Antigonish Diocesan Website "Transformed by the Eucharist"
- Members were encouraged to attend weekly mass, liturgy for All Souls and attend mass on-line
- Recited the rosary before mass, held on-line live rosary with members weekly for the month of May
- World Day of Prayer
- 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care
- Spiritual readings and reflections at meetings
- Many on-line postings on saints and spiritual teachings
- Distributed information and resources on spiritual topics in person and by e-mail during COVID-19 restrictions
- Talked about giving help to others instead of thinking about ourselves
- Readings from scripture and prayers for the sick. Used CWL prayers.

The Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel was mostly celebrated individually at home by watching mass on TV. Father Patrick O’Neill held mass via Zoom.

Most spiritual advisors attend council meetings on a fairly regular basis.

Members are encouraged to study and discuss Catholic teachings and the role of women in the church through prayer, readings and relationships, encouraging involvement in the church, inviting new members to join and suggesting websites for more information.

Members have undertaken leadership roles in the church by serving on parish pastoral councils, parish finance committees, diocesan council/committees and regional pastoral councils. They have also chaired parish committees and served on parish liturgy committees.

Councils have supported Catholic Missions in Canada (CMIC) by donating air miles, giving financial support, knits for the North, subscribing to the CMIC magazine and buying CMIC calendars. Other missions in Canada supported financially are Eskimo Missions, Chalice, Mass for Shut-Ins, Diocesan Seminarian Association and L’Arche.

Our members were actively involved in every lay ministry of the church in 2020 and in many cases chaired these ministries.

When asked “What training would you recommend be provided for this position next year?”, these were suggested:

- Webinars by Sr. Nula Kenny on end-of-life care
- A one-two hour workshop to explain what is expected of the spiritual development chair
- Training on how to prepare a spiritual reflection
- Suggestions on where to obtain ideas and resources
- How to facilitate different liturgies and ceremonies
- Follow in the footsteps of the previous chair.

In Conclusion:

It is said that God works in mysterious ways. However, it is no mystery that the members of the Catholic Women’s League of Canada in the Diocese of Antigonish are very spiritual people. Even during the COVID-19 restrictions, you have adapted and found ways to keep connected and follow God’s teachings and to lovingly lend a hand where and when it is needed.

Keep praying. Keep the faith. Keep encouraging younger women to join us as we continue to do God’s work to Care for Our Common Home and its people. And during this time of pandemic, let us continue to follow public health guidelines! Stay safe and keep your neighbour safe!

May Our Lady of Good Counsel guide us in our efforts!

Doreen Boudreau
Spiritual Development Chairperson, Antigonish Diocesan Council

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Antigonish Diocesan Council**

Education & Health

Annual Report: 2020

of councils reporting: 15 of 39

Thank you for sending in your annual report and relaying the information about the many activities of your councils in 2020. Only nine councils reported a chairperson for Education and Health, seven had been elected and two appointed. Eight of them held the position previously. Ladies who have been members for a number of years seem to prefer this chair.

Catholic Education

The majority of the councils are informed about the quality of Catholic religion in the parishes but there is no Catholic teaching in the schools in the Antigonish Diocese. One council has become involved in the Rites of Christian Initiative program in their parish. Another council provides crosses, rosary beads and certificates to children receiving First Communion and Confirmation.

Literacy and Continuing Education

There are no Catholic universities or colleges in the Diocese of Antigonish. Eight of the 15 councils have a list of scholarships/bursaries to further educate Catholic women. All fifteen councils provide bursaries or scholarships. Most (67%) donate to high school students and three councils also provide for university/college students. Some specified that *children of members* graduating from grade twelve or going on to university/community college be considered for the bursaries. Four councils contributed to the Coady International Institute in 2020. For more information: www.coady.stfx.ca.

Cathy Petrie was the recipient of the Marian Hepditch-Littlepage award. Cathy is a graduate student at Atlantic School of Theology.

