

## ANTIGONISH DIOCESAN COUNCIL FAITH CHAIR

Annual Report: 2024

# of councils reporting: 17/27

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the annual survey. The parish level is the grassroots of our League. It is important that each council report on their activities so that we might get a true picture of what is being done in the whole of Canada. What you do is important—don't forget that! Here is a summary of the responses from councils in the Diocese of Antigonish:

**How were members assisted in their communal and personal prayer life?** Most councils used a variety of prayer styles for meetings (82%); used resources on the national website and promoted prayers that are regularly posted to cwl.ca and social media (65%); and encouraged spiritual reading, bible study and participation in a book club (53%). To a lesser degree, councils organized or promoted retreats/days of reflection; shared in the televised Mass in honour of Our Lady of Good Counsel; encouraged members to use apps or subscriptions for daily Mass readings; sought the assistance of subcommittee members and spiritual advisors to develop spiritual programs; and sourced the calendar of faith events and prayers on the national website.

**How did the council incorporate the National theme “*Here I am Lord, send me*” in spiritual programs?** Councils did this by praying the theme prayer at monthly meetings, group sharing on how members have responded to God's call in their lives, praying and reflecting on Isaiah 6:8, discussing the symbolism of the theme logo, and using a video or hymn on the theme as part of a spiritual program.

**In what ways did the council assist members in the growth of their Catholic faith and greater awareness of the role of women in the life and mission of the church?** Councils raised awareness of Catholic resources on the internet; participated in the Year of Prayer webinars hosted by the CCCB; studied/read encyclicals by Pope Francis; encouraged reading of the synodal synthesis document and pastoral letters on reconciliation with Indigenous peoples; scheduled guest speakers on religious topics; discussed League position papers; and encouraged the study of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

**What ecumenical or interfaith activities did members of the council initiate or participate in during 2024?** Councils reported they participated in World Day of Prayer and Week of Prayer for Christian Unity events; worked with other churches in the community to address local concerns or hosted an information event about another faith.

**How did the council support or promote religious vocations?** Many councils (79%) prayed on World Day for Consecrated Life and/or World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Councils also donated to a seminary fund, hosted special events to celebrate the priest's birthday or anniversary of ordination, supported consecrated women religious through prayer and/or donations, invited guest speakers on vocations to ordained ministry/consecrated life and the role of women and the church.

**In what ways did the council and members uphold or advocate for the sanctity of life?**

Councils participated in 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care; discussed League position papers; promoted and encouraged member participation in pro-life events; wrote letters to government against abortion and medical assistance in dying and advocated for palliative care funding and accessibility; participated in March for Life or similar pro-life gatherings; included pro-life prayers and reports at meetings; and donated to pro-life causes. They promoted the CCCB's National Family and Life Week in May; participated in pro-life webinars or guest speaker events and in 40 Days for Life prayer vigils.

Judging by the responses to this annual survey, I can tell that councils in the Diocese of Antigonish are faith-filled and busy. Based on the number of answers entitled "other", I also know that councils have demonstrated their faith in more ways than appears on the survey, but these have not been elaborated on in the report. As we embrace the theme "Here I am Lord, send me", I know that you will find new and exciting ways to share your faith!

**Diocesan Chair Activities:** As most of you probably know, I submitted my final report as Treasurer and also as an officer of the Antigonish Diocesan Executive to be read at the convention/AMM in April, 2024 due to the fact that I was a full-time caregiver to my mother and didn't feel that I could devote the attention to any chair that the position would require. Regrettably, Mom passed away convention weekend. This, however, left me with some free time and Madam President came knocking. She offered me the Faith Chair and I gladly accepted.

Since my appointment in May 2024, I have:

- participated in several executive meetings via ZOOM and in-person,
- prepared memos and articles for the newsletter,
- prepared and delivered a workshop at Fall Conference with the service and social justice chairs,
- continued to source out and prepare spiritual reflections and prayers for our meetings,
- participated in Mass for Shut-Ins on several occasions,
- participated in a Truth and Reconciliation ceremony prepared by St. Louis Council, Louisdale,
- and have maintained the Book of Life.

I am always available to answer your questions.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage each council to remember our dearly departed sisters who came before us and ignited the flame of spirituality and hope. I invite you to prepare special intentions for them at Mass and/or hold a Deceased Members' Ceremony for your council and invite family members to attend/ participate. During this Jubilee Year, let us be "*Pilgrims of Hope*" as we keep the flame that they lit burning brightly and continue responding to the call to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service with a resounding "*Here I am Lord, send me*".

*Doreen Boudreau*

Antigonish Diocesan Faith Chair