



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

### Education and Health

#### *'Care for our Common Home'*

**Directive #2**  
**Date: October, 2020**

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**To:** Parish Council Education and Health Standing Committee Chairs  
**From:** Colleen Hill, Diocesan Education and Health Standing Committee Chair  
**CC:** Diocesan Executive, Provincial Education and Health Chair

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In the Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium," Pope Francis invites us to "remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other" (Ex 3:5). The Church will have to initiate everyone—priests, religious and laity—into this 'art of accompaniment'. Ordained ministers and pastoral workers are all called to "***make present the fragrance of Christ's closeness and his personal gaze***". What a beautiful expression of this art of accompaniment as we help each other during the pandemic!

#### **Wellness/Sickness, Disease**

(In this item, I am referring to our mental health.) I was inspired and affirmed in my own thoughts and emotions, by an article from Margie Royle of our provincial executive. She shared that we have lost our 'surge capacity' as these months drag on, but we need to grasp the concept of 'ambiguous loss' and accept the ways to grapple with it. Consider how the many vulnerable people in our communities may need help to cope. She shared the full document with me:

<https://elemental.medium.com/your-surge-capacity-is-depleted-it-s-why-you-feel-awful-de285d542f4c>

It describes the feelings of many of us as we try to navigate this pandemic which has no definitive end and which plagues the globe. Our stress loads are overwhelmed (many of us have hit the wall or our 'surge capacity') and we need strategies to help with this current state of 'ambiguous loss'. Some ideas to cope, suggested in the article, include:

- accept that life is different right now
- expect less of yourself (embrace those 'down days')
- recognize the different aspects of grief and know they are not linear
- recognize that with ambiguous loss it is the situation that is crazy, not the person
- look for activities old and new that continue to fulfill you

There is a book called 'Life After the Pandemic' - a collection of addresses by Pope Francis compiled by Canadian Jesuit Cardinal Michael Czerny. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness ... we need to "embrace the Lord in order to embrace hope". Words worth remembering and a book worth reading.

## Environment

Again, the pandemic has interrupted life in a way that may have set us back somewhat in regards to recycling. Initially, many stores refused the use of our cloth bags and this may have contributed to an increase in plastics, just as we were beginning to make headway. Please learn about the waste management practices in *your own* jurisdiction – educate yourselves and your family on disposal of household waste – what IS garbage, what NOT to put in your blue bins, what is acceptable as 'organic' waste, what constitutes hazardous waste etc. Did you know that your pharmacy will accept outdated or unused medications to be disposed of safely? In researching information for this Directive, I learned that waxed cardboard (milk cartons for example) is considered organic waste in my area! Who knew?

Further afield, the plight of many First Nations communities in regards to safe drinking water is still a problem in Canada. According to the David Suzuki Foundation, the federal government will not meet its commitment to end all drinking water advisories (DWAs) affecting First Nations communities by 2020 (as they projected in 2015) without significant changes to current processes. The number of DWAs fluctuates but many are long-term. The Council of Canadians provides information on this issue. A link to one background report is here:

<https://canadians.org/sites/default/files/publications/report-summary-drinking-water-advisories-0217.pdf>

Perhaps as we envision a winter of further self-isolation to improve Covid-19 cases, councils might find time to research this issue and consider a letter-writing campaign to your own M.P. and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change (Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson) about it. Remember, you are writing as an individual citizen not 'from the CWL'.

Respectfully submitted.