

CWL History in Edmonton Archdiocese 1912-1962

Although the Catholic Women's League was incorporated nationally in 1920 in Montreal, it actually began in the Edmonton Diocese in 1912.

"Katherine Hughes of Edmonton had become aware of and interested in the Catholic Women's League while traveling in England and she spoke of it to her Bishop on her return home.

"During the early 1900s, the influx of European immigrants to the 'new world' was becoming a major concern. Many of these immigrants were young women, and many of them were finding their way to western cities in Canada.

"Bishop Emile Legal, OMI, of Edmonton, recognized the need for organized assistance for these immigrant women and called upon Katherine Hughes and Abbé Casgrain, well known for his work with immigrants, to organize a meeting..." (taken from CWL history "Except the Lord Build the House...")

Katherine Hughes organized a meeting of the Edmonton Catholic women to discuss the possibilities. That first meeting was held on November 13, 1912 at St. Joachim's Church under the direction of Mrs. Samuel Gorman. The plan of work and organization was enthusiastically adopted. They called themselves the Catholic Women's League, after the English group. The officers elected at this inaugural meeting were President Mrs. Samuel Gorman, 1st Vice President, Mrs. Wilfred Gariepy, Corresponding Secretary Miss Katherine Hughes, Recording Secretary Mrs. J. Markin, and Treasurer Mrs. Tehan. (The first Chaplain was Father Naessens.) Other names on the early rosters included Mesdames Couchon, Berube, Madore, Barry, Lavalee, Boucher, H.B. Dawson, T.P. Malone, T. Ducey, J. Laughlin, E. Underwood, St. Smith, A. Fraser, and J.J. Duggan.

This first CWL included the seven parishes in Edmonton at that time; namely, St. Joachim, Sacred Heart, St. Anthony's, Immaculate Conception, St. Joseph's (not yet a Basilica), the Franciscan Parish, and the Jesuit Parish.

The women who founded the Catholic Women's League in 1912 began with the intention of protecting and supporting immigrant women and girls seeking work in Edmonton, and promoting spiritual and temporal good works. Sacrifice was asked of all members, whether in contribution of service, goods, or other, or to sanctify its members.

Members established a League hostel, volunteered to meet trains, visited hospitals, and ran a free employment office. Although branches collected their own membership fees, all worked together on every project. Convenerships included Good Shepherd Auxiliary, Rosary Hall Guild, Social Committee, Publicity, Royal Alexandra Hospital, Misericordia and General Hospitals, Red Cross, Membership, Teacher's Exchange, National Council of Immigration, and Visiting Sick and Strangers.

The first hostel established by the League was at 543 - 111 Street, Edmonton. After only one year, a larger house was needed, and one was found at 522 - 105 Street. Still later, a property was acquired at 10043 - 107 Street, and this building was named Rosary Hall. A Miss Lasky was in charge, and she was paid the huge sum of \$50.00 per month! The Sisters of Providence of Kingston, Ontario, took over the management of Rosary Hall in 1915. They later purchased the Gariepy Mansion on the corner of 100 Avenue and 104 Street, and this then, became Rosary Hall. Monthly meetings of CWL were held at Rosary Hall until there was no longer space available. At the outset, the CWL operated an employment bureau out of Rosary Hall, and later, a secretary was hired for this purpose. Later still, Rosary Hall became a rooming house, providing lodging for those girls who needed it.

To raise money for Rosary Hall, garden parties and a St. Patrick's Day Sale of Badges were held. The city gave a small grant to cover the cost of water and light. Those who could pay received food and lodging for a small stipend. Those who couldn't pay received just the same. CWL members provided linens, took girls into their homes, paid rent on Rosary Hall, renovated Rosary Hall, and even provided a piano.

In 1918, CWL provided dishes and sundries for a summer camp at Lac St. Anne. Donations were also made to construct the camp and to help purchase a second lot.

All these events took place before CWL became a National Organization! In 1920, when the first National Catholic Women's League Convention was held, Mrs. Howard Thompson, President of the already-very-active Edmonton CWL, was proud to be in attendance.

In 1921, the Edmonton Diocesan Council came into being, and in 1922, Archbishop O'Leary gave Mrs. J.J. Duggan, President, his blessing and encouragement. The first Diocesan Convention was held March 31, 1922. Those subdivisions taking part in the first Diocesan Convention were Edmonton, Camrose, Wetaskiwin, Red Deer, Leduc, Duhamel, Vermilion, Viking, Killam, Vegreville, and Edmonton Business Girls (later called Juniors). The convention netted total receipts of \$1321.17 and had expenses of \$1099.35.

After the National CWL was established, the Edmonton Diocese had a Junior Subdivision (formerly Business Girls) and a Senior Subdivision. The Junior Subdivision assisted with the National Convention held in Edmonton in 1924. They raised money to furnish the students' rooms at St. Joseph's College. In all, 54 rooms were furnished, at a cost of \$50.00 each. By 1936, when the Diocesan Convention was held, there were only four Junior Subdivisions left. These, like the Senior Subdivisions, carried on until 1952, when subdivisions disbanded and individual parish councils were formed.

Over the years, the majority of CWL work was in the social services area. For example, when the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd came to Edmonton in 1922 to assist in the reformation of wayward girls, the CWL formed a Convener'ship (under Mrs. Edward Underwood) for the Sisters. The Sisters had Good Shepherd Home on 96th Street, and the CWL helped pay the debt owing on its purchase. They also paid for clothing, boots, and treats for the children. Along with the Edmonton groups, surrounding subdivisions of the CWL supported these efforts. In 1939, Mr. William O'Connell bought a mansion in Forest Heights and gave it to the Sisters for an orphanage; they named it O'Connell Institute. Mrs. P.R. Gaboury, Diocesan President in 1922-24, worked at O'Connell Institute and Good Shepherd Home, and as a result, she was remembered with love by many an underprivileged girl and neglected orphan.

