

OPC Convention ORAL Report
July 15th – 17th, 2019
Hamilton Diocese

Environmental Term: Environment

Madame Chair:

The environment. A term with so many varying definitions. In the context of the Catholic Women's League I propose that this definition from Merriam Webster most closely describes our environment:

"the complex of physical, chemical and biotic factors that act upon an organism or an ecological community and ultimately determine its form and survival."

Pope Francis asserts in *Laudato Si*, "in God's loving plan every creature has its own value and significance...a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion." Pope Francis is not only speaking of "creatures", animals and other living things but specifically to us as human beings and our higher call to communion with each other.

In an attempt to bring together the National theme *Care for Our Common Home* and the Provincial focus on *Homelessness* and with an understanding of how profoundly our environment can affect all of us, a Hamilton Diocese convention theme for 2019 was developed; *Welcome Home*. In the proposal outlining the underlying rationale for the theme it was noted that;

- We are called to remember and acknowledge the love and bond of sisterhood in the Catholic Women's League by creating a welcoming and safe environment for our members to thrive, feel valued and at home.
- We recognize and appreciate that many experience "homelessness" in a variety of ways; physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual.
- We affirm that we are all God's daughters and we belong to one family through Christ and it is in this belonging that we are truly "home".
- We recognize the need to take action in social justice to protect and advocate for our Common Home, the earth that God created for humankind. In doing so, we are witnessing the love of God through ministry and service.
- Our Common Home, the earth, is sacred in that our Lord once walked upon it as fully human and fully divine. God commands us to respect and love this gift of life, each other and the earth.

As a follow up to the prayer services and guest speakers that reflected the theme in some way at convention, a diocesan wide retreat was held in June. The focus of the retreat, *Thy Kingdom Come*, was giftedness, our own and gifts of creation and our continuing call to care for these gifts.

Welcome Home will continue to be the theme in Hamilton Diocese for the next two years and all activities and events will honour the theme.

We have a tremendous opportunity within our organization to reach out to our sisters and provide for them an environment that is first and foremost faith filled. As Pope Francis proposes and as Saint Bonaventure teaches our faith focus can be on not only discovering the action of God in our souls but also learning to encounter God in creatures outside ourselves...our sisters in the League.

This concludes my report.

Catherine Feren - President