

The Catholic Women's League of Canada



Antigonish Diocesan Council

Here I am Lord, send me!

TO: Parish Council Service Chairs
FROM: Diocesan Service Chair Rita Wojtyniak
DATE: October 18, 2025
SUBJECT: Service in Action: Ideas and Key Dates
MEMO: # 3 (2024-2026)
CC: Parish Council Presidents, Diocesan Officers, Life Members, Provincial Secretary (for distribution to provincial counterpart)

Sisters in the League:

Welcome back to this busy fall of CWL activities 2025. I was kept busy with workshops, Spring Conventions at Diocesan (Antigonish) and Provincial (Our Lady of Fatima-Sydney). I was able to attend the National Convention in Toronto (participating in the Halifax NS presentation for 2026) and on return I attended Monastery's 200th Celebration as well as the Provincial – Diocesan Executive Retreat in Amherst.

SERVICE is at the heart of the Catholic Women's League and valued by those in need in our parishes, local communities, country and world. Madonna Clark, National Chairperson of Service, has sent along dates and activities we might be interested in this fall. I have expanded on those as well. Remember ...*Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love* (Mother Teresa). Pick and choose a few to focus on through the fall and winter. (Some of the suggested dates have already passed; however, the activities and resources remain relevant and can be considered as upcoming projects.)

***October 9th was National Children's Hospice Palliative Care Day.** Want to learn more on palliative care? The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) have a toolkit available on their website, *A Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care*, which help parishes reflect on and provide palliative care through a faith-based, community centered approach. It will help educate and empower parishioners, care givers and pastoral teams to foster compassionate community care by offering support through illness, death, suffering and bereavement.

***October 10th was World Mental Health Day.** This offered a special opportunity to host a prayer service or rosary focused on hope and healing. Councils are encouraged to host a rosary, prayer service, or moment of reflection focused on mental health at any time—perhaps during Lent, Advent, or as part of a regular meeting. Mental health matters every day, and our League can be a source of hope and strength for all.

Continuing on our theme of **Support for Mental Health and Illness**, at the national convention in Toronto, Dr. Gerry Turcotte (President of Corpus Christi College, Vancouver, and St Marks College, UBC) gave a talk on Phobias and Homelessness in regards to Mental Illness. He empathized that of foremost assistance to those with mental health issues is *to see them as a person*. Recognize them in passing, smile or say hi, acknowledge them by sharing eye contact and listen--ask what they would need. They exist and are not invisible.

The second speaker at national convention was Brother Richard MacPhee from the *Good Shepherd Center*, Hamilton. The Good Shepherds emphasize being a good neighbor by providing hope, healing and love. By providing the 4-H's of *Health, Housing, Healing and Hospitality*, they provide compassion to the poor, and power to the powerless. With over 400 projects from Hamilton through Toronto to Scarborough, they provide services for many with mental health problems including family shelters; women's shelters; runaway teens; homeless seniors; teen pregnancies; medical stepdown care; post Cancer treatment; senior day camps; GED with child care; counselling; help lines; tiny homes, etc. 25% of people have mental health issues and 67% of homeless have mental health issues. Jesus said *Send me your Broken*. CWL members, through faith, compassion, empathy and dignity, can offer support and volunteer at shelters, soup kitchens, supply linens, health items, food drives, etc.

***October 27th, Monday 7pm. Dr. Jean Ferguson will talk on MAiD and Palliative Care.** Hosted by St. Mary CWL, East Bay, at the East Bay Fire Hall.

***November** is recognized as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Canada. Participate in campaigns that encourage wearing purple to show your support for survivors of domestic violence. Purple symbolizes courage, peace and survival.

***November 16th, World Day of the Poor**, established by Pope Francis. Support food banks, shelters, food drives. Mother Teresa says *if you can't feed one hundred people then just feed one*.

***December 6th, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women/ White Ribbon Day.** Hold a prayer vigil or rosary for victims of family or gender violence. Collect hygiene items, baby diapers, gift cards for Transition Houses. Promote the White Ribbon Campaign.

***December 18th, International Migrants Day.** Celebrate multiculturalism in the community. Collect winter coats, household starter kits for immigrant families. Send cards to past sponsored families. Pray for peace for refugees and areas of conflict in world (Gaza, Ukraine).

***December 28th, Feast of the Holy Family.** Sponsor a family at Christmas (Adopt a family/ CBRM). Host a community dinner (delivery/ takeout) for seniors or those homebound; host a family fun day.

***Development and Peace Caritas. Turn Debt into Hope Campaign and Petition.** Sign the petition if not done in the spring (devp.org) advocating for establishment of a multilateral debt resolution mechanism within the United Nations which is intended to cancel unsustainable debts, prevent debt crisis' and tackle root cause of indebtedness.

These are a lot of suggestions to consider in **service** for others. Try what you can with what you have. Mother Teresa says *give your hands to serve and your hearts to love*. We have done this as CWL members for many years and remember "*I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things*" (Mother Teresa).

There are some updates to the *Handbook for Chairpersons of Faith, Service and Social Justice* available on the cwl.ca website with examples of projects to try. Let us work together on this journey.

Your sister in the League,
Rita Wojtyniak
Antigonish Diocesan Service Chair