Wellness and Sickness/Disease

Many members have taken action on resolutions under Education and Health. Conserving water, writing letters to MLA and MPs (sample letters were provided to help with topics of interest) and donating to the construction of the new residence for Hospice/Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton County, were some actions taken. The CWL Mental Health Postcard was not well promoted with only three councils showing interest. Most of the councils have focused on some national organizations such as: Alzheimer's Society; Canadian Cancer Society; Relay for Life; Canadian Red Cross; Canadian Diabetes Association; Heart and Stroke Society; Children's Wish Foundation. Only one chairperson was aware of the Canadian Blood Services Partners for Life Program. For more information: www.blood.ca/joinpartnersforlife

National Hospice Palliative Care week encouraged councils to participate in 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care. Of the councils reporting, 47% took part in the program. Palliative Care postcards were not distributed this year.

Environment

Councils continued to participate in the "Care for Our Common Home" initiative with 27% participating in the plastic reduction and waste cleanup. Some councils didn't participate in the road cleanups due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One council partnered with their local fire department to clean up their

community. The fire department supplied T-shirts, gloves and bags and picked up the litter collected by the volunteers.

Three councils planted a tree in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the League. Councils were very creative with this project. One planted a young sapling from a 100-year-old tree and a young maple tree representing our future hope. Another planted 2 holly bushes in memory of a parish member who had died in the past year. Members are looking forward to planting their trees in the spring.

The CWL Water Pledge Challenge was very successful in 2019 and many members are keeping up the challenge. World Water Day is about water and climate change. Members kept their pledge alive by not letting the water run when brushing their teeth; using less water when showering; using cooking water and dehumidifier water when watering plants and gardens. Chairpersons encouraged all members to not waste water. Many councils use green bins, compost, reduce paper use, recycle, reuse and reduce waste. Members were reminded to use less plastic bottles, less plastic bags and plastic straws to help keep our environment clean.

Genetics

Nine councils were aware of advantages and disadvantages of technology to alter genes. One council would like to see more information in *The Canadian League* and through memos. One council continues to follow C.O.L.F. and read the newsletters from the CCCB.

In the councils closing remarks

Councils would like to learn more on the criminal code pertaining to medical assistance in dying. What can we do to have more Hospice/Palliative Care programs? Health & fitness was a topic shared with members of one council. That council suggested to maybe try to add fitness tid-bits at meetings, with a simple exercise for arms and legs. A council has showed interest in information on the Gardasil Vaccine. Another council initiated a cell phone reuse program for the local women's shelter. Councils had discussions on the restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic according to the World Health Organization. Meal programs were supported by councils at some elementary schools. Most councils found it very difficult this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Education and Health chairpersons have had a tough year dealing with COVID-19. Staying in touch with your members and keeping them informed of the health restrictions to wash your hands, social distance (six feet apart), using hand sanitizer and staying home as much as possible, has helped in the Care of Our Common Home and keeping us safe.

To Care for Our Common Home is an ongoing responsibility and in reviewing your reports, I see that even with not much contact with our fellow members, due to COVID-19, you have all truly accepted the challenge to make our communities a better place to live. May Our Lady of Good Counsel guide you as you continue to share your gifts and keep your councils informed.

I hope you all keep safe and healthy during this time of pandemic.

I look forward to hearing from you in 2021. Let's keep a positive attitude. 
Thank you for all you do for God and Canada.
This concludes my report.

Earlene Landry

Education & Health Chairperson, Antigonish Diocesan Council

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Antigonish Diocesan Council**

Treasurer

Annual Report: 2020

of councils reporting: 17 of 39

TOOLS USED BY COUNCILS TO TRACK RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS:

Cheque books (16), bank statements (17), deposit book (17), ledger/columnar book (11), receipt book (7), disbursement book (1), computer program (1), and other (-).

MEMBERSHIP:

All of the councils were aware of the per capita fee amount for 2020.
The minimum range of the membership fee was \$22.00.

NATIONAL VOLUNTARY FUNDS:

Amounts listed are from the 17 councils who participated in the 2020 Annual Report Survey

Catholic Missions in Canada	\$ 465.00
Coady International Institute	\$ 370.00
Euthanasia Prevention Coalition	\$ 90.00
Catholic Near East Welfare Association	\$ 590.00
National Bursary Fund	\$ 90.00

It was reported, by the councils participating in the 2020 annual year end treasurers report, that a total of \$16,595.00 was donated to help their parishes.

