

**Pembroke Diocesan Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada**  
**Annual General Meeting, May 29, 2021, Oral Report**  
**Sheila Bielawski, Education and Health Chair**

We must never become complacent and think that Catholic schools in Ontario will always be here. Parents in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec know how quickly things can change. We must continue to pray for, and fight for our Catholic schools because there are many groups in Ontario fighting to get rid of them.

The theme for Catholic Education Week this year, Nurturing Hope, tied in with Pope Francis's theme Laudato Si (Caring for our Common Home). As this week occurred during the provincial lockdown students participated virtually in prayer services and simple activities, individually or as a family. The theme for each day was – Preparing the Earth, Sowing Seeds of Gratitude, Cultivating Relationships, Harvesting New Fruit and Marvelling in Wonder.

On March 17, 2021 Bill C-7 medical assistance in dying (MAID) was signed into law. Since 2016 there has been some 13,000 medically assisted deaths in Canada. This has overshadowed the need for Palliative Care which would provide Canadians with a means of dying a natural death with dignity. The aim of Palliative care is to relieve the symptoms of the patient, and decrease the stress of the illness. The goal is to provide comfort and dignity to the person as well as their family.

Immediate measures need to be taken to improve the availability, effectiveness and efficiency of palliative care. Home hospice programs, palliative care units and hospices are not available in many communities throughout Canada which makes it difficult for those having to leave their community for care.

We need to educate ourselves in palliative care and there are a number of resources available to assist us. A very informative resource is [Canadian Virtual Hospice](#). This site provides information and support on advanced illness, palliative care and grief. Some of the many topics it covers are Rituals to Comfort Families, Talking with Children and Managing Pain.

“Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.” (Galatians)