

Canadian Catholic women pass resolutions that show care for everyone

Nearly 900 Catholic Women's League (CWL) members from across Canada gathered in Calgary Aug. 18-21 for the 99th Annual National Convention.

Each year members debate and vote on resolutions, forming League policy and guiding their advocacy work. The CWL members passed two resolutions concerning the rights of the unborn and a nuclear arms ban.

The first resolution to pass urged Canada to honour its commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Canada ratified this United Nations agreement to protect the unborn 20 years ago, yet there is still no Canadian legislation protecting the unborn at any stage of development.



Anne-Marie Gorman

"When you sign something and ratify it, you'd expect some legislation to appear," said CWL president Anne-Marie Gorman. "What we are looking for is legislation. You said you were going to do it, so why hasn't someone done it. We'll be asking that question."

The second resolution to pass asks the Canadian government to honour the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The CWL wants the federal government to support, sign and ratify this treaty which the UN adopted in July 2017; so far 25 countries have ratified it.

Once members adopt a resolution an executive committee prepares to bring the concerns to federal politicians in Ottawa on behalf of all 78,000 members in the coming months.

Each convention also has a spiritual, educational and cultural component. Four Calgarians spoke on this year's theme "Care For Our Common Home." Among the speakers were St. Mary's University professors Dr. Peter Baltutis – the CWL Chair for Catholic Studies – and Dr. Timothy Harvie, as well as Sr. Madeleine Gregg of the Faithful Companions of Jesus and Marilou LeGeyt of the Diocese of Calgary. They unpacked the topic from both theological and practical perspectives.

Sr. Dorothy Ederer, a Dominican Sister from Grand Rapids, Mich., delivered a high-energy, entertaining and emotional keynote address titled "What is our common home? We care for our homeland, our homes, our hearts."

"Everyone take out your phones," said Ederer. "What would God be calling to tell you if He were on the other line?"



Sr. Dorothy Ederer is a Grand Rapids Dominican sister and international speaker. Annie Chirka, Special to Grandin Media

Ederer explained how each person is called to be Christ-like and loving toward their neighbour using a series of personal stories from her time in ministry and mission, interspersed with inspirational songs and tidbits of wisdom. She highlighted topics such as daily prayer, finding your passion and reconciliation.

“What kinds of values do we want to leave to our children or those coming after us?” asked Ederer.

She used the phrase “more is caught than taught” to highlight how her mother would keep a holy hour each morning before getting on with her day.

“Kids imitate us. Find your passion, live it, but don’t compromise your morals and values,” she said.

Ederer urged the Church to be a place where people are loved and forgiven.

“To forgive yourself is one of the hardest things we have to do as Christians,” she said. “If you hold anger in your heart it’s destroying you. It’s like taking a glass of poison and pouring it down your throat.”

Her last message was one of hope and love. “I want to tell you how loved you are.”

Conventions are an opportunity for renewal and Gorman said she hopes all CWL members will take what they’ve learned and share it with their communities.

□“I hope they leave appreciating who they are and that God loves them,” said Gorman.

[Click here for more photos from the convention](#)

-Sara Francis is a writer for the Diocese of Calgary, which originally published this story.