In 1942-43, the Edmonton Community Chest gave support to both these Institutes, and the CWL was, to some extent, relieved of the need to raise funds. By 1944, the mortgage had been paid on the 96th Street house, and in 1949-50, it was sold, and the Sisters set up a home for delinquent girls near O'Connell Institute. CWL continued to hold Lilac Teas for these institutions, and in 1962, members celebrated 50 years of work with the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

League members also supported the Sisters of Service who, in 1922, began work in immigration, in charge of hostels for reception and care of immigrant girls across the Dominion. In 1924, a hostel was set up in Edmonton by three Sisters of Service. In 1925, they had a Catechetical House at 11837 - 85 Street, and in 1929, a hostel at 9919 - 105 Street. CWL supported both of these facilities under the convener'ship of Mrs. M.J. McElhone of Stettler. A "Purple Bag" program was initiated in 1926 and ran until 1944. In 1927, an organ was given to the Sisters at Vilna. By 1937, in addition to continuous fundraising, classes in Home Training were given by Mrs. R.G. Brewer, Home Economist, to help girls in the residence get jobs as domestics. In 1961, a Lay Advisory Board was

established, and Mrs. A.L. LaBerge was a member. The Sisters of Service did a tremendous amount of work in catechetical and residence work, with the aid of CWL.

In 1927, the work of the Sisters of Atonement was added to the list of CWL convenerships. The Sisters of Atonement came to Edmonton to work on the project of caring for high school students who came to the city to continue their education. Later, the Sisters worked with orphans. Faithful CWL aid for these Sisters continues today... in 2004!

Other early endeavours included a Comfort Corner, established in 1921, and re-established in 1928 by Mrs. F.J. Conroy, to do relief work. At the 1923 Diocesan Convention, Father Patton suggested that the CWL adopt St. Mary's Home for Boys, and Mrs. F.R. Munshaw became the first Convener. Wherever they saw a need or were asked to help, these early members leapt in with both feet!

Of course, during the First World War, CWL members from all parishes did patriotic work, with many of them joining or organizing Red Cross Circles. Later, they did their part again during the Second World War. They distributed ditty bags to parishes to be filled. In response to an appeal for prayers from Canadian Catholic Chaplains' Services, members printed forms to be distributed to parishes. Parcels were prepared and sent to prisoners of war. When the Second World War ended, Mrs. F.J. Conroy was appointed to the City Rehabilitation Committee. CWL began, in 1945, to support the Colonel Mewburn Hospital. Records show that in 1954, this support was still being given in various ways.

The Catholic Women's League was not just involved in social work... Oh no! Education was also very important. A Catholic Teachers' Exchange was set up for both rural and city teachers. A Nurses' Guild was set up in the General Hospital. CWL donated prizes to schools, and a Red Cross committee was set up to visit schools, give lectures, and demonstrate Red Cross work. In 1925, four subdivisions had Study Clubs. These Study Clubs met three times during the winter, and three discussion papers were covered at each meeting, the first by a priest and the other two by CWL members. By 1930, it was reported that 50% of the CWL subdivisions had active Study Clubs.

The CWL realized that members needed good reading material. In addition to a Reading Committee, an Extension Library was formed, principally for the benefit of those in rural areas. By 1925, a Diocesan Circulating Library with 700 books existed. St. Joseph's College Library was the recipient of CWL generosity: in 1939, the College was presented with 100 books, and in 1961, with another 600. In 1961, all the books from the CWL Library were housed in the Catholic Information Centre and were catalogued separately, and then in 1965, the Library was turned completely over to the Centre.

When the *Western Catholic*, a weekly newspaper, was first published, CWL held a drive for subscribers to this paper. League events were well publicized in it, and in 1925, a CWL column, written by CWL member Winnifred O'Brien, was started. CWL promoted the *Western Catholic* and the new League magazine. Funds were raised to provide for subscriptions to the *Western Catholic* for poor families in isolated districts, and *The Canadian League* magazine subscriptions were provided to pastors and shared among neighbours. Even in the Depression years, letters and circulars were sent to councils. In 1951, Edmonton CWL sponsored two "Catholic Truth" broadcasts, and in 1955, they sponsored the November issue of *The Canadian League*. By this time, scrapbook keeping was being taken up by councils.

The National Scholarship was established, and donations were made by councils to provide for the scholarship as the one, great National endeavour of the CWL of Canada. Essays of high quality were submitted by students who had achieved more than 66% in all subjects. By 1935, two \$100 scholarships were being awarded in each of the nine provinces to the pupil obtaining the highest marks in Senior Matriculation. That same year, the Edmonton Senior Subdivision arranged a public speaking contest for Edmonton Separate School students. As well, there was an oratorical contest

at the Diocesan Convention. By 1958, the National Scholarship was worth \$1500, and contributions were being made to a Seminary fund. In 1961, Edmonton Archdiocesan members contributed more than \$3000 to education and were advocating for a Catholic Junior College in Edmonton. The National Scholarship and Study Groups carried on, in various forms, up to 1962.