It was also reported by the 17 councils, that a total of \$19, 612.87 was given to causes that are not listed above.

OTHER FINANCIAL APPLICATIONS:

All councils had at least two signatories on all cheques.
Books examined by an independent individual experienced in accounting procedures (9).

ONE COUNCIL SHARED:

Due to COVID-19, our council has not been able to fundraise. However, we have tried to maintain our most necessary donations.

This information was provided by 17 of 39 councils that submitted their year-end reports.

Kathleen Campbell
Treasurer, Antigonish Diocesan Council

Page Left Blank Intentionally

**Catholic Women's League of Canada
Antigonish Diocesan Council**

Christian Family Life

Annual Report: 2020

of councils reporting: 15 of 39

This committee received reports from 15 councils. Most positions were filled by appointment and most chairs have held this position previously. The majority of members are in the range of 65-80 years old and have been members for more than 25 years.

Because of COVID-19, most councils couldn't have meetings and therefore haven't done as much within the communities as they normally would have done. They were unable to have workshops or attend seminars on family life, pro-life walks, masses or vigils. Most don't have pro-life brochures in their council or in the church. Half of the councils wrote letters pertaining to CWL resolutions on abortion and euthanasia, but were unable to meet with anyone in legislation. They do, however, pray for the protection of life. Councils were unable to promote World Youth Day, participate in youth programs in the parish or have a CGL (Catholic Girls League). Also due to COVID-19, councils could not organize activities for, or celebrate, National Family Week. Some councils gave donations to Sunday school programs, NET ministries and Girl Guides of Canada.

Our councils help with local women shelters and often donate supplies and money when needed. They have sent cards to disabled members, brought communion, phoned and provided transportation to those who needed it. They have done the same for seniors in the community. Some parishes gifted women with membership, invited newly retired women to join and organized some social events.

In the event of a death, they have sent cards of condolence, provided prayers, arranged for funeral lunches, arranged for a group to be at the funeral home for prayers and called or visited when needed. The majority of councils do not have copies of '*Annulments Today - Merciful and Just*' nor did they attend any presentations on the topic of annulments.

Councils supported vocations with prayer and financial assistance. A few councils offered a spiritual bouquet and hosted a luncheon.

Laurena Greencorn

Christian Family Life Chairperson, Antigonish Diocesan Council

Page Left Blank Intentionally

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Antigonish Diocesan Council**

Communications

Annual Report: 2020

of councils reporting: 12 of 39

Thank you to everyone who took the time to fill out their year end reports for your communication chair.

THE CANADIAN LEAGUE is used by mostly all members to keep informed with what is going on. The president's messages are what most of the people found to be the most relevant part of the magazine. There was a suggestion that maybe an article on how to engage young ladies to become members could be added to the content.

EVANGELIZATION:

Resolution 1978.03: Catholic Press encourages members to subscribe to and promote Catholic newspapers, periodicals and magazines. The majority say that Mass for Shut-Ins is the best way to assist them in their mission to evangelize.

KEEPING INFORMED:

The CWL website is cited as a very good tool for everyone to use to keep informed on a national level. The councils rely on their church bulletins, emails and the use of telephone committees to keep everyone informed. The use of newsletters has been promoted but the majority of the councils do not publish one. The biggest challenge of this standing committee is the membership largely is made up of older women who don't have knowledge or very limited knowledge of computers.

PORNOGRAPHY:

In the questions that were asked pertaining to **Resolution 2017.02- Mandatory Age Verification Mechanisms for Adult Pornographic Websites**, adopted at the 2017 national convention, most councils reported that they did read articles in the newspapers. However, they did not take additional steps such as contacting members of parliament or encouraging members to become educated on internet safety and responsible and appropriate technology use. 12 out of the 14 reporting councils said they did not participate in the **Pornography Hurts Everyone** postcard campaign. Members can go to the national website and print the postcards themselves and mail them to their members of parliament.

