

Provincial Report

Greetings to all members gathered.

The year started out like any other. Members participated in League Development Days, Lenten Retreats, and training workshops in February.

On March 14, 2020, a global pandemic was declared and our CWL world, as we knew it, changed. Everything changed. The provincial theme of loneliness suddenly was more relevant than ever.

Despite not being able to meet in person, members continued to support their parishes and communities through outreach and commitment. Members, in many circumstances, took the lead as part of parish cleaning teams and volunteering to support the public health regulations when only limited numbers could attend mass in person. Reaching out to the lonely, vulnerable and frightened became a mission for many. Members called each other to offer support or a listening ear. They sent cards of encouragement and friendship.

The pandemic seemed to make us thirst for spiritual fulfillment. The lockdowns provided opportunities for training. Diocesan councils across the province offered virtual workshops, rosary gatherings, CWL Wednesdays, mass dedications and virtual celebrations. Members gathered when they could, keeping the health and safety of members foremost in their minds. Drive-by membership drives popped up all over the province. Members held celebrations of life in cemeteries while social distancing. Generally, where there was a will, Ontario members found a way.

Several diocesan councils organized celebrations to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the League. One hundred thirty-six trees were planted across the province as part of the national centenary project.

While isolating, almost one thousand letters were written to the Ontario provincial government in support of changes to long term care in the province. Letters also were written to oppose the passing of Bill C-7 which would permit medical assistance in dying for those whose death is not reasonably foreseeable. The provincial council team was unable to arrange a government visit due to the public health restrictions, but a letter was sent by the provincial president to the premier reminding him of our commitment to bring Catholic values to legislation being passed by this government.

Member's prayer lives were enriched by both in-person and virtual rosary rallies, 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care, Prayer Shawl Ministries and weekly prayer services.

The Covid 19 pandemic has shown us that councils can continue to pull together, through teamwork and a willingness to help and support each other. People became stronger, more supportive, and more giving; they learned to be kinder and more patient, and most important, learned to never take today for granted.

The Ontario Provincial Council was challenged in 2020 to find new ways to serve the membership, the community, the Catholic Church, and the world. In Ontario, every member stepped up to those challenges and met them head on; each responding in their own way, with the support of League sisters and under the guidance of Our Lady of Good Counsel.