The League has always stressed civic responsibility and good citizenship. Members worked among all nationalities: Ukrainians, Scots, and Poles, to name a few. When women obtained the franchise in 1918, members were urged to use this function "For God and Canada." Father Connolly, chaplain of Edmonton Juniors, stated that, "we have a moral responsibility in regard to public affairs, especially in a democracy." It is interesting to note that, in 1927, CWL was already presenting resolutions to the Canadian government—one asked for the closing of Communist Schools in Canada and the deportation of Communist teachers. Another early resolution dealt with an important facet of CWL work in the area of Girl Guides—it asked that the Edmonton Diocesan Subdivisions do everything possible to foster Girl Guide companies under the auspices of the Catholic Women's League. Presentation of resolutions at National conventions has carried on throughout the years.

In 1933, the Edmonton CWL resigned from the Local Council of Women because the Council requested that the Provincial Government set up birth control clinics. Mrs. F.J. Conroy wrote articles to the Edmonton paper, and Mrs. A.J. McCormack presented the League's case to the Local Council of Women.

In the 1940s, Irene Hawkes, Diocesan President in 1939-1941, was instrumental in setting up the Provincial Council of the CWL. She subsequently became the first Provincial President in 1948.

In 1956, the Edmonton Civic Action Committee of CWL was set up, with Father J. Burke appointed as Director. Mrs. A.C. Woodman was the first chairman. Activities of this committee included, but were not limited to, involvement in hospital visiting, Mental Health, United Nations' Society, Catholic Metis and Indian Referral Centre, Pedestrian Safety Council, Movie Censor Board, Red Cross Blood Donor Clinic, Foreign Mission Aid, Citizenship Courts, Cancer Society, John Howard Society, Canadian Association of Consumers, Marian Centre, Edmonton Family Service Bureau, and United Community Fund, with different members representing CWL and reporting on each activity. The teas held in the 1950s and 1960s were the chief fundraising events for these Edmonton institutions, which closed or changed their focus in the 1970s. At that point, the Edmonton-based Civic Action Committee was replaced by a Regional Committee or Zone. It was at about that time too, that the remainder of the Archdiocese was structured into Zones.

In 1960, coffee parties were put on for those receiving their citizenship papers. Later, immigration was curtailed when the government changed the regulations so that people wanting to immigrate were forced to be self-supporting or to have sponsors. CWL provided assistance to immigrants in the form of cash, clothing, furniture, visiting, and helping to secure employment. As well, the Catholic Immigration Service was available at the Catholic Information Centre.

Members served on many community boards, including: Council of Social Agencies, Community Chest, National War Services Council, Red Cross, Recreational Centre and V.E. Day Committee, Edmonton Rehabilitation Council, Edmonton Housing Committee, Canadian Association of Consumers, and Wartime Prices and Trade Board.

And throughout its years of activity, the CWL prayed... and prayed... and prayed. The number and variety of spiritual endeavours of the members and councils is endless. A few examples follow. Requiem Masses were recorded for the Spiritual Directors, for soldiers who had fought and died, for Archbishops and priests who died, and for deceased members of the League.

The Catholic Women's League members recited the Rosary for Peace, and presented spiritual bouquets on occasions such as the Silver Jubilee of Rev. J.A. MacLellan, the Golden Jubilee of Archbishop MacDonald, and the Silver Jubilee of Rev. R.V. Britton. As well, many prayers, masses, and spiritual bouquets were offered for Queen Elizabeth on the occasion of her coronation. Among other things, members saved and sent stamps to those who were raising funds for St. Alphonsus Seminary.

In 1955, Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was introduced at St. Joseph's Cathedral by Rt. Rev. Msgr. J. Malone, with 269 women enrolled for daytime hours. The CWL distributed pamphlets and religious booklets, and sponsored the "Our Lady of Fatima" traveling statue.

In 1939, during the presidency of Sadie Ross, the first lay retreats were held. Mrs. J. W. Connolly and Mrs. A.C. Woodman convened them for CWL. In 1950 or so, members attended special retreats given by the Franciscan Fathers at Cochrane, Alberta. Later, the Star of the North Retreat House in St. Albert offered facilities for retreats.

In 1962, an increase in Lay Apostolic Work was reported. In addition to the things mentioned above, Catholic Women's League members prayed for vocations and for lapsed Catholics. Members were urged to participate in the family rosary, nine First Fridays, five First Saturdays, and Stations of the Cross—in fact, everything these women did became a prayer.

Also in 1962, during the presidency of Barbara Basso, the Golden Jubilee of the League's beginnings in Edmonton was celebrated at St. Joseph's Cathedral, with 32 charter members present.

Although many early members of the League worked tirelessly "for God and Canada" and deserve our recognition and admiration, some were singled out at various times. The following is a list of awards received by members, as compiled from the history book *The Catholic Women's League—Early History and Growth in Edmonton Archdiocese*.

1930—Mrs. J.J. Duggan received the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice decoration from the Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, in recognition of her efforts for the faith and the CWL.

1937—Miss Catherine McGrath received the Coronation Medal from King George V.

1945—Mrs. F.J. Conroy received the King's Honour of MBE for work as Alberta Chairman of the Women's Regional Advisory Committee to the Wartime Prices and Trade Board.

1953—Mrs. J. W. Connolly received the Lateran Cross from the Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, for outstanding service.

1961—Mrs. D. Melton, Mrs. C.D. Kelly, and Mrs. R. Byers each received the Bene Merenti Medal from the Holy Father, Pope John XXIII.

Bene Merenti medals from the Holy Father have also been bestowed on Mrs. D.M. O'Brien, Mrs. F.J. Conroy, and Mrs. P.R. Gaboury.