Item 178 <https://www.cwl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Pornography-Hurts-Everyone-Postcard.pdf>

Instructions to printing: <https://cwl.ca/instructions-for-printing-pornography-hurts-postcard/>

STRATEGIC PLANNING:

When the communication chairs were asked if they shared the strategic planning information or shared with their members the information printed in *The Canadian League*, the majority did not.

There have been a couple of new incentives that have come from the Implementation Committee: an Instagram account and To Inspire, a new permanent web page that has been added to the national website. They can be found at <https://cwl.ca/to-inspire/> or by clicking on “*To Inspire*” at the top of the national website home page.

When asked if there was anything else that they would like to share about their council's communications activities, the consensus was that the majority have been inactive this year because of COVID-19. Most of their meetings and activities have been cancelled. Some of the councils have tried to keep in contact with their members with wellness checks and connecting via phone calls and emails.

As Communications chair, I have been attending Zoom meetings and sending all updates as needed to our website <http://antigonishdiocesanowl.ca/index.htm>

Your sister in the League

Helena MacLeod
Communications Chairperson, Antigonish Diocesan Council

**Catholic Women's League of Canada
Antigonish Diocesan Council**

Community Life

Annual Report: 2020

of councils reporting: 14 of 39

I received 14 annual reports from councils and of those, 12 councils had chairpersons.
Thank you to everyone who took time to fill out their reports.

Dignity and Rights:

The majority of councils are aware of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They support those suffering from homelessness, incarceration, poverty, human trafficking, bullying, domestic violence and Indigenous women. Councils contribute to these minority groups with donations and volunteer services, and a few councils hosted guest speakers and workshops for educational awareness. Two councils have discussed Bill C-262 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Public Safety Canada released the 2018 Human Trafficking Consultation Report, Building a Safe and Resilient Canada. Councils are very aware of human trafficking; a small majority of councils discussed the report at their monthly meetings. February 8, 2020 was International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking. Councils reported they took part in the day with prayer, lighting candles, saying the rosary and sharing the news that the Nova Scotia government announced it is combatting human trafficking with financial support for the next five years.

Social and Economic Justice:

Due to COVID-19, councils this year supported their communities with health and safety in mind. The majority of councils were still able to support those in need. One council had a shower for the homeless shelter, Transition House and Every Women's Centre. Other councils donated to their local food banks, soup kitchens, St. Vincent de Paul, Share Christmas and donated gift cards for grocery stores. Councils made wellness checks by phone and sent out thinking of you cards to the sick and shut ins and CWL members. One council made meals for the seniors in their community. The majority of councils are active in supporting organizations caring for those in need offering prayer, financial support and volunteering for school programs, clothing drives, affordable housing initiatives, employment and skills training, anti-poverty campaigns, restorative justice programs, and emergency shelters for homeless and those suffering domestic abuse. Due to COVID-19, councils did not participate in National Indigenous Peoples Day, Orange Shirt Day, prison ministry and restorative justice programs. This year the Catholic Near East Welfare Association was supported by a low number of councils. Councils focused on other topics. World Day of Peace was September 21; councils did not celebrate together this year but offered individual prayers.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship:

Less than half of councils are informed about Canada's official immigration and refugee policies. The councils are aware of the importance of understanding the needs of immigrants and refugees in their community. The council members rate their knowledge from fair to very good referring to the availability of employment services, English courses, financial assistance for food and rent, number of immigrants and refugees in their community and country of origin. Councils are very aware of the difference between temporary foreign worker, immigrant and refugee. No councils participated in citizenship ceremonies this year. The majority of members participate in Remembrance Day services and wearing poppies, also wearing red on Fridays, in support of Canadian troops. Half of the councils reported reading an article in the winter edition of *The Canadian League*, about Fr. Charles Okechukwu Udeh, a Nigerian priest serving in New Brunswick. Resolution 2016.01 Equal Access to Permanent Resident Status, was monitored by one council. A small percentage of councils took part in the annual 1% Program.

Developing Countries:

A low percentage of councils are aware of conditions of child labour in developing countries and urged independent study of codes of conduct. A very low percentage of councils are aware of the implications of trade laws and practices in the global economy. Councils offered support to Operation Christmas, Chalice, Canadian Red Cross, Pennies for the Poor, Save a Family Plan and Sleeping Children Around the World.

