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Service Communique # 2

From: Laura Esposito, BC & Yukon Provincial Service Committee Chairperson

It is definitely fall. The crispness is in the air, the nights are cooler, my container garden produce is waning and the days are definitely getting shorter. I love the colors, the smells, and the sounds at this time of year. I hope that you are all experiencing a wonderful beginning to the Fall Season.

In her second communique, Joline Belliveau, National Chairperson of Service, quotes Pope Francis who said, "Service is a pillar of the culture of encounter: 'It means bending over those in need and stretching out a hand to them'..." Joline continues to say "in the League, members are called to service in various ways to share their gifts and talents. They are called to value the human spirit with dignity and respect. While members serve, they develop bonds with each other and relationships with those they serve. Many friendships in the League form while serving others, whether through delivering a tray of food, volunteering at a charity event, or reading a book to someone visually impaired. Members truly evangelize their faith as they serve."

How true these words are!! One of my favorite ways of serving in my parish is through the weekly soup kitchen held in our church both Saturday and Sunday lunch times. I volunteer on several occasions throughout the year, including when our CWL council takes their turns. . Soup, sandwiches, fruit, a sweet, coffee and tea are offered. Patrons are served and they are truly appreciative of all they receive. Many that come used to be my students and they remember me and acknowledge that. I find it inspiring and humbling to talk to all who come for sustenance. A smile goes a long way. It is so very fulfilling.

Joline goes on to say, "Monthly meetings need not always be held at the same time, on the same day or place. Consider scheduling an activity of service instead of the monthly meeting, or scheduling a meeting in a daycare centre, a room in a local hospital, or a shelter for young people. Many councils have wonderful projects and fundraisers. When brainstorming, remember to listen to others, respect each other's suggestions, build and improve on ideas and then learn to think "outside the box". You will be surprised at the outcome of the brainstorming session. Write down all the phrases, statements and thoughts and refer to the often. Service is a ministry, and we are called to ministry in our daily lives and within the parish community. Examples of ministry include volunteering at a charity event, knitting or crocheting blankets, hats, mittens and shawls, visiting the sick and more".

I draw your attention to two documents on the national website: "*The Joy of Leadership – Module 1: Ministries*" (835/835a) and "*Toolkit for Service*" (637). Both are tools developed to assist councils at all levels. There are many other documents which have been developed over the last few years by the various teams who worked on the Strategic Plan. We have a wealth of information on the National website. It is there to be shared and used.

Truth and Reconciliation Day is around the corner, Sept. 30, 2023. It is a statutory holiday and many businesses, schools etc. will be closed on Monday Oct. 2, 2023 since this year it falls on a Saturday. How will you honour, in service, our Indigenous brothers and sisters? If you are not aware of the calls to action developed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, perhaps you can read them www.reconciliationeducation.ca. Another way to serve is to read a book written by an Indigenous author. There are so many worthwhile books to choose from. Visit your local library and have the librarians help you. Get together with someone in your community of Indigenous descent and share time in conversation with them over a coffee, a meal, a walk.

Internationally, CNEWA needs financial help to continue running all their projects in the Holy Lands and other countries. The League has partnered with CNEWA for eight years through the National Voluntary fund. Is there more that we, as individuals and alternately our councils can do. The League also supports two projects in the Holy Land – Shepherd's Field Hospital in Beit Sahour near Bethlehem and the Infant Welfare Centre in the old city of Jerusalem. A description of these and other projects can be found on the CNEWA website.

I had the privilege of going on a four week tour of Egypt, Jordan and Israel in 2008. I am so glad the tour was in that order. To end with visiting so many sites in Israel was inspiring. I was able to visit the Masada, float in the Dead Sea, visit Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jericho and of course spend time in Jerusalem and walk the Via Dolorosa. The Bible stories I had heard from childhood came to life and I hear the readings at Mass every Sunday in a very different way than before I made this trip. To be able to spend some time in places where Jesus walked is truly a treasure – one I will always cherish and value.

Ciao for now and God bless. Laura Esposito