

Report to National Convention

Provincial Council of NL

It is a pleasure to report to you as president representing Canada's most easterly province, Newfoundland Labrador. Some special highlights from our province this year included the welcoming of two new bishops. Bishop Peter Hundt, - Bishop of Corner Brook, - Labrador and Bishop Anthony Daniels - Bishop of Grand Falls. Our Past President, Agnes Kenny, attended both installations. We welcomed the first female Premier in our province's history and a letter of congratulations was sent on behalf of Provincial Council to Premier Kathy Dunderdale. We are also happy to say that the Labrador part of our province elected the first Innu to serve in the federal cabinet. The Hon. Peter Penashue became Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Secretary of the Queens Privy Council and our provincial council congratulated him by letter as well.

Councils from across the province embraced our theme Centered on Faith and Justice, and the Women against Poverty Projects. The projects are impressive and some innovative projects have been reported. These included: Adopt a Mom Campaign, Hands Across the Sea- Haiti Mission Project, women's shelters, Operation Christmas Child, volunteering and supporting soup kitchens and drop in centers, school supplies for children of food bank recipients, pillow case dresses and shorts for missions in Dominica and Peru. Donations received through the Change for Change Project were channeled to various local community projects.

Our winter meeting had to be dropped a few years back because of financial reasons and high travel costs. The geography of our island province leaves us with a number of councils that are very far removed from each other . We have two councils in western Labrador that we can only reach by air. We are happy that we were able to reinstate the winter meeting this past year. Coming together in a fall or winter meeting is a time for our provincial executive and parish presidents to connect, be recommit and be spiritually nourished. One of the highlights of our winter meeting was a presentation by Anne Walsh; Director of Adult Faith Development for the Archdiocese of St. John's. Anne spoke on the Social

Teachings of the Catholic Church. Presidents from different parish councils gave presentations on some of the different faces of poverty.

Our provincial convention was held in Corner Brook. Bishop Peter Hundt spoke on the Holy Father's Encyclical Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth). A new provincial executive was installed and we welcomed a new Provincial Spiritual Advisor, Father William Hearn.

One goal for provincial council this year is to provide more league development and leadership training so that in the next two years those eligible for office will have the tools and skills to give them confidence to let their name stand for office. We aim to nurture those parish councils on the verge of disbanding and renew contact with those who have recently disbanded. We are sending letters to our bishops asking their support of our plan for contacting all parish priests to send observers from their parishes to fall, winter or convention meetings, whichever is more geographically accessible, with a view to establishing new councils. We also plan to meet with our provincial government after our October provincial elections to address such topics as health care, poverty, affordable housing and the issues addressed in resolutions passed at this convention. We are committed to establishing better communication between provincial executive and parish councils in our province. We believe that while electronic methods of communication are the newer, faster way to do things, we want to put back a more personal touch in some of our communicating and plan to use the telephone more often.

The membership numbers in our province are small but we have a group of very dedicated women, committed to our league mission statement. Provincial council aims to assist and support them in their endeavours. We pledge to promote a positive attitude about our future and turn negatives into positive new projects. In this way we hope to remain united, maintain and hopefully increase our membership, and encourage and support each other in our work for God and Canada.