Comments from Councils:

Councils are very active with seniors in their communities. They visit them in nursing homes and the veteran hospitals, entertain them with games and provide lunch. Toiletries were collected for seniors. Other councils provide lunch once a week at their parish hall and provide food donations to the programs. One council and their parish collected baby items for new born babies. Community life chairs commented there were challenges this year because of small councils, aging councils, lack of youth ministry, challenges to help everyone and COVID-19.

As you can see councils are reaching out to those who need our support in our country and communities, even during COVID-19. Thank you for submitting your reports. It is important for members to share their individual activities with the standing chairperson so it can be included in the annual reports. Your dedication is inspiring as we work together for our League.

Wanda Bruckschwaiger
Community Life Chairperson, Antigonish Diocesan Council

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Antigonish Diocesan Council**

Secretary

Annual Report: 2020

of councils reporting: 20 of 39

The majority of councils reported that one person holds both positions of recording and corresponding secretary. Most have been appointed and most have held the position previously.

All reported that they take minutes at meetings and maintain a list of their executive with their contact information. One half of respondents are signing officers for their council. One half reported their council has a motions book and a copy of the CWL Personal Letter Writing Guide from national office. The majority are aware of the location of their council charter, receive written reports from the executive and have a copy of the *Handbook for Secretaries* from national office.

By far the biggest challenge faced by secretaries in 2020, as reported by most respondents, was staying connected with League members throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Various measures were taken to address this challenge. Some distributed "Thinking of You" cards, and Christmas cards to the membership. Others kept in contact with members and sent information by emails, phone calls and texts. In some councils a newsletter was delivered or emailed to members. One council reported having outdoor events with social distancing.

Another challenge presented by the pandemic was the inability to have regular meetings and conduct business. Councils were limited in their ability to address this. One council conducted business by phone and computer; a small number reported resuming executive/general meetings, when permitted, as per public health guidelines.

One secretary, who is a working mother, reported on the difficulty of arranging her schedule to attend council meetings and functions. Her fellow executive members assist in her absence.

One reported overcoming the challenge of providing members with minutes. She now sends minutes electronically, and by paper copy, to those without email.

One person shared that she enjoys the position of secretary; she has been a member for 81 years, has been very active in CWL activities, and always enjoyed them! What a role model!

I wish to thank all those councils who submitted these annual reports in this very challenging year.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel bless us and guide us as we continue to use our gifts and talents in service to others.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne McCormick
Secretary, Antigonish Diocesan Council

Page Left Blank Intentionally

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Antigonish Diocesan Council**

Legislation

Annual Report: 2020

of councils reporting: 11 of 39

The year 2020 was certainly one for the record books. While most of us were staying at home, many of our legislators were busier than ever, as they took on the daunting task of keeping their citizens safe. Many of our members tuned in daily to see what Prime Minister Trudeau would say from outside Rideau Cottage, or what news Dr. Strang and Premier McNeil would have for us. However, while updates have been given, and decisions have been made, the Nova Scotia Legislature did not assemble for over eleven months, and the House of Commons was meeting only when necessary, and not all members attended the sittings. This made acting upon bills more difficult than in past years

Eleven councils submitted annual legislation reports. Forty-six percent of these did not have a chairperson for legislation, and eighty-three percent of those who had chairpersons had been appointed rather than elected. All councils knew the names of their municipal, provincial and federal representatives, and some knew how to contact representatives at each level of government. Councils seemed to have received more mailings from the federal government, than from the other two levels. Most councils had not attended any forums sponsored by any level of government, as the pandemic made that almost impossible. That being said, all councils felt somewhat, or extremely well informed of issues being discussed by all levels of government.

Several councils, though not all, felt well informed regarding bills being monitored nationally.

