

Pembroke Diocesan Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada
Annual General Meeting, May 29, 2021, Oral Report
Annette Chaplin, Christian Family Life Chair

ARROWS AND ARMOUR

In Canada, anyone over the age of 18 can receive assistance in suicide if they have a serious illness, disease or disability (excluding a mental illness until March 2023). When we consider that only 15% of Canadians have access to palliative care and that abortion is not restricted in Canada, we know how little our government values human life.

Don't be discouraged! We have never, as Catholic women, been without serious challenges that require us to pull out our best arrows, armor, and tactics. And so, first, WE PRAY. We write letters, we discuss, we march. We raise and donate money to organizations that support pregnant women and that raise awareness about abortion, euthanasia and palliative care. And we care. We sit by the side of those who are ill. We call or walk with someone who needs to talk. We help with material things, with food, and with time.

Let us not forget touch! Covid has crystallized the need for touch. It is so important, and when nothing else can get through to a person (perhaps due to dementia), touch can be a comfort. I include a verse written by our own Pat Weller on this topic, and I urge you to read her article (The Healing Power of Touch) in the May newsletter of the Ontario CWL. https://www.cwl.on.ca/sites/default/files/newsletter/2021_May_ON_LineNewsletter_1.pdf

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he following verse connects water and touch as two life giving forces, both working to heal a wounded soul and a wounded world; touch connected to our provincial theme of *Loneliness* and water to National's year two focus under *Care of Our Common Home*.

Nourished, like the life-giving water on a parched earth deprived of rain.

Nourished, like the life-giving water on a dry throat thirsting for relief.

So, to a person nourished by the sound of the human voice, responding to the words of a son, a daughter, a friend, or a care giver.

Nourished by the touch of a human hand gently caressing a hand, arm, face.

Recognizing the dignity of being alive, the person we have always known but now hidden in this shroud they call dementia.

Acknowledging the loneliness, the aloneness

Offering a healing presence

Just as water gives to the earth, to the thirsty person,

The parched earth, the body, revives.

So, the person revives by a small act of presence, human touch.