

SERVICE

Annual Report: 2025

of Councils Reporting: 20/27

The three standing committees of Faith, Service and Social Justice constantly crossover. Each pillar focuses on different dimensions of gospel living—enabling its members to grow through prayer, action and advocacy. Service transforms faith into action through charitable outreach, particularly by living corporal and spiritual works of mercy. We care for those in need by offering practical help, compassion and our presence. Our focus was on Mental Health and Illness, which can sometimes be compounded by addictions, violence, poverty, and homelessness. Information was given at conventions, conference, workshops, and through memos, newsletters and handouts expanding on these themes.

1. Did your council take part in or encourage support for the following.....

The focus for many councils was on Human Trafficking (79%), Mental Health Awareness (74%), Homelessness (47%), Family or Intimate Partner Violence (26%). Actions included providing financial support, volunteering at shelters, foodbanks, soup kitchens, and transition houses and by hosting education and awareness talks. Councils (58%) promoted health, welfare and physical activities and active living for seniors through social activities like ceilidhs, dinners, socials or game nights, and exercise classes. Councils (42%) supported blood donor drives through Canadian Blood Services' *Partners for Life* Program. In Cape Breton we do not have convenient access to blood donation. We continued working on the revised Resolution 2025:01: Provision of a Blood Donation Service for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) with a presentation to CBRM council/Mayor, an expanded letter writing campaign to Indigenous reserves/communities, service clubs, MLAs, MPs, NS Premier and NS Dept. of Health & Wellness as well as reissuing letters to Canadian Blood Services. 32% of councils supported or welcomed refugees and migrants as encouraged by WUCWO and discussed in "Welcoming the Stranger" in the Winter 2025 issue of *The Canadian League*. <https://www.cwl.ca/the-canadian-league-winter-2025/> Some councils organized lunches and "meet-and-greet" gatherings to welcome international residents. Many joined CWL councils as a result of being welcomed, acknowledged, and encouraged to participate in Masses and choirs. 11% sponsored a child.

2. Has your council supported, promoted or participated in initiatives related to:

Evangelization or Missionary work (92%); Catholic continuing education such as the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA, formerly known as RCIA) (23%); Chalice (8%); councils did not report promoting or starting a Catholic Girls League.

3. Did your council actively support or promote fundraising activities led by:

Development and Peace Turn Debt into Hope Campaign (75%); Catholic Missions in Canada (63%); Coady Institute (50%); CNEWA Canada (31%); and through the Catholic Women's Leadership Foundation (19%).

4. Parish councils are encouraged to engage members in faith-filled action that reflects the mission of the Catholic Women's League of Canada. Activities that follow the liturgical seasons provide meaningful ways for members to live out their faith and connect service with spirituality. Did your council support or distribute resources related to any of following?

Feast days or Catholic observances such as Marian celebrations or feasts, patron saints or parish devotions (81%); Lenten charitable activities through donation or community outreach (63%); Season of Service Advent Calendar (6%);

5. In May 2025, the new toolkit “12-Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” was introduced tying together faith, service and social justice. List activities your council participated in or information you shared from the toolkit:

Councils participated by walking and/or donating to palliative care or hospices. They participated in “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” by assigning 1-hour increments to different members, combining with other parishes, organizing a prayer chain, holding a Mass or Eucharistic adoration, and encouraging prayers for patients, families and caregivers.

Others held information sessions on palliative care topics including benefits of palliative care regardless of prognosis, supporting grieving or caring for loved ones, and supporting what matters most to dying persons and families. Some attended the Dying with Christ - Living with Hope online sessions offered by the CMDA and a presentation by Dr. Jeanne Ferguson, Gerontologist, on a “Christian Perspective on Palliative Care vs MAiD”.

6. Which days, promoted by the national service chairperson, were noted or recognized by council?

World Mental Health Day (82%); National Day of Remembrance on Violence Against Women (64%); National Family and Life Week (55%); National Seniors Day (55%); World Day of the Poor (55%); Purple Thursday (Domestic Violence Awareness Month) (36%); National Children’s Hospice Palliative Care Day (18%). Many dates were missed because the communications did not reach recipients before the due date.

Service Chair Activities:

- Attended Diocesan Officers’ meetings in January, Feb, May, September and October and Diocesan Executive Meetings in April and October 2025
- Attended the 2025 Diocesan Convention in April; presented oral report for service
- Attended NS Provincial Convention hosted by Our Lady of Fatima, Sydney River June 6-8
- Accredited delegate at National CWL Convention (Toronto) August 8-11 and participated in presentation to promote the 2026 National Convention in Halifax
- Attended Diocesan - Provincial CWL Officers Retreat (Amherst) September 2025
- Presented workshop *Here I am Lord to Lead and Follow* at 2025 Diocesan Fall Conference
- Presented workshops in Sydney, Port Hawkesbury and Bras D’Or: *A Three Pillar Approach to Mental Health, Here I am Lord to Lead and Follow* (leadership, engagement, ministry), *Send Me Lord-Ignite our Gifts* (Human Trafficking: A Three Pillar Approach)
- Participated in webinars: CMDA Dying with Christ - Living with Hope (May 8, 15, & 22); Family Violence: Challenges & Opportunities for Catholics, Nov 2025; Stained Glass Story of Abuse, November 5; NS Provincial Human Trafficking Prayer Service and Information Session Feb 2026.
- Prepared memos (3) and newsletter articles (2) for councils.

Thank you to all councils who submitted annual reports.

Rita Wojtyniak, Antigonish Diocesan Council Service Chair