

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Halifax-Yarmouth Diocesan Council
Faith Annual Report 2023

This report covers summary of 11 councils; seven councils participated in the online survey and four forwarded their annual reports manually. Thank you to all the councils who completed the survey provided by the National Council. Twenty percent of the Faith Chair were elected, sixty percent were filled by appointment and twenty percent remain vacant.

One council prays using traditional prayers while another used a variety of resources - 7- and 30-Day Novenas for Holy Souls in Purgatory. They distributed books with "Day by Day" passages from the Bible and Catechism with reflections and prayers. Using the Prayer from National, Prayer service for Season of Creation, a council prayed near the Public Gardens in Halifax in the Fall.

A council made its members aware of all Feast Days, using specific prayers and/or Novenas related to the specific feast day. The council reminds members on the 15th of each month via email to pray for someone in need, whether living or deceased. A few councils sent emails to members requesting prayers for members and their families who are ill or deceased. Some council begin their meetings with prayer and Bible reading and reflection. Most councils pray for their sisters who are ill and cannot be there. They also remember their deceased members. Councils are requested to dedicate one third of their meeting to prayers but because of the time factor and the information that needs to be shared, this becomes a challenge. However, some councils do start their meeting by attending Mass, reciting the Rosary or focusing on a Reflection.

All councils assist members to grow in their faith. A couple of councils provided websites where they could find Catholic material to enrich their faith. Some invited guest speakers to talk on religious topics to help the spiritual growth of their council. One council studied and read Vatican II documents. However, no councils were made aware of Pope Francis' encyclicals, nor encouraged members to read the Catechism of the Church, No council reported on the progress of the Synod or Synodality which began in 2022.

All councils participated in the World Day of Prayer Ecumenical Service with other church denominations. One council organized a Rally to pray the Rosary for Canada Needs Our Lady and invited their members, parishioners and others church members to join. Many councils attended Mass to celebrate the Feast Day of our patroness, Our Lady of Good Counsel, during which time deceased members were remembered and prayed for through a carnation ceremony. A few councils attended the Diocesan Retreat which focused on Mass, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, prayers and reflection. The retreat included a talk on Bible Spirituality by the Diocesan Spiritual Advisor. A council organized two spiritual retreats for their members to celebrate the World Day of Prayer.

One council had a guest speaker who spoke on the role of Women in the Church. Another council sponsored League membership to novitiates and consecrated religious life. No council supported consecrated religious women through prayer or donation nor did they have guest speaker to talk about vocations to ordained ministry and consecrated life. No donation was made to a seminary fund.

Many councils promoted Pro-life events and encouraged member participation while others included more Pro-life prayers and reports in their meeting. Three donated to pro-life causes and two participated in the March for Life or similar public Pro-life gatherings. Two councils participated in the

12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care. Two wrote letters to government against abortion and/or medical assistance in dying (MAID). Two councils wrote letters to government advocating for palliative care funding and accessibility. One participated in pro-life webinars or guest speaker events. However, no councils participated in 40 Days for Life prayer vigils.

One council had concerns that young families in their parish were not attending Mass or Prayer Service; so, an online site for religious education for parents was set up to teach their children catholic education from home but the council is not sure how receptive and effective this program was. Another council invited their Spiritual Advisor to do a presentation on Women in the Bible. A council has several members who are actively involved in Bible study groups, and they also have a member who is a Lead for FORMED.ORG programs within the parish. A council promoted the Catholic Leadership Foundation program to members and their parish. They also provided support to the parish program for youth. A council had a few members assist with the sacramental training, and helped with youth group programs.

Though no councils created awareness of mental health issues which lead to teen suicide, bullying etc, one council had information workshop on the shelter in their area and another invited a speaker from Chrysalis House to speak about the women in vulnerable positions in their home. They had a shower and solicited for items which the women in crisis situation would need.

Survey results indicated that Faith Chairs and members are very active in the various Ministries in the parish. They are on the Liturgy Planning Committee, they serve as Hospitality ministers, Lectors, Eucharistic ministers, Catechists, Altar servers and in the Music ministry. They are also involved in parish bible studies and other faith related programs. Some reached out to women of other denominations through joint prayer services. Council members attend the wake for deceased members where they engage in leading prayers and give their deceased sisters.

Some requested training for the Faith position by a former Faith Chair. Also, suggestions were made to create awareness of liturgical events, life of saints, prayer services, catechetical training on all aspects of our faith. The Faith chairs are dedicated, actively engaged in working to enhance the prayer life of their members.

Respectfully Submitted

Catherine Gonsalves

Faith Chair

Halifax Yarmouth Diocesan Council