



2018 Convention Highlights

The Ontario Provincial Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada, representing over 45,500 women in Ontario, gathered at the Marriott-Airport Hotel, in Toronto, on July 7th thru July 11th, 2018 for the 71st annual provincial convention. The theme of "**Homelessness**" was showcased throughout the convention, where over 350 delegates representing 13 Ontario Arch/diocese came together for business sessions, workshops, faith, fun and fulfillment.

The official opening began with the Celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday July 8th, with his Eminence Cardinal Thomas Collins and Most Rev. Archbishop Brendan O'Brien, our Provincial Spiritual Advisor, at Nativity of Our Lord Parish. After Mass, we were welcomed by His Eminence Cardinal Thomas Collins, the National President, Margaret Ann Jacobs, the Provincial President, Anne Madden, the Toronto Diocesan President, Ann D'Souza, the Toronto Diocesan Spiritual Advisor, Fr. Patrick O'Dea, State Deputy of the Knights of Columbus, Dan Hefferman, and the convention co-chair and mistress of Ceremonies, Mary Capobianco. The convention was official declared open by Stephanie Spinelli, Administrative Assistant. The greetings were followed by a wonderful reception with plenty of goodies.

On Monday, our keynote speakers, Namarig Ahmed and Rami Shami, spoke about their experience with the homeless and PEACH - Palliative Education and Care for the Homeless, a mobile medicine service. They described their work with the vulnerable and marginalized population. The ladies were quite moved and chose to donate their change for this initiative. Approx. \$700 was raised to help them make necessary changes to continue to give end of life care and dignity for the homeless.

Five (5) new Life Members were introduced: Lynn Olenik, Hearst; Genny Sexton, Hearst; Stephanie Spinelli, Kingston; Sharon St Jean, Ottawa; and Joanne Hough, Peterborough.

In the afternoon, the Diocesan Presidents and Officers presented their oral reports based on their goal of "Homelessness", while linking their reports' to one of many of Mary's titles.

On Tuesday morning, for the early risers, a beautiful Sunrise Prayer Service was held in the courtyard to reverence all that God created.

The three resolutions were presented with efficiency and all passed by the membership as follows:

ON-18-01 Develop national standards for levels of pharmaceuticals in Canada's drinking water.

ON-18-02 Full implementation of Income Security: A Roadmap for Change for disabled adult Ontarians.

On-18-03 To fully implement alternative sentencing to incarceration of Indigenous offenders.

On Tuesday afternoon, members were able to attend two sessions (one hour each) of their choice, as listed:

- **Covenant House** - A homeless youth shelter that provides a range of services including education, counselling, health care and employment assistance.
- **Homeshare** - A home provider offers accommodation to a housemate in exchange for an agreed level of help.
- **Ontario 211** - A telephone helpline (2-1-1) and website which provides a gateway to community, social, non-clinical health and related government services
- **Saint Elizabeth Homecare** - "Journey Home Hospice" - a new hospice offering flexible care suited to the unique and complex needs of the homeless.
- **Sistering** - Provides information and referrals to housing, education, health care, therapists and much more.
- **St. Vincent de Paul** - an organization whose mission is to live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy.

Everyone enjoyed the lovely banquet on Tuesday evening and all were ecstatic when Cardinal Thomas Collins presented the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice medal to a very deserving Margaret Ann Jacobs, our National President.

The **Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice** (Latin: *For Church and Pope*) decoration is an award of the Roman Catholic Church. It is also known as the "Decoration of Honour". It is currently conferred for distinguished service to the church by lay people and clergy.

On Wednesday morning the Social Justice award was presented to Jan Sosiak from St. Joseph Parish in Belleville in the Kingston Diocese. Archbishop Brendan O'Brien was presented with a spiritual bouquet on the 50th anniversary of his ordination, and Margaret Ann Jacobs presented a workshop on "Envisioning our Future". The question and answer period that followed was very moving as the different Past Provincial Presidents recalled some of their experiences in the League.

A delightful invitation was extended to all members to attend the 2019 Provincial Convention in Kingston next year. The reaffirmation of the elected officers was held at the closing mass at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Mississauga. The banner was then passed on to the President of the Kingston diocese, and this ended the 71st Ontario Provincial Convention. Congratulations to Anne Madden, Provincial President for a very wonderful and successful convention!

Pictures may be seen at the following link:

<https://ontarioprovincialconvention2018.shutterstock.com/pictures>