



**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
London Diocesan Council**

To: All Parish Presidents, Service Chairpersons
CC: London Diocesan Council, OPC Service Chairperson
From: Lori Loreta Alexander, London Diocesan Service Chairperson
Date: March 10, 2025
Directive # 8

“LENT CALLS US TO JOURNEY TOGETHER IN HOPE” Pope Francis

Lent is a 40 day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday. It's a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter.

Thank you to all councils who sent in their Service year-end report for 2024. Your accomplishments and support to the needy families, the unhoused, to the community and in your Parish family were greatly appreciated.
My term as your Service Pillar Chairperson is coming to an end. I would like to thank all Councils and my Service Pillar Sub-chairpersons for your hard work and support.

National Council suggested that Faith, Service, and Social Justice work together. Councils are encouraged to continue to promote/coordinate activities in service to members, the parish and the community. Continue to educate, invite speakers and support services, help in areas of the homelessness, poverty and empower members to fight human trafficking.

Challenges and the Path Forward

Despite progress, significant gaps remain, particularly in shelters, legal aid and psychological support. Five cities—Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax and London— account for 45% of Canada's known trafficking cases. This highlights the need for local interventions as well as national approaches. Human trafficking is a complex and pervasive issue, affecting thousands of vulnerable individuals. More work is needed to raise awareness, to provide comprehensive victim services and to ensure that traffickers are held accountable for their crimes. Addressing it requires a coordinated and sustained effort from all sectors of society.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel continue to lead us deeper into the Sacred Heart of her divine Son, Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Lori Alexander

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In August 2024, a League position paper on human trafficking was adopted, emphasizing that it is a violation of human dignity and Catholic social teaching (CST). Exploiting society's most vulnerable for profit undermines the core principles of social justice. Pope Francis calls human trafficking "an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ," stressing the need for urgent action.

How Informed Are You About the Current Situation of Human Trafficking in Canada? True or False: •

Most trafficking victims in Canada are illegal immigrants or temporary residents. • Sex trafficking is the most reported form of human trafficking in Canada. • Social media is a standard tool used to recruit victims of human trafficking. • Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax account for 45% of cases. • Victims can be charged with crimes like prostitution or immigration violations.

The Reality of Human Trafficking in Canada

Human trafficking is a global crime affecting millions, and Canada is not immune. The crime involves exploiting individuals through force, fraud or coercion for forced labour or sexual exploitation. Traffickers prey on victims' vulnerabilities, often promising better opportunities. While human trafficking is commonly linked to developing nations, Canada serves as both a source and destination country, with individuals trafficked into, out of, and within its borders. The 2021 Trafficking in Persons in Canada report highlights human trafficking as a growing concern. Between 2009 and 2019, more than 1,000 cases were investigated, though actual numbers are likely higher due to underreporting. Victims are primarily Canadian citizens or permanent residents, with most being women and girls, with about one-quarter being children and youth younger than 18 years. Sex trafficking is the most reported form of human trafficking in Canada, with victims—especially women and girls—coerced into prostitution, pornography or other forms of sexual exploitation. Victims often work for little or no pay and may be moved across provinces or between cities to meet demands in high-traffic areas. Traffickers frequently use false promises of legitimate work, such as jobs in hospitality or modelling, to recruit victims. Social media, dating apps and fake job advertisements are standard tools for luring individuals. Once under the control of their trafficker, victims are isolated from their families and communities, confined to hidden locations such as brothels or hidden apartments, and threatened with violence or deportation. In some cases, traffickers claim victims owe large debts for transportation or housing, creating a cycle of debt bondage. Victims may also face criminalization, being charged with prostitution or immigration violations, further complicating their ability to seek help. Canada's Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking Canada's Criminal Code (Section 279.01) criminalizes trafficking for exploitation, including sexual exploitation and forced labour, with severe penalties for offenders. In 2012, Canada launched its National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking, emphasizing prevention, victim protection and prosecution through collaboration among governments, law enforcement, non-government organizations and international partners. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police operates specialized units to address trafficking, and high-profile operations have disrupted major networks, including illegal brothels and prostitution rings. Internationally, Canada partners with organizations like the United Nations, nations such as the United States, and the European Union to tackle trafficking on a global scale.