

President's Report

June 12th, 2023

So, another 10 months have passed since we started up again last fall. As you have seen in our slide show we have been busy as usual.

In the month of May, as part of my duties as a Diocesan executive, I have had to do "Unity Presentations" to my Buddy councils. I have done 6 and have 2 more to do this fall, just like ours will be in September. It has been very interesting, even though being separated by distance; ideas, commitments and issues are basically the same. How do we keep the church going? How do we retain and attract new members? Several of the councils are very focused on just keeping the church going. Yes, the Catholic Women's Leagues is relied upon intensely when things need to get done.

Something that struck me after the last visit I did was how our council is more focused on Social Justice and Service to our church and community. It is neither right nor wrong on how a council works, it is just interesting the different dynamics that each group adopts. This is what makes us unique and I believe that it is not necessarily what the "rule" book says what we should be doing, but doing what works best for our group.

It was a nice change to attend the Annual Provincial Convention as the President. The event was well attended and there are several pictures on the Alberta MacKenzie site if you wish to see what happened.

On Friday, Fran Lucas was as energetic as usual in her presentation. She talked about her visits since being President but also focused on the relationships that she has built over time. Fran challenged us to go outside our comfort zone and build new relationships. She gave an example that she hosts a tea party at her place and will invite some people that she knows and a few that she might not know or are just acquaintances. You never know when or who you will need in your journey, so isn't a good idea to have as many people to help you out.

Archbishop Smith, spoke on the pope's visit and on how it was a visit to the indigenous home but also, how do we bring it home. He talked about his visit to Rome and how he witnessed Pope Francis took the time (5 hrs) to listen to what the people had to say without interruption. He said, we must listen to the other in order to hear them. Archbishop Smith asked us if we listen to react or to hear? How do we listen to God's word?

He also talked about the Pathway of Healing, that not only do the Indigenous people have to heal, but perhaps we too have some healing that needs to occur.

The next speaker of the day was Chief Wilton Littlechild. Chief Littlechild is the person who gave his headdress to the Pope when he came to visit. His list of accomplishments is too long to list – I would really suggest you google him and read everything that he has done.,

Though he is soft spoken and frail, he is wonderful to listen to. This man was raised by his grandparents and remembers his grandmother and aunt belonging to the Catholic Women's League and that the rosary was said every Friday night.

Yes, he was a victim of the residential schools, but he chose to leave the negative behind and focus on the positive instead. He told us many stories about his growing up, his hockey years and his working career.

He then addressed what does Truth and Reconciliation look like? To him it is about having a good reconciliation, but it needs to include everyone. He referenced when you walk on a rail tracks it is difficult to walk on it alone, but when you have someone on the other track helping you, it is much easier to do.

So, he asked the question – What can I do? He suggested reading the 94 calls to action and find one action that speaks to you and act on it. This has not been the first attempt to address these issues and in the past the documents that were written had hundreds of recommendations. He said the more

recommendations you have the easier it is to ignore them. That is why there are only 94, more feasible to work with them.

The last speaker was Judy Look, who had a 40 minute presentation to do in about 18 minutes. Her presentation was called, Change is here. Embrace It. Love it. It was a great presentation, as usual, but I do not want to bungle it up, as it had great information, so I will be presenting it at a future meeting.

So, it is time to take a bit of a rest for the next couple of months, rejuvenate and prepare myself for the last 4 months of my term. I came away from the Provincial convention with ideas that would be great to try out, but first I need a break.

So, everyone have a great summer and where ever you go be safe.