The information for this summary came from a book called *The Catholic Women's League—Early History and Growth in Edmonton Archdiocese*. Compiled by Marion Conroy, this history of the League in the Edmonton Archdiocese from 1912 to 1962 was published in 1963 in recognition of 50 years of service by CWL in the Edmonton Archdiocese. Fifty-two councils and Archbishop McDonald funded the printing of this history book, and copies sold for \$2.50.

CWL History in Edmonton Archdiocese 1963-2004

By 1963, the Diocesan Council and its member councils were firmly entrenched in doing the work of the Catholic Women's League. The Archdiocesan Council was made up of a nine-member executive, 13 conveners, and three to five committee chairpersons. Five newly organized councils brought the number of councils to 116.

Themes for the 1960s included *Universal Charity, A True Love of Neighbour in Christ is the Only Way to Unity and Peace, Toward a Better Apostolate, and The Christian in the Community*. Of course, immigration was still a large focus for the CWL. Mrs. Nina Timperley was Secretary of the Advisory Board to Immigrant Counseling Service, under the direction of Fr. Bill Irwin, who was the Director of Catholic Charities. Council members acted as hostesses for citizenship ceremonies, providing a festive air after the swearing-in ceremonies. CWL councils and members worked to find sponsors for families of displaced persons in Europe.

Then, as now, councils worked diligently to increase membership. It was noted that the public-speaking courses offered in councils were credited with bringing in younger members. Even the Vatican was supportive: Pope John XXIII encouraged every Catholic woman to become a member of the Catholic Women's League.

Resolutions were numerous at conventions. The Legislation conveners urged women to vote and to be informed, responsible citizens. A resolution was passed in 1963 to petition the Provincial Government to keep the law governing adoption as it stood, which meant that Catholic children could only be placed in Catholic adoptive homes. In 1964, because the government had *not* introduced a change to the legislation, a resolution was passed to commend the government for its continued effort to improve the standards of adoptive and foster care for wards of the province.

Councils contributed to Catholic media programs under the Radio, TV, and Film Convenership. When the National Film Board offered a course called "Film Training" on how to use a film projector, every council was urged to have a member attend. Councils made many contributions to the newspapers of the day and to the *Western Catholic Reporter*. Mrs. O'Brien wrote a CWL column for the WCR and, Mrs. Barbara Basso, 1962-63 Diocesan President, appeared on TV to promote the upcoming 1963 Convention.

In 1964, a Centennial Project was undertaken to establish a Group Home for Indian and Metis girls discharged from jail. Mrs. Nina Timperley, Diocesan President, was the head of the Committee, which included Archbishop Anthony Jordan; Msgr. J.A MacLellan, Reverend William Irwin, and Reverend Leo Klug. Others appointed were Mrs. J.R. (Daisy) Wilson, Mrs. L.T. (Doreen) Melton, Mrs. AC. (Rita) Woodman, Mrs. S.C. Badger, Mrs. C.K. (Mary) Kelly, Mrs. W. (Rita) Atkinson, Mrs. C.T. (Jeanne) den Ouden, and Mrs. H.F. MacNaughten. Jeanne den Ouden was the Diocesan President when the Villa opened. By convention time in 1965, \$3,651.09 had been raised. The committee applied for and received a centennial grant of 20% of the value of the project. In 1966, land was purchased, and a year later, Mrs. Timperley reported at Convention that the building permit for the project had been obtained. She stated that the committee hoped for a July 15 opening date, and that Mrs. Donihee, National President, would attend the opening. In fact, Centennial Villa, as the building was named, opened on November 5, 1967, and was turned over to Catholic Charities. By June 1968, 12 girls were in residence and four people were on staff.

During these years, councils and members were very involved in the area of Girl Guides. All councils were encouraged to form and support the packs of Girl Guides. In 1964, Mrs. A.J. (Gladys) Michaud was one of five Canadians sent to New York for a special Girl Guide Training Course to qualify her to train Canadian women in Guiding. In 1967, a Girl Guide Badge was authorized: the CWL crest in League colours on a navy blue ribbon, to be worn on the left side.

Also in 1964, four trophy cups were awarded for spiritual work undertaken during the year. Both city and rural councils competed for the cups. Judging was based on the number of members in proportion to the size of the parish. Consideration was given to councils stressing extra spiritual work in regard to the Feast of the Holy Name, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Days of Recollection, and Days of Reparation, in accordance with the Bylaws and Constitution.

Leadership was becoming more of an issue. In 1964, Mrs. C. den Ouden presented the following Diocesan resolution: "BE IT RESOLVED that a request be made to the editors of *The Canadian League* to make space available to print practical instructions suitable for ten monthly workshops... sufficient to occupy some ten minutes of the monthly meetings of the local councils." Seconded by Mrs. J.P. O'Hara and carried. That same year, Father Bill Irwin gave a convention address on how Christian women, in particular CWL members, need to have ideals, to be realistic, to be self-disciplined, and to take initiative. Such was the encouragement given to enable the CWL members to take on large projects such as the Centennial Villa.

At Diocesan Convention in 1966, the first President's Meeting, which preceded the Pre-Convention Meeting of the Executive, was held. Another first in 1966—husbands were invited to attend the Convention Banquet. Throughout the 1960s, praying for and promoting vocations to religious life came to the fore. In 1966, Father Albert Laiznez, in his Convention Banquet address, gave extensive instruction on fostering vocations.

Under Pope John XXIII, Christian unity and ecumenism were areas of concern. Members attended lectures on Vatican II, and in 1967, three councils even had banquets with other churches in order to "get acquainted."

