

MERCY



RIGHT TO LIFE

HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

September 2nd, 2016

Dear sisters in the League;

This morning I noticed some of the leaves at the top of our old maple tree are already turning red- first sign autumn. With that, of course, there is renewed activity in our parishes and in our CWL.

At the National convention in Halifax something wonderful happened (one thing of many actually) but this one bears celebration. Our own Joan Bona was elected to the National Council and this morning I discovered that she is our new National Chairperson of Resolutions. This is absolutely wonderful news for us.

In her first communique (found online at cwl.ca) Joan has listed the following

Resolution 2016.04: Amend the Canada Health Act to Identify Palliative Care as an Insured Health Service (Legislation) – urges the federal government:

- **To identify palliative care as an insured health service covered under the Canada Health Act;**
- **To develop a national strategy for uniform standards and delivery of palliative care as defined by the World Health Organization; and**
- **That the ten provincial councils urge their provincial/territorial governments to provide palliative care as an insured service covered under their provincial/territorial health act as deemed necessary/prudent.**

This is an important resolution as it is a step in our continuing fight against physician assisted death. At the Convention much of the focus was on Palliative Care as an alternative to assisted death.

The first step in a national approach to Palliative Care is education: how can a properly funded palliative care program be an alternative to assisted death and how can we lobby government to bring about such a change?

I was truly inspired and moved by a presentation at the convention by Dr. Nuala Kenny- a Sister of Charity and world renowned ethicist and physician. This statistic quoted by Dr. Kenny opened my eyes; one of the main reasons that people chose death over life is not the prospect of pain and suffering. It is the fact that they see no option. They do not want to be a burden to their families; they have no family; they do not know what resources are available to them to enable them to live out their days to the natural conclusion. The reality is that most people would not choose to end their lives if they had another good option.

At our Fall Conference on **October 21st and 22nd** hosted by St Joseph, North Sydney, Holy Family, Sydney Mines and St Joseph, Bras D'Or, we will be focusing on these life issues. Our theme will be as outlined at the top of this letter and every attendee will receive a bag with this lovely logo. Featured will be a presentation by Dr. Bob Martel, a physician with a special interest in palliative care. There are many video presentations by Dr. Kenny available online for use in parish communities. We will present one of them in our afternoon session as a sample of what you can do in your own councils to educate on this important topic. There will be plenty of time for discussion and an exchange of ideas.

This coming year we are being asked to focus on Palliative Care. Let us begin by informing ourselves on the issues so that we can respond to the challenge of Bill C-14 in an enlightened way.

You will be receiving your registration package for Fall Conference shortly. Please make every effort to have as many of your members as possible attend. A special invitation goes out to new members of your council who have never attended a diocesan event. It may encourage them to become more active in your own parish councils and, perhaps 😊 even join the diocesan council!

I look forward to seeing you at the executive meeting on Friday October 21st. We have jam- packed agenda. Until then, enjoy the Autumn!

Yours in faith

Jessie

Jessie Parkinson

Antigonish Diocesan CWL