

Service Communiqué
Nov. 20, 2024

2023-2025/07

Greetings as we approach Advent – a time of anticipation and wonderment which ultimately leads to the joys of Christmas. Have we slowed down enough in order to prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus more fully into our lives; to enter more frequently into prayer and reflection, and to read more of Scripture readings?

In this communiqué, I will focus on two main topics – Youth Mental Health Wellness and Family Life and some resources available to more fully celebrate families.

Youth Mental Health Wellness

The stresses our youth face daily and the mental health crisis which can develop from these stresses will be the focus in the month of February. Suicide remains a leading cause of death in Canada. 24% of youth between the ages of 16 – 24 report that they have ideas of suicide. Our youth are considered a vulnerable population where many have an early onset of mental health issues before the age of 24. Many youth do not like the stigma that comes with others knowing they may have issues. Many youth are willing to talk about mental health as a general topic, but are very reluctant to discuss their own mental health. Much of our youth need mental health supports; however many of them are not getting the help they need. There are many contributing factors. An increase in mental health issues was being reported among youth before the pandemic, but have worsened since the pandemic due to a combination of social disconnection, excessive screen time and social economic changes. Some youth feel the crisis we are seeing with climate change problems has negatively impacted their mental health.

What can be done? This is a complex issue; however all of us need to be vigilant around any young people in our lives. Are there changes in their behavior, in their interests, in the friends they associate with, in the foods they eat? If so, we need to talk to them, and potentially to a health care provider, to try to deal with changes early. Are there support groups in the community who can help? Most of all, we need to educate ourselves. Have we invited speakers to present information to our councils? The sub-theme to the National theme of *Here I am Lord: Send Me* continues to be Mental Health. In the coming months, please make this a propriety in your councils.

Family Life

Joline Belliveau, writes “The Office for Family and Life is anticipating the coming “Holy Year of Hope” the Jubilee Year 2025, which begins Dec 24, 2024 and closes Jan 6, 2026. The CCCB (Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops) ad hoc committee for the Preparation of the Jubilee recently published extensive resources, including webinars, pastoral toolkits for adult and child formation, social media assets, prayer cards etc.

On the CCCB website, you can find a video series celebrating 30 years after the first World Meeting of Families. This mini-documentary is a powerful pastoral care tool, to be shown during a variety of events, family meetings, pastoral care of the family, marriage preparation courses, catechesis.”

Resources to help promote the Jubilee Year in the Catholic Women’s League:

- CCCB Adult Faith Resources on the Jubilee Year 2025
- CCCB Catechetical Activities for Children and Youth Jubilee 2025

- CCCB Graphic design kit – Jubilee 2025
- CCCB Webinar Recordings and Ongoing series – Preparing for the Jubilee 2025
- CCCB Jubilee 2025

Other resources include

- Pope Francis' Message for World Youth Day – Nov 24, 2024
- Papal Address "Disability and the Human Condition. Changing the Social Determinants of Disabilities and Building a Culture of Inclusion"
- Guidelines for the Celebration of Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities
- CCCB Press Release: Statement and Recommendations following the International Interfaith Symposium on Palliative Care

There are many resources which can help councils present some aspects of Family Life. No one can view or use them all. The idea is to choose one or two which will help particular councils and go from there. Our needs continue to be great and our service continues to be needed.

Remember that all three Resolutions passed at National this last August fell under the auspices of the Service Committee. Has your council completed any part of the action plan on any of the resolutions? There is still time to do so. The Lord needs our eyes, our voices, our hands our feet to help Him spread his message on Earth. How have we helped to do that?

. The Pope's Prayer Intentions

December 2024 For Pilgrims of Hope

We pray that this Jubilee Year strengthen our faith, helping us to recognize the Risen Christ in our daily lives, and that it may transform us into pilgrims of Christian hope.

January 2025 For the right to an education

Let us pray for migrants, refugees and those affected by war, that their right to an education, which is necessary to build a better world, might always be respected\

February For vocations to the priesthood and religious life

Let us pray that the ecclesial community welcome the desires and doubts of young people who feel a call to serve Christ's mission in the priesthood and religious life.

Throughout this coming Holy Season, let us be more like little children, full of anticipation and wonder. Have a very Blessed Advent. May it lead to true Christmas Joy. Buon Natale a tutti. Merry Christmas to all

Laura Esposito, BC & Yukon Chairperson of Service