Having Regional Committees organized in all deaneries was first suggested by Nina Timperley in her Organization Convenership Report at the 1967 Diocesan Convention. This was in response to a decline in membership that was being attributed to a lack of communication between the levels (Diocesan and Parish) of CWL. In 1969, regional meetings were held in Wetaskiwin, Evansburg, Lacombe, Wainwright, Edson, St. Albert, Camrose, and Stettler. Having these smaller groups made it easier for members to travel to meetings, and communication was improved because more members went to the regional meetings. By 1977, there were nine of these small groups, and they were called Zones. The ninth zone was made up of the Edmonton city councils and Sherwood Park council (formerly the Civic Action Committee). This organization is still in effect today. The Zone Chairpersons meet as a group prior to the Diocesan meetings and conventions in order to share their ideas and activities, and each writes an annual report for the Diocesan Convention Report Book.

In a further effort to improve communications, the Diocesan Council produced a newsletter called the "Little League" in 1966 and 1967.

In 1968, a farewell tea for the Sisters of Service was convened by St. Alphonsus Council, and CWL said goodbye to a long—standing relationship. Some events took the form of new beginnings. The CWL was represented by the Diocesan President, Daisy Wilson, on the planning committee for Meals on Wheels, and members participated for the first time in the World Day of Prayer. New issues were coming to the fore, and in 1968, CWL took a stand against abortion—letters were written at council meetings and sent to members of Parliament. CWL members were also urged to become members of their Parish Councils as a way of having the voice of women heard in the Church. In fact, by 1974, it was reported that women were members of Parish Councils in almost every parish. Another sign that CWL supported the equality of women in society was that the Convention Book and the rosters began to name women by their given names; for example, Mrs. Rose-Marie McCarthy rather than Mrs. Ronald McCarthy. In 1975, the Convention Book also recorded that a set of policies for Edmonton Archdiocesan Council had been formulated.

Vocations became more and more a pressing issue in the 1970s. A CWL Mass was held every second Sunday at St. Joseph's Seminary as a first step in familiarizing members and families with the Institution and its role in Catholic life. In 1973, a Diocesan Vocation Team was established (Mrs. Eleanor Hogan was the CWL representative). Along with the Knights of Columbus and the Serrans, the CWL helped purchase audiovisual equipment and the popular slide presentation entitled "The Call." Mrs. Rita Matthews, who was on the Vocations Team in 1977, even wrote a Vocations Hymn.

At about the same time, Mrs. Marg Bouska and Mrs. Eleanor Hogan, Cultural Life conveners, brought education programs to the forefront by helping to complete and present a High School Religion Program to Archbishop MacNeil. CWL was giving scholarships to students, presenting awards to students with the highest academic standing in grades 7 to t 2, and presenting achievement awards in english, physics, and music. These awards were in addition to the many volunteer hours spent by members in schools and to all the work that was done to teach religion and sacramental preparation to those Catholic students who were not attending Catholic schools throughout the Archdiocese. Protection of Catholic schools was often on the agenda of CWL councils. Members lobbied hard for fair distribution of corporate taxes between public and separate schools during this time.

In 1973, CWL in the Archdiocese of Edmonton hosted the National CWL Convention, with Gertie Slavik as a most gracious hosting Diocesan President. With the excess money from the convention, a \$5000 scholarship fund was created. The interest from the invested fund was awarded as a bursary to a student, male or female, taking a family life course at a Catholic university or college. Records show that the scholarship was awarded from 1974 through 1978. Meanwhile, in 1975, Doreen Melton died. Doreen was a long-standing member and a past Diocesan President who had done much to establish the CWL at the parish level in the Edmonton Archdiocese and throughout the province. In 1978, it was decided to rename the bursary the "Doreen Melton Scholarship" to commemorate her dedication to the League. Because of Mrs. Melton's interest in encouraging vocations to the priesthood, the scholarship was redesignated to a seminarian studying at St. Joseph Seminary for the Archdiocese of Edmonton. This scholarship is still given to a seminarian every year at Convention.

Another bursary that was given out by CWL for a number of years was from the Mary Dittrich Memorial Fund. Mary Dittrich was a long-time CWL member, and when she passed away, \$5000 was loaned to CWL on which to collect interest. Each year, her brother Rev. Dittrich, a parish priest in the Archdiocese, was consulted as to where the interest earned should be donated. Records show that each year a different Pro-Life organization was the recipient. This fund existed until 1992, when Father Dittrich discontinued the bursary.

In 1975, at the invitation of the Archbishop, Diocesan President Dorothy Keates coordinated a study, through CWL councils, exploring the mission of women in the Church.

Birthright was also a new project for the CWL in the 1970s. By 1975, Birthright had moved into a house at 9805 - 105 Street and here CWL members manned the phone and spent time talking with pregnant girls to give them encouragement. CWL saw Birthright as a good way to counteract the growing abortion mentality. They did, of course, write letters to the government and the medical profession stating the Catholic view against the taking of life and of allowing abortion to become an alternative to unwanted pregnancy.

Work began in 1977 to establish a Diocesan camp for young people. Camp Encounter, as it was called, was supported by various councils for a number of years.

In the early 1970s, the Edmonton Women's Shelter Ltd. was incorporated. Among the founding members were CWL members Ardis Beaudry, Betty Nigro, and Diocesan President Daisy Wilson. (Other board members who were League members were Kay Charest, Rose-Marie McCarthy, Rita

Atkinson, and Dorothy Keates.) After eight years of study, opening facilities and abandoning them, and in collaboration with many other organizations, WIN House (Women In Need) was opened as a facility for women and children fleeing abusive situations. This facility has been supported by CWL members and councils throughout its history. It exists today because of the long-standing efforts of CWL members who still provide money, prayers, and other forms of support to WIN House. One of the major fundraisers for WIN House was the annual tea that was organized by the councils of Zone 9. As the number of shelters has grown, so has the support of the League. Throughout the Archdiocese, councils are helping shelters in Edmonton, Sherwood Park, Camrose, Hinton, and Red Deer.

