



**THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA
TORONTO DIOCESAN COUNCIL
104th Convention Oral Report**

April 28 and 29, 2025
Ajax Convention Centre
550 Beck Road

***Here I am Lord, send me
Pilgrims of Hope***



Name: Kate O'Quinn

Position: President

Dear Sisters in the League

As I mentioned yesterday, before our TDC executive began their oral reports, I asked them to use the national theme, Here I am Lord, send me, or the 2025 Jubilee Year theme, Pilgrims of Hope, to describe how they answered the call of "Here I am Lord, send me" or as a "Pilgrim of Hope", to put their name forward to be on the diocesan executive and how they have grown in their role as they worked for God and Canada at the diocesan level. As there were 8 reports, the choice of theme was 4 using each theme. Thus, I decided to use both themes, to keep it even!

When I look at my life as a CWL member, from where I started to where I am today, I think of it as a journey. Here I am Lord, send me and Pilgrims of Hope, both reinforce answering God's call in my CWL journey.

We have all heard various versions of the phrase, "Life is a journey, not a destination". Theologian, Lynn Hough, expands this phrase to include: the heart must be set upon those matters of character which are eternal and not upon those matters of sensation which pass away. What a wonderful reminder to listen to where God is inviting us to go, (Here I am Lord, send me) rather than go to a destination of our own choosing.

My report today will focus on my journey in my first year as President of the Toronto Diocesan Council and what a beautiful, joyful journey it has been! And, might I add, a real learning curve!

You may have noticed the words *Be Eucharistic* in all my correspondence. My diocesan focus, was taken from a homily from His Grace, Archbishop Francis Leo, (Archbishop at this time) at the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Corpus Christi, in June. His Grace spoke of the body and blood of Christ as a symbol of love. At the end of his homily, His Grace asked us when we are representing our organization, Are we being the Eucharist? This really resonated



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with me, so I sent a letter of request to Archbishop Leo, if I could use the phrase. His Grace gave me permission, but requested the words: *Be Eucharistic* be used. Thus, my diocesan focus for my two years was established.

One of the first items on my agenda at our first executive meeting in June was parish council visits, a resounding recommendation from our parish councils that all our executive members heard, when we did our parish visits for Unity Outreach. Not only did this executive council, sitting here before you, just agree, they did so with enthusiasm and excitement. And thus, my journey began with parish council visits. To date, I have visited 26 parish councils, bringing greetings from diocesan council, doing spiritual presentations, or attending special events. And as an executive, we have accumulated over 70 parish councils visits! Council presidents, please continue to send an invitation to me and I will forward your request to the executive member to whom the invitation is directed. May is filling up already, so send the invitations out early.

When I met with Fr. Liborio, in August, seeking his input on where he would like to see us focus as a diocese, he said he would like us to focus on the Spiritual Health of our members – relationship with God comes first. In response to this, my visits to councils have included a presentation on Spiritual Gifts, our Chairperson of Faith did a presentation on retreats, CWL Wednesdays have a spiritual focus and at the Regional and Parish Council levels, many retreats/pilgrimages have been and are being offered – what a beautiful tribute to 'Pilgrims of Hope'.

September saw the introduction of our first zoom All Regions meeting, where the TDC executive gave a report and you had the opportunity to meet the executive. This left the focus of the in person Regional Meetings on updates in the region. The feedback was very positive, thus we will continue with this initiative. Both fall and spring zooms saw over 200 members in attendance! The fall and spring in person regional meetings (October and March) were also well attended and even the crazy winter weather didn't keep the members from meeting in each region.

As your diocesan president, I represent you at the Ontario Provincial Council meetings. We had an in-person meeting over 3 days in October, and in January, a 3-day meeting via zoom. I have also attended zoom diocesan president meetings hosted by OPC President, Colleen Martin. Diocesan presidents are working together and sharing ideas, especially on increasing memberships across Ontario.



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I have responded to calls from members who were experiencing some form of conflict in their council. I just want to commend you on first, recognizing support is needed and secondly, solving the conflict modelling the diocesan focus of *Be Eucharistic*. We can't and don't always agree on everything, but we must always disagree with respect and we shouldn't take a difference of opinion personally. If we want new members, we must remember that no one is comfortable sitting in a meeting where animosity takes over. In the words of St. Teresa of Calcutta, "If you do your work with joy, you can bring many souls to God. Joy is prayer, a sign of our generosity, evident in our eyes, our faces, our actions." Again, I have seen beautiful results in conflict resolution and I thank and commend you, my sisters.

In closing, I want to thank you all for walking with me in my president journey thus far. Without the love and support shown by all Sisters in the League, at all levels in the League, I would have reached a destination far sooner and would have missed out on this wonderful part of the journey. May we always *Be Eucharistic* to all our sisters in this beautiful CWL journey, so that no one reaches their destination too soon. And as we take a look at the beautiful road in the picture on the slide, we see a winding road, not knowing where it leads, but the beauty of God's creation is all around the road, calling us to continue the journey, not knowing the destination. In the wonderful words of St. Teresa of Avila, "The feeling remains that God is on the journey too" – and so, my journey continues in hope, open to go where God is sending me.

God Bless and *Be Eucharistic*

My written report can be found on pages 3 and 4 in the online Annual Report Book.

This concludes my report.

Kate O'Quinn
TDC President