These bills included:

Bill C-7	An Act to Amend the <i>Criminal Code</i> (medical assistance in dying)
Bill C-13	COVID-19 Emergency Response Act
Bill C-14	COVID-19 Emergency Response Act, No. 2
Bill C-15	Canada Emergency Student Benefit Act
Bill C-71	An Act to Amend Certain Acts and Regulations in Relations to Firearms

Councils reported on writing letters regarding Bill C-7, and all expressed keeping a close eye on the government response to the pandemic. Councils expressed that due to COVID-19, their number of meetings were limited. They are finding it hard to find information on different bills, and difficult to research the facts surrounding them. As many were new to this position, they expressed trouble with knowing where to go to find the information they needed to keep their members informed. Councils also reported that it was hard to keep people interested in the goings on in government when the bills are presented in such a lengthy and legal manner.

I would like to thank all those councils who reported this past year. I know it was a trying time and difficult to stay on top of all of the information being thrown at us about COVID-19, and the government response to the pandemic. The care for our common home has never seemed so important, and I thank you all for trying to keep your members informed of the issues presented to us during this time. Blessings to you all,

Jolene MacLellan, Legislation Chairperson, Antigonish Diocesan Council

Page Left Blank Intentionally

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Antigonish Diocesan Council**

Resolutions

Annual Report: 2020

of councils reporting: 11 of 39

The challenge of this chair, especially since COVID-19, appears to be common for all of us: finding ideas, doing research, promoting interest, getting up-to-date information, ensuring letters of support are sent, doing workshops and lastly finding the time. Having a chairperson for this committee is vital for its success.

The basis of this report is formulated on information received from 11 out of 39 parish councils of the Catholic Women's League for the Diocese of Antigonish. It is based on the statistical analysis of the information received from the Resolution Committees and forwarded to diocesan from national.

From the 11 councils reporting – 6 positions were filled:
of these, 4 were appointed and 2 were elected; 5 shared their chair with legislation.

It appears that the biggest challenge is generating interest for resolutions. Contact with elected officials – local, provincial and federal – has been little to none, whether by phone, email or in person. The average contact would be 2 out of the 11 councils.

Personal development for members has been done through workshops, attendance at conventions at all levels and communiques from all levels of the League, by 3 of the 11 councils. Issues of strong interest were - abortion, euthanasia, assisted dying, and home care. Discussion around a resolution took place but actual formulation did not.

Familiarization with the resolutions on the CWL website (cwl.ca) was done by 6 of the 11 councils reporting. Action taken by councils regarding resolutions was done in the form of letter writing, making members aware either through meetings, emails and/or newsletters, and signing petitions.

Restrictions due to COVID-19 have deeply affected how our members have been able to perform their responsibilities. However, despite those restrictions, there has been contact with members via the telephone, making sure all was well with them and seeing if they had anything they wished to bring up with the League. Newsletters kept our members informed and contact with the councils was always there.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Callahan

Resolutions Chairperson, Antigonish Diocesan Council

Page Left Blank Intentionally

**Catholic Women's League of Canada
Antigonish Diocesan Council**

Organization

Annual Report: 2020

of councils reporting: 16 of 39

Three councils reported the position was vacant, 2/3 were appointed to the position, 1/3 through election. Approximately 2/3 of the chairpersons held the position previously.

Membership: This year councils were asked to identify members' race, ethnicity. A few councils answered 'unknown', stating in the comments that they felt it inappropriate. Of reporting councils, most members are of European descent and a small number of members were identified as Latin, Caribbean, African and Asian. Most councils felt their membership does represent the culture of their parish community.

Members Participation: Council activities were vastly curtailed this year, due to the pandemic. Council meetings were held Jan-Mar and a few councils held a meeting/ gathering in the fall. Participation is for the majority of reporting councils with other councils having more/ less members participating.

Fundraising: 60-80% of members assist in fundraising events

Attend Meetings: half of the councils have 40% of members attend meetings

Social Events: 40- 60% attendance at social events

Spiritual Events: two-thirds of councils have 60% -80% of members attend spiritual events.

Total New Members: 14

New Members: Personal invitation is the best recruitment tool for recruiting new members. Parish/bulletin announcements, social events and mass presentation also were useful for some councils. Four councils have one or more 'associate' members. New members are welcomed by introduction and welcoming at meetings; asked to participate at events; some councils give out new member's kit.