Throughout these years, many resolutions were brought to the floor of Diocesan conventions. It is fair to say that the convention themes had some influence on the subjects of the resolutions, but the majority of these resolutions were in response to the needs of society. They supported causes such as Northern Development, urban sprawl, restrictive waste of prime farmland, and low-cost housing.

In 1978, when the sexual nature of TV shows was becoming risqué, Diocesan President Mitzi Crowe presented a paper on "sex stereotyping in the broadcasting media" to the CRTC Task Force.

Projects that were initiated at National conventions were supported and encouraged by our Diocesan Council. In 1978, a National Bursary Fund was established for the Coady International Institute—never was so much written in reports for a national project! Every year from then on, councils were cajoled, encouraged, and requested to send their "ten cents per member" to this project. Another project that was strongly encouraged, and that still exists today, was the appeal for members to give 1 % of personal expenditures on luxury items to Development and Peace.

The 1980s came, and with them themes such as *Year of the Child, Faith and Family*, and *League Ministry to God and Canada—Where Are We?* The CWL examined itself in each of these areas, while continuing all of the works that had been started earlier. It must have been the right thing to do because membership increased, and each year, the number of first-year members rose. Perhaps credit should be given to the declaration of a membership week and to the centrefold in the WCR newspaper, submitted by CWL Provincial Council in recognition of membership week. Some younger women came into the League, some new councils were established, and the Diocesan Council was busier than ever. Unfortunately, in 1992, the centrefold was discontinued because the cost was becoming prohibitive.

Pornography was of major concern to CWL in the 1980s. Members carried out a campaign asking neighbourhood convenience stores to remove pornographic material from their magazine shelves. In 1986, it was recorded in the minutes that the head office of 7-11 convenience stores had listened and was removing that type of magazine. In later years, these crept back onto the shelves, and CWL members resumed their fight to have them removed.

The 1980s were years of distinction for the Edmonton Diocesan Council. Our own Ardis Beaudry became National President of The Catholic Women's League of Canada. Ardis was also a board member of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) representing the CWL for nine years, four of those years were spent as Vice President for North America of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations. In 1988, a motion was passed at the Diocesan Convention to nominate Ardis Beaudry for a federal government volunteer award. As a result, in 1989, she was presented a Citation for Citizenship Award. As an interesting note, some time later, she also received a service medal from the Diocese of Victoria for her service to the church.

It was in 1981, under the presidency of Anne Laskosky, that the Diocesan Council acquired the facilities at St. Joseph's Cathedral for CWL meetings and the storage of files.

In 1984, Pope John Paul II visited Edmonton—what a year to remember! CWL representative Rose-Marie McCarthy, CWL Provincial President at the time, was on the “Senate”—the planning and coordinating committee in charge of all the details of the Papal Visit. Councils participated in a visible way by sewing the banners that lined the streets of Edmonton along the route of the Papal Motorcade. The banner project was actually province-wide, with councils throughout Alberta sewing banners. Rose-Marie was very proud that the projects of CWL were paid for by CWL and that our portion incurred no cost to the Senate. Rose-Marie was honoured to proclaim the second reading at the Papal Mass. Working alongside Rose-Marie through the banner project was past Diocesan President Mitzi Crowe.

The National Convention was hosted by Fort McMurray in 1984. Mary-Anne Warren, who later moved into the Edmonton Archdiocese, was the hosting Diocesan President and the Convention Convener. Mary-Anne later became Provincial President and has served in many capacities in our diocese.

Jenny Halajcio became a member of the steering committee of the Jeremiah Project, which was an inner-city youth project. Donations were made by Diocesan Council in 1985 and 1986, when Mary Laffin represented CWL on the Board of Directors of the Jeremiah Project.

Throughout our history, whenever one project came to an end, others took its place. By the late 1980s, the Youth Emergency Shelter Society began operating, and CWL councils took turns, once a month, providing a meal for the residents and staff. Many pans of lasagna and pots of chili appeared at YESS. Oh, and don't forget the salad, dessert, milk, ice cream, and loaves of garlic bread-or, for a change, a chicken stew or pizza. Lucky YESS!

With poverty becoming a major societal problem, food banks began to appear, not only in the cities but also in the rural areas. CWL members often became the mainstay of the volunteers at Food Banks. Members worked and donated regularly—not only money, but garden produce and items from food drives held in their parishes. In the fall, many baskets of apples and vegetables appeared on the doorsteps of food banks, dropped off by CWL members.

Around the same time, it is recorded that councils began to participate in “Nutrition at School” programs. They studied the situation, and soon lunch programs were set up in the poorer schools. Many hours of volunteer time went into keeping these lunch programs going and growing. Our ladies studied the Junior High School Health Program in 1987, and in 1988, the new School Act. Worries about our Catholic schools being in some jeopardy prompted more involvement and activity.

The 75th anniversary of the inception of the CWL in Edmonton was celebrated in 1987, during the presidency of Dorothy Lang. An event inaugurated to honour Mary, our patroness, and as an anniversary celebration, was a pilgrimage to Skaro Shrine on July 17 and 18. This pilgrimage continued annually. During that year too, a “Women in the Church” kit (the “green kit,” which was sent out by the CCCB) was circulated and studied. This kit proved to be a controversial issue, and shortly after, a “blue kit” was prepared by Catholics who disagreed with some of the ideas in the “green kit.” These kits made for a very interesting year in the life of the League!

