

Halifax-Yarmouth Diocesan General Meeting

Education & Health

September 18, 2021 – Saint Joseph's Kentville

Reverend Father, Madame President, Executive Council and CWL members

My name is Gail Grapes. I have been a CWL member for 8 years and active in various positions and in special projects. Being a member has fulfilled my desire to continue as a volunteer serving this organization, my church, my community and continuing my faith journey.

Nova Scotia will have now moved into the final phase – Phase 5 – of its reopening plan that was dated for September 15. Doctor Strange, Chief Medical Officer of Health in our province, had repeatedly said that when 75 per cent of the population was fully vaccinated and then most of the public health restrictions would be lifted. Schools will transition to making masks optional. Doctor Strange during a briefing with reporters on August 23, 2021 was quoted by saying *“But it’s only a matter of time before the fourth wave is here in Nova Scotia too”*. He confirmed a small presence of the Delta variant, which is more transmissible, has been here since July and it does pose a threat. Being fully vaccinated, keeping social distancing, hand sanitizing and wearing a mask will continue to keep us safer and help prevent the spread.

Pope Francis in September 2020 brought us a message on education in the times of the Covid pandemic. With the rapid switch to online educational platforms globally, 250 million school age children were excluded from all educational activities and ten million children were forced to leave school as a result of the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus. Equal access to educational and technological opportunities was already existing problems. With uncertainties and fears still existing in our children daily lives, Pope Francis reminds us that the family is the first and essential place of education apart from their first encounter with the Gospel that children learn *“education if above all a matter of love and responsibility handed down from one generation to another”*. His hope is that we all can devote our energy and talents to support the role of family in this educational mission.

Respectively submitted

Gail Grapes

Rejoice in hope, patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer Romans 12:12