

Timmins Diocesan Council  
The Catholic Women's League  
President's Report to the 2021 Annual General Meeting  
June 12, 2021

Under the National theme of "Care for Our Common Home", the climate activist Greta Thunberg made a big impression on us when we watched her presentation on the Ted Talks program. Members of the C.W.L. were already working hard to reduce, reuse, recycle and conserve water, but Greta's determination spurred us on to try harder.

I was pleased to read an article of a young Canadian, a teenage Indigenous water activist named Autumn Peltier who hails from Wiikwemkoong First Nation on Manitoulin Island. Autumn shared the stage with Greta when she appeared on a panel in Davos, Switzerland at the World Economic Forum in January 2020. Autumn had spent her last eight years putting pressure on politicians to take climate change more seriously, while advocating for clean drinking water in Indigenous communities and serving as the chief water commissioner for the Anishinabek Nation, a political advocacy group for 40 First Nations across Ontario. At the time, Autumn was 15 years old. We can be proud of these young women and on the lookout for more from them.

The provincial sub-theme of "Loneliness" started out slowly as we looked at what this means for us and for others. We could not foresee that loneliness would become a big issue when the pandemic forced everyone to isolate. Some welcomed the change in routines because it slowed everything down and made us look again at our hectic pace of life. For seniors in long-term care homes, however, loneliness was exacerbated when loved ones could no longer visit and help care for mothers and fathers. Those who were dying were not able to have the comfort of their families.

Loneliness itself can force us to be quiet and, for some, it is an opportunity to look deeper, to enter into a prayer life that we have never had time for. Being alone is not always a bad thing.

We have found new ways to connect, starting with the good old fashioned telephone and cards in the mail. We are learning new technology so that we can hold meetings and actually see each other as we are doing this weekend. We have been creative in thanking and supporting our essential workers – letters of thanks, posters, a simple word of appreciation and kindness.

We need each other. We long for our churches to be open once again, to receive the Eucharist and to meet and greet our fellow Catholics. A few of us have been able to attend a mass on occasion within the limits required.

We continue to pray for an end to this pandemic, healing for those afflicted with the virus and strength and courage for the caregivers who put their very lives at risk. We keep our eyes on the One who sustains us and on His mother, Our Lady of Good Counsel, and we are filled with hope.

Respectfully submitted

Annette Kelly