

## Catholic Women's League brings action to Kingston convention



**Meredith Wilson-Smith**

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A flag will be raised in Confederation Park on Friday afternoon to signify the Ontario Provincial Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada coming together in Kingston. But the women are looking to forge change far beyond their own group.

Outside their workshops and community-building activities, the Ontario women of the Catholic Women's League (CWL) will discuss and vote on various resolutions meant to spur widespread political action.

The 72nd annual convention will take place at the Ambassador Hotel and Conference Centre from July 13-17, bringing together almost 400 Catholic women representing 13 Ontario dioceses.

It's being hosted by the local diocese to honour the retiring president of the provincial council, Anne Madden, whose home diocese is Kingston and who works at Hotel Dieu Hospital as a registered nurse.

The theme of this year's convention is "Care for our Common Home," which Maureen Vincentine, past president of the Kingston diocese, said is "certainly something being picked up everywhere.

" Since the national Catholic Women's League's foundation 99 years ago, its objectives have included "recogniz(ing) the human dignity of all people everywhere" and "contribut(ing) to the understanding and growth of religious freedom, social justice, peace and harmony."

For Vincentine, the resolutions bring forward "issues that Catholic women are concerned about." The motions will be introduced on Sunday and then brought to the floor for either acceptance or rejection. If accepted, the resolutions are ultimately meant to be used to notify government officials of the league's concerns and recommendations.

“There’s a lot of discussion, there’s a lot of work that goes into them before they’re presented,” the past president explained. The motions must pass at the diocesan level, the provincial level, and the national level of the league as well, if the issue being addressed is a federal one.

“Sometimes they’re turned down, but usually there’s a lot of work that goes into them and people have a lot of research and background,” she added.

Some resolutions have achieved success, said Vincentine, pointing to a past highway safety motion that led to white lines on roads to prevent distracted driving. Others have included regulation around bike safety, crib safety and poison control legislation.

This year, the Kingston diocesan council is putting forward a resolution promoting a psychotherapy pilot project meant to improve timely mental health service for adults. Others will deal with urging the United Nations to ratify an agreement prohibiting nuclear weapons, and seeking out more health and physical education specialists in schools.

Despite the organization’s activism, Vincentine is quick to state that the women are “concerned with issues” — not politics — and don’t affiliate with any partisan leanings.

Other highlights of the convention will be speeches by guests ranging from Prof. Hazel Markwell of St. Paul’s University to Marilyn McLean, chair of the Kingston Street Mission. The gathering will conclude with an invitation to the 2020 provincial convention by the Hamilton diocese.