Spiritual activities in the 1980s were highlighted by retreats organized by the Diocesan Spiritual conveners and held at Star of the North Retreat House. Two per year were organized in the years from 1984 to 1993, one mid-week and one on the weekend. These retreats were discontinued in 1993 because attendance was down and the costs were rising. Instead, each zone was encouraged to hold a yearly retreat in their area. Noted in the convention book for 1984 was that “the most significant action taken was the number of councils who have initiated the Rosary for World Peace.”

In 1988, President Jenny Halajcio gathered together a group of experienced League members to develop and present a League Orientation presentation to every council in the diocese. This was the beginning of the Edmonton Diocesan Fieldworkers. The outreach to the councils with the original presentation was so well received that it has continued to today, with the fieldworkers offering and presenting many more workshops, including those from National and those they have developed in response to requests from the councils. The members of the Fieldworkers have changed over the years, but the commitment to serving the needs of our members and councils remains the top priority of the group.

In 1989, President Jenny attended the meeting of the Western Conference of Catholic Bishops. As a result, Jenny formulated a workshop on the Papal document *Christifideles Laici*, which she presented to all Zones in the diocese during the following year.

In 1990, at the Fall Diocesan Meeting, our new CWL flag was processed into Mass by President Ollie Manderson. The flag was blessed during the celebration. What a proud day for those members in attendance!

A few years later, when membership was dropping and several councils had gone dormant, our Diocesan Spiritual Advisor, Fr. Gordon Roebuck, suggested that we increase the time spent on the spiritual program at our meetings, both at Diocesan and Parish levels. This has indeed resulted in spiritual growth among our members.

Over the years, one major stumbling block within the CWL was getting councils to report on time and with accuracy. For a time, the Diocesan Council offered a cup to the Zone that was first to have all its councils report. We also offered a Membership Cup. The Coronation Council had 100% of its Catholic ladies as members of the League! This was achieved in 1991, by Mrs. Leon Lutz who wrote saying that in order to achieve this goal, she offered to provide transportation any time work had to be done or meetings held.

At about that time, we were approached by Catholic Charities with a request that we support immigrant families, and immigrant women in particular. As we had in the first years of the League in Edmonton, councils responded. In 1991-1992, a project to prepare welcoming bags for immigrants was initiated by the Devon St. Maria Goretti Council, who prepared the bags while all other councils were asked to contribute, either with items for the bags or by giving money to purchase the necessary items. The bags contain personal toiletries and essentials. In 1997, this project was taken over by Our Lady of Perpetual Help Council in Sherwood Park. They requested that councils make it a policy to send \$25 annually, to maintain their supplies. Over the years, countless bags have been assembled and delivered to Catholic Social Services to help new immigrants get through their first weeks in Canada.

Pro-Life issues have always been important to CWL. In 1989, a Pro-Life Pledge was approved for distribution to all councils. By 1992, Birthright had come out with a distinct blue Christmas card. All councils were asked to sell these cards. The fight against abortion was ongoing. Some members joined in a vigil outside the Morgantaler Abortion Clinic to pray the rosary.

The 1990s began on a high—in 1991, Mitzi Crowe received the Bene Merenti Medal from the Holy Father. Unhappily, loss and sadness were to follow. Several members who had recently served, or who were currently serving on the Diocesan Council became ill and passed away. These included Jo Bremault in 1991, Marcella Gillis in 1994, Molly McDonald in 1994, and Mary Laffin in 1995—may their souls rest in peace.

In 1993, the White Ribbon Against Pornography campaign was first promoted. This is a week in October set aside to focus on eradicating pornography, and particularly pornography using child subjects. Many councils joined in this campaign, mainly by providing an information sheet

distributed through parish bulletins, along with a white ribbon to wear on the lapel and then to mail to members of Parliament. Also in 1993, NAMBLA (North American Man Boy Love Association) was protested, with CWL joining in the fight against it by encouraging all councils to work actively against such an aberration in society.

The incidence of family violence and abuse seemed to be growing rather than diminishing. Our Diocesan Council was asked to support the building of Lurana Shelter, a shelter for women and children fleeing abuse. Lurana Shelter is one of the programs of the Atonement Home, the other being the CAP Headstart program. Other shelters were also being supported in various ways by councils throughout the diocese.

In 1993, the Mama Margaret Guild of St Mary's Boys Home donated a silver tea service to the CWL, in appreciation for all that the League had done for them. The tea service is stored in the vault at St. Joseph's Basilica, and the custodian of it is the president of St. Joseph's CWL Council.

While Molly McDonald was Diocesan President, she became too ill to complete the second year of her term. Connie McBride, President Elect, took over for Molly in December. Just a year later, President Elect Mary Laffin passed away. After much discussion both in the Diocese and with National Council, it was decided that the current executive could extend their term by one year and that at the 1996 Convention, a President Elect would be elected for a one-year term.

CWL councils and members have been strong supporters of Newman Theological College through the years. A provincial project, the Newman Endowment Fund, was contributed to in years prior to 1995. In 1995, the College asked if CWL would help them computerize their library—the amount needed was \$75,000! The Diocesan Council agreed and the Newman Library Automation Fund project was born. When all was said and done, more than \$80,000 had been raised and Newman Theological College and St. Joseph Seminary have a library that is second to none.

