

Spiritual Advisor's Remarks – 051004

Dear Sisters, Members and Guests of this Archdiocesan Council. I have brought printed copies of the notes I took at this summer's Annual CWL National Convention in Vancouver. I took notes because I have found these conventions to be a great opportunity to learn many things about the League and the important roles and rich activity of Catholic women in our Church. We even learn a lot about our faith and God's call to us in the various homilies, conferences, and workshops.

“Companions on the Journey” continues to be a significant theme for us. As Bishop Smith pointed out, Jesus is our first and best Companion on our journey of life, love, and faith. He always brings out the best in us, as He did for both Martha and Mary. For Mary, it was her love for Jesus and desire to know Him and grow in faith. For Martha, Jesus sought to bring out her joy, which was for the moment trapped beneath her preoccupations.

Bishop Smith in a homily drew our attention to the way Jesus received the Canaanite woman by at first apparently rejecting her. As a pagan and an outsider, she would have been held in contempt by Jewish people; so Jesus began by playing the game of using that kind of language with her. What He in effect did, though, was bring out her faith, and He immediately commended her for it. Jesus is the One who brings out and affirms our faith as we show it and use it. This is what Jesus continues to do for all those who approach Him in the Holy Eucharist.

Mary is also our Companion on the journey. The Rosary especially allows us to walk with her and approach her Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus. Walking with Mary on the journey of faith and going to Jesus is the work of every Christian, and it is the work of the New Evangelization, which has begun this 3rd Millennium of Evangelization.

I look upon the activity of the League and the life of its members as a light in the darkness of this world shrouded in a culture of death. What the League is all about and the companionship, mutual support, and faith development that happens among League members and around them in society is so vital; that I truly believe every single Catholic woman should be a member of the League.

It remains true that – like most if not all other organizations at this point in western civilization and history – recruitment remains problematic. It is certainly true of that companion organization the Knights of Columbus. I think a primary reason for the difficulty of recruiting is that the inclination is so great to fall off the main track of what the organization is about and fall onto the sidetrack of trying to “fill in vacancies” or “get reports and administration done”. We are fishing or hunting for “bodies”, and people can see or smell us coming miles away.

Recruitment is one of those human activities that cannot be successful if we only approach it head on, directly, and try to fill posts just because they are vacant. That is just a mechanical function, and it won't happen unless something more meaningful is already happening and creating momentum. The path I suggest is this: let us intensify our love for each other, our love for our members, and our love for all Catholic women, indeed, for all women.

For my part, as Archdiocesan and also Parish Spiritual Advisor, I am beginning to realize what forms more intensive love might take. After 11 years of kind of supporting our Parish CWL Council, I need to intensify my interest in them and love for them, by meeting with the executive and chairperson for spiritual development and enter into dialogue and prayer with them; so as to follow the Lord's lead in our joint outreach to women. I must do the same thing with the Spiritual Development Chairperson of this Archdiocesan Council. I also must find opportunity and ways to dialogue and pray with other Pastors and Spiritual Advisors of Parish CWL Councils. Please pray for me.