



**The Kingston Diocesan Council of
The Catholic Women's League of Canada**

Education and Health Standing Committee

'Care for our Common Home'

Directive #1

Pages: 2

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To: Parish Council Education and Health Chairs

From: Colleen Hill, Diocesan Education and Health Chair

CC: Diocesan Executive, Provincial Education and Health Chair

THANKSGIVING message from Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada
(www.wicc.org), We-connect 2019:

*"Let us give thanks for women all over Canada and the world who make a difference in the lives of others. To those who feel the call to assist in restoring justice, we are blessed to call you a friend and a sister. Please keep your hearts and minds open to opportunities to learn about the needs of others and join together in faith and hope to help those with needs reclaim **health and safety**."*

Autumn greetings to you all and welcome new Presidents! As I humbly begin this term as diocesan chair of this Committee, allow me to introduce myself to those who do not know me. Support and guidance from loving and committed Catholic parents in Windsor helped steer me into nurses' training at St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto. Marriage to David and the arrival of two sons followed my new career. I first joined the league with young children at home in Don Mills. After a fulfilling career and launching our boys on their life roads, we retired to Prince Edward County. My joyful part-time '*work*' now involves League efforts in so many aspects of my life – growing spiritually, connecting with like-minded women, learning new concepts and skills from League sisters, expanding horizons in so many ways... If you are new to your role, know that tackling one small project with passion and joy, will be better than not mastering many! Be kind to yourself.

One of the areas that this Committee is mandated to explore is: ***wellness and sickness/disease***. In consideration of the new OPC theme of loneliness, may I suggest contemplation on the physical and mental health risks of loneliness and possible solutions for us, as League members, to implement.

Many researchers, including John Cacioppo of the University of Chicago have studied the biological and psychological effects of loneliness. These include:

- weakening of the immune system potentially leading to chronic stress and inflammatory conditions;
- difficulty sleeping normally because it disrupts our diurnal cycles;
- taking a toll on your heart, causing the actual arteries to narrow and become inflamed; this means your heart has to work harder to pump blood and if this continues for long enough it can raise one's risk of developing heart disease.

Suggestions to Combat Loneliness:

1. Don't be a victim – Despite what may indeed be *very difficult* circumstances, don't just let life happen to you. Stretch yourself, be bold, find people who you can relate to and go out of your way to become their friends. Find places where you are likely to meet people that are like you e.g. *at church (my words!)*. If you are in an abusive relationship, find help – God tells us that our worth is beyond imagination so don't sacrifice yourself, your worth and the fate of your family for someone who doesn't value you.
2. Don't settle for bad friends –don't waste your time with people who pull you down or make you feel like you're not good enough. Be brave enough to get them out of your life so that you can open up space for new people who will love you for who you are.
3. Realize you need both social relationships *and* intimate ones; Make room in your life for those people who are most important to you and also reach out to make new friends and create social circles.

As members of the Catholic Women's League it behooves us to reach out to those who may be suffering from loneliness – remember even someone with hundreds of 'likes' on Facebook or an apparent sizeable social circle may indeed be lonely. Personal contact (face-to-face, a written letter via snail mail, or telephone call) is much better than exclusive social media contact. To this end, become aware of your own community supports such as women's shelters, 'help' phone lines, social services. Invite speakers from these organizations to your meetings.

Respectfully submitted