Among the many projects used to raise the funds for the library was the Day-timer Project. Day-timers were distributed throughout our parishes at no cost to the recipients, as the advertisements paid for the printing. Recipients, in turn, were encouraged to make donations to Newman College Library. A good \$5000 was raised, and the CWL and Newman College were given good exposure through their joint efforts.

One of the initiatives begun in 1993 was that the Diocesan Executive set three priorities for the year, based on the polled responses of members at convention. This direct feedback provided concrete ways for the Executive to respond to council concerns. In 1994, in support of the Diocesan priority of "Family," a Poster Essay Contest for school children in all grades was inaugurated. The topic was *Family-What it Means to Me*. Subsequent executives have continued to hold this contest, and each year the winners are awarded cash prizes and are invited to lunch at convention.

Edmonton Diocesan Council was ahead of any other council, including National, in getting "on the internet" when Mary-Lou Veeken set up a website for us in 1994.

The National Convention, held in Edmonton in 1995, marked the 75th anniversary of the League as a national organization. In the fall of 1992, Connie McBride had been appointed convention convener, with Ardis Beaudry as co-convener. The 75th anniversary logo was printed on T-shirts for the 1994 Convention in Vancouver so that when the members of Alberta issued their invitation, they were "in uniform." The T-shirts were immediately popular and the Edmonton CWL was requested to provide more T-shirts for sale. They were even advertised in the League magazine.

In 1996, CWL played a prominent role in celebrating the 125th anniversary of the Edmonton Archdiocese. One of the projects was the selling of anniversary lapel pins. At the 125th Anniversary Mass, CWL members formed an Honour Guard, sold programs and pins, and provided information

at the CWL display. A banner, designed and made by Liz Lauer, was among the many decorating the Coliseum that day.

Another project directed by the Diocesan Executive that year was a quilting project. In keeping with our priority of "Family," and with the United Nations' "International Year of the Family," each council was invited to complete a quilt square depicting some aspect of family. Spiritual Convener Sandra King arranged to have the squares made into two quilts and two quillows. These were later raffled, with tickets sold only to CWL members. The proceeds from this raffle were donated to the Newman Library Automation Fund.

At the 1997 Diocesan Convention in Lloydminster, elections were held for every position, and Becky Kallal became our new President. For this Convention, Spiritual Convener Sandra King had had a large banner made to motivate us to begin preparing for the Great Jubilee. It did that and more—from the banner came the idea to have lapel pins made of the Papal Jubilee crest. We decided to sell the pins at cost as our way of spreading the good news of the Jubilee. Over the next year, we sold 5000 pins throughout the Archdiocese, at Provincial Convention, at National Convention, and everywhere we went.

Also in relation to the Great Jubilee, the Diocesan Council purchased a beeswax candle for every council and zone in the Archdiocese. These were distributed with a prayer card, and councils were asked to burn their candle at each of their monthly meetings until the end of 1999, as a symbol of union in prayer and preparation for the coming Jubilee. Since then, the candle stubs were collected for use in making one large Jubilee Candle to use at future meetings and conventions. A Jubilee quilt project was undertaken, with each council completing a quilt square depicting the Great Jubilee. These were made into quilts and wall hangings (six in all), which were eventually raffled off in 2003 – 2005 to raise money for the Doreen Melton Scholarship, as interest rates were not sufficient to provide \$500 a year.

In 1998, another quilt project was initiated. Three members of the Diocesan Administrative Executive (Becky Kallal, Connie McBride, and Dorothy Johansen) and a member from St. Charles Parish (Rachelle Pouliot) utilized their handiwork skills to make 12 quilt squares, each representing a different biblical woman. The end result was a beautiful-and symbolic-quilt. At the 1998 Convention in Camrose, guest speakers Sr. Teresita Kambeitz and Shirleyan Threndyle used the quilt as the focal point for a drama and workshop. Since then, the Diocesan Field Workers have taken the quilt and the "Women of the Bible" workshop far and wide!

During this time, the Archdiocese presented the Transformation of Parishes (ToPs) report on the restructuring of parishes. The immediacy of the report, which suggested timelines for the amalgamation of some parishes and the closure of others, greatly affected many of our members. Our councils in affected parishes would face some tough decisions, too. By way of responding to the concerns of our members, a workshop was held at the 1998 Fall Meeting and as well, the Diocesan Field Workers developed a workshop and made it available to councils.

In response to the ever-growing shortage of priests and a heightened concern about vocations, Christian Family Life Convener Linda Carten began what she termed the "Adopt-A-Seminarian" program. Seminarians studying at Newman Theological College and St. Joseph Seminary were matched to interested councils throughout the Archdiocese. The councils "adopted" these men by praying for them, inviting them to special council occasions, sending them cards or letters, or asking them to speak at meetings. This program has met with great success and has been continued. The seminary has also benefited from numerous small projects from 2000 - 2005, such as providing pots and pans, crucifixes, desk lamps, coat hooks, ceremonial vestments, towels, and linens, as requested.

In 1998-1999 the focus of Diocesan Presidents, Becky Kallal and Mary-Lou Veeken was preparation for the Jubilee 2000 celebrations. Each meeting and convention followed the Jubilee theme for the year culminating in the 2000 Convention spiritual program focused on the four pillars of our faith.

In 2001 emphasis was placed on the plight of Native peoples, and convention speakers addressed issues in Native Education, and Native spirituality. In 2002 focus was placed on international affairs, with CWL members educated on the Taliban's oppression of women in Afghanistan. CWL members expressed their concern to the government through letters and resolutions. The convention themes in 2003 and 2004 follow the Papal theme of Cast Out into the Deep.