

Incoming President  
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May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

In Jesus' time, greetings were of the utmost importance...Let's take a moment to bring God's peace to each other. (pause for a few seconds)

Good Afternoon, Madam National President, Madam Provincial President, Madam London Diocesan President, Fr. Greg Bonin, Life Members, Members of the League, Spiritual Advisors, Guests....

The objects of the League call us to help and share with others at home and abroad. As Catholic women, we respond to the call through the many services that have been reported in the Convention Report book. Through this work, we contribute to make positive changes in the lives of Canadian women, girls and their families; and, consequently, changes in the lives of people around the world. The Catholic Women's League's resolutions provide concrete and effective solutions to some of the problems facing society today. How can we fail when we use our combined network of successful, peer-driven women of God? We cannot afford to ignore these societal problems.

I am guided by St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians and I quote:

"And, I am certain, that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day that Christ Jesus returns" (Philippians 1:6)

That is my belief, that all of us working together, guided by the Spirit and acclaiming "Be Not Afraid", we will succeed. There is no doubt that as an organization, the League has been very successful. (resolutions go to government, assistance with immigrants and refugees, Velma's Dream, our work with aboriginal peoples, and more). There is much more to be done...homelessness, suicide, poverty, violence still exists.

As illustrated over the past 2 years within the organization framework, my mantra is succinct to the strategies of the League. It is important that each of us recognize that we must change how we present the League and all its entire good works for our younger generation.

I love to garden, camp and generally be outdoors. We spend time as a family identifying the birds we see, building bird houses and feeders. Abbey and I have planted the potatoes this year, and Penny has assisted with the flowers...our daffodils are blooming now!

***This brings me to the focus for my term...the environment.***

We are blest to live in Southern Ontario...one of the most fertile areas in Canada. But pollution has taken over the great lakes, invasive species of fish, frogs, eels, plants, and spores are making the natural life in this area nearly extinct. Our wells are being contaminated, our air is full of chemicals. We were tasked by God to be stewards of His earth. Let's take these next two years and explore how we as Catholic women can heal the earth and in turn heal our own lives. Let us focus on how we can cleanse our environment.

How do I know that this vision will work? **Educate, Engage and Empower.**

**Educate:** current members, new members, people who are not members - they need to know who we are, what we do and why we do it. We must learn how to introduce change, so our membership now and future can see what's in it for them.

**Engage:** don't frighten people with too much, introduce a little at a time, but with enough substance to pique interest, let go of the tasks, allow new women to try things in their own way, be positive, be welcoming. Allow others to make a decision to journey as a CWL member.

**Empower:** this is the result of the engaging, allowing others to do the tasks...Allowing others To take action.

Each of you has been gifted with a special talent. Every person around the world has a talent...no matter how large or small. Allow them to be a part of this great organization, to bring their gifts and talents to the table.

As I have promised over the years and will again formally at the Installation Mass this afternoon, "I will with God's help". Today, I will extend it to include all of you, trying as one by one to make a difference, and then all of us working together to magnify that difference. Can I count on you?

By keeping these three words in mind, Educate – Engage – Empower as we collaborate and develop strategies to bring us into the future, God's grace will guide us through the journey -- whether it be a few short steps or a long and winding road. We cannot do it on our own; we must re-charge spiritually so that we can feed His Lambs, tend His sheep and love our neighbours.

As we put our vision and dreams on paper, there are two things I am sure will help us succeed: Faith and a spirit of gratitude, and that means even being grateful for the bad days. We have a winning combination when we can leverage God's purpose on our lives and use it to serve others. What's even more amazing is that God will send the provision we need to fulfill his call on our lives. Now that doesn't mean we know everything we need to know to be successful, but in the right season, God will bless us. Be available and listen to that still and quiet voice to guide as His vision manifests. If you are grateful for every little thing, he'll give you even bigger things. One who has conquered failure and transcends fear, carries an undeniable power from within. I will conclude by sharing with you a favourite bible verse, I am sure you will recognize it, focus on finding the joy in the journey.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.  
Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

**Psalm 23: 5-6**

Thank you for listening, enjoy the rest of the day!