Members Recognition: Most councils present 'years of service' pins to members. Some councils present other awards to members, such as the Maple Leaf Service Pin, certificates, gifts and cards for special occasions.

Membership Fees: 70% of councils use online membership renewal, 30% still do them manually. Half of the reporting councils have members on diocesan or provincial council. Life members are not readily asked to assist councils. Two councils have occasionally asked life members in their council for advice on procedural matters in the past.

Keeping members informed: Council activities were very limited due to the pandemic. Most councils have not met since March, but a few councils held 1-2 meetings in the fall. Some councils introduced ways to keep members up to date such as: started a *Facebook* page; news bulletin developed and mailed to all members; reached out to members via phone calls.

Attracting, maintaining, engaging members and/or regaining a former member:

Councils' initiatives included: pay membership fee for senior members in long term care homes; pay membership for members over 90 years of age and give them a poinsettia at Christmas; one council has set their membership fee at \$20 and the council covers the additional \$2 for its members.

Council Activities: Most activities were not held this year due to the pandemic, but were reported by councils since they have helped engage women/members in past years: Annual Prayer Breakfast that targets women in the parish which is always sold out; annual Tea & Sale brings women of the community together; Annual Christmas Tea & Sale in which many parishioners help and some have become members; Fall Fair; Feast Day (honouring Our Lady of Good Counsel); Christmas lunch party and gift exchange. One council planted a tree to honour the League's 100 years and were presented a plaque in recognition for their council's 80 years.

Challenges as Organization Chair: Not comfortable using technology; member engagement and new member recruitment; collecting membership dues this year was especially challenging; knowledge of the position and becoming confident in the role; finalizing a comprehensive membership list, worked with national to enter updates; keeping up and learning the role from the president and past presidents, thankful that they are a strong council and support each other.

Challenges in completing this survey: Not as active due to council meetings restrictions due to COVID-19; not comfortable with technology; much easier than last year; question on member diversity seems invasive, we are all members no matter what our ethnicity; very easy to maneuver; user friendly; survey highlighted the areas that require attention; completed by other council member who is more computer savvy; as the new chair of organization in 2020, since COVID-19 shut us down, there was no opportunity to actively be involved this year or to engage in regular meetings and activities; questions are not straight forward especially for membership identity; some councils did paper copies (for all positions), sent to diocesan chair who entered them online for the councils.

Activities by Diocesan Chair:

- Organized a leadership workshop in Feb, attended by 6 area councils. Topics included: Team Building and Leadership; Effective Meetings and Procedures; and Discerning our Spiritual Gifts. This half day format and topics were very well received by participants as stated on the evaluations.
- Attended national Zoom webinar(s) on: National Convention Speaker Series; The League of the Future-Strategic Plan Updates; How to Complete Annual Reports; and four diocesan zoom meetings.
- Compiled and sent 3 memos this year re: #3 Strategic Planning, Membership Fees, Council Mailings, League Crest; #4 Membership, Strategic Plan Updates and Annual Reports; #5 National Office closure, Catholic Women Leadership Foundation, Strategic Plan Update
- Contacted 4 councils to complete 'staying connected survey' as assigned by diocesan president
- Received access code from national, to monitor the completed annual report surveys and follow up with councils who had not completed them. After the deadline of Jan 15, the survey was "closed" and I forwarded the final survey summaries to each diocesan officer. I had many phone calls and emails to councils to assist in completing annual reports. Also sent paper copies to 3 councils, once completed they were returned to me to input online for their councils.
- Assisted the president as requested to offer input on upcoming diocesan activities.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie LeLievre,

Organization Chairperson, Antigonish Diocesan Council

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Antigonish Diocesan Council**

Past President

Annual Report: 2020

of councils reporting: 15 of 39

I would like to thank the councils that were able to do their annual reports, either by completing the online surveys, or by paper copies, which were entered online for them. Past presidents are mentors in their council, assisting the president and other members as requested. Thank you for your dedication to the League!

