

**Pembroke Diocesan Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada  
Annual General Meeting May 29, 2021, Oral Report  
Joan Lemay, President**

***Life is a cycle of Crucifixion/Rebirth/Renewal.***

We have experienced a lot of change as we live through this pandemic: the loss of being together with our families and friends, restricted attendance at mass, no in-person CWL conventions or meetings (to name a few). But we have learned how to adapt, to cope and even thrive with this reality. So many of us have learned how to connect through technology, and have found new ways of getting things done. Many councils have figured out ways to raise money safely by selling calendars, serving take out dinners, or tapping into reserved funds, in order to live our core values of Faith, Service and Social Justice.

Actually, the CWL was a few paces ahead when this pandemic hit, having made its decision to embark on a Strategic Direction in 2017. *The Canadian League* magazine over these past 2 years has been filled with the rich works that the CWL accomplished in the past, and its strong vision for the future. There will be change within the structure of The CWL and the way we do things. Technology is a reality that we must learn to embrace, and use to accomplish our mission.

We have been blessed with amazing leadership within the CWL, from parish councils through to our National Council. These women didn't set out to lead their council or the organization. They joined with other women and responded to God's call. Margaret Ann Jacobs, National President 2016-2018, in her address at our 96<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Convention in Arnprior, stated "you may ask how did I get here?" (i.e., National President). And she said, "I ask myself the same question". She went on to state that she just kept responding to God's call.

On January 10, 2020, Pope Francis granted a private audience to The World Union of Catholic Women's Organization (WUCWO), of which the Catholic Women's League of Canada is a member. The Holy Father encouraged all women members of WUCWO "to move forward on the path to holiness with courage and also with craziness". He recommended that we be like Mary Magdalene who was crazy enough to announce the resurrection of Jesus to the apostles, even though they did not believe her. His exhortation was "Take Charge with Courage". (from the wucwo website 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020: Private audience with the Holy Father)

May the CWL continue to be blessed with women who are prepared to respond to God's call. Let us move into renewal with courage and a bit of craziness.