Twelve councils have the past president position filled and three councils reported the position was vacant. Half of the members have held the position previously. The majority of the past presidents (80%) attend council meetings. Most of past presidents (60%) attend social and spiritual events. All reported that they are called upon for advice monthly or more often and felt their president was supported and encouraged by their help.

Archives: One of the usual responsibilities of past president is maintaining the archives for the council. Ten past presidents reported that they do this in their council; other councils have another member who does this for the council. Councils' archives are kept in storage either in the parish office, glebe house or their CWL room in filing cabinets or boxes. Archived items include photo albums, scrapbooks, and council information either paper copies or on a USB stick, CD or DVD.

Councils retained materials such as: annual reports, financial information, lists of past executives, membership lists, pins and awards recipient list, minutes of executive and general meetings, written reports, Book of Life and the history of deceased members. Most councils keep these records indefinitely; however, a few councils only keep the annual reports, minutes and financial reports for 4 to 10 years. Five councils maintain a council history book.

There is no set rule as to how long a council should keep records but is mainly based on storage space. Archives should be reviewed once during the past president's term- or every two years. Two past presidents reported doing this, while most reported that they reviewed archives as needed.

Resource Material: Past presidents reported that their council has copies of the *Constitution and Bylaws* and the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*. Most councils refer to the manuals to clarify issues and help with procedures, once to a few times a year, or every few years as required. Five councils stated they are rarely used. Eleven of the reports noted that they have a council policy and procedure manual for their own council, which is reviewed when policies change and or every two - five years.

Other Levels of the League/Other Resources: Parish councils most commonly sought advice from the diocesan executive and rarely from provincial council or national office. 75% of parish councils sought advice from diocesan executive, annually or throughout the year. Three councils reported they have asked for information from provincial council and/or national. Most councils (75%) reported that they sought advice from their spiritual advisors occasionally or monthly. Councils reported that they never or rarely sought advice from the Bishop. 60% of councils reported that they rarely or never seek advice from life members in their area. Six councils who have a life member in their council, ask them for advice occasionally. Councils were split 50-50 on their support for the implementation of the national strategic plan.

Other Duties Undertaken by the Past President at the Request of the Council President:

- Checked national and provincial websites for information and shared information
- Organized social events, fundraisers or charity events
- Promoted the League in the parish and community
- Chaired the nominations and elections committee
- Organized funeral lunches
- Represented the council at conventions
- Chaired a standing committee or filled a vacant position
- Helped organize a spiritual event or prayer service
- Chaired executive or general meetings
- Prepared newsletter articles and correspondence
- Helped prepare agendas

Ideas to Make the President's Experience more Enjoyable and Fulfilling:

- Get all members involved in projects such as; fund raisers, social and spiritual events, encourage attendance at conventions and conferences.
- Delegate tasks to executive and or members, thereby sharing the work load
- Encourage social time after meetings to provide a little fun, so that it is not all business
- Be available for questions and give advice
- Support the president in decision making, and encourage her to ask for help
- Stay active in council activities

Due to COVID-19, most councils have not been able to have many events this past year. Projects that were done in the past, were adapted by some councils, to include social distancing.

Some successful ideas and projects reported were:

- Organized a CWL mass, where service pins and a Maple Leaf Service Pin were awarded
- Organized fun games for members to enjoy following the meeting and social activities
- Hosted a "shower" for the homeless and a "bakeless" bake sale, while social distancing
- Reviewed, revised and updated the council policy and procedure manual
- Distributed prayer blankets to seriously ill parishioners. The blankets were made by members, while praying the Rosary, and were blessed at mass.

Greatest Challenges Shared by Councils:

- To fill chairs and positions
- Members are not always open to change or new ideas; encouragement was given to do things in a different way
- Keeping in touch with members during COVID-19 was challenging
- Having members doing two chairs at the same time
- COVID-19 has halted the ability to function for many councils. Some councils decided to attempt one small project each month to stay connected with their members
- Lack of willingness to take on leadership roles, leading to some members experiencing "burnout"
- Elections being postponed for one year, also due to COVID-19
- Members are aging and not able to be as active in League activities

Respectfully submitted,

Cleo Windsor, Past President, Antigonish Diocesan Council

Notes: