



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

One Heart, One Voice, One Mission

To: All Parish Presidents, Regional Chairperson, and Community Life Chairpersons

Cc: London Diocesan Council

From: Kathy Levesque, London Diocesan Chairpersons, Community Life

Date: January 23, 2016

Directive # 15

**Living with Limits, Living Well! .... Session 7- Final chapter.**

“When we stop to think about it, we can all marvel at the extent to which we now live in a “global village.” We are seconds away from vivid, detailed news about a catastrophe – or a sporting event – on any continent in the world.” With all the technology we have at our disposal, we are able to connect with anyone in the world at a moment's notice. The technology of all this is awesome. It touches every aspect of our daily lives! Eventhough, we are more tightly interconnected with one another it does not make us a loving family.

Pope Benedict wrote Caritas in Veritate to help everyone reflect on the great moral and spiritual challenge of this new time. “He called on us to broaden on social conscience and grow our capacity to love, so that we can develop a readiness for brotherly/sisterly living that is equal to the reality of our global connectedness. Our technology, politics and economics and all our institutions and laws need to be transformed by awakened consciences so that they can function as “networks of love” in the development of genuine global community.”

Pope Francis, on the day of his installation as Bishop of Rome, addressed this global challenge to love. He spoke of St. Joseph as the being the “protector” of young Jesus and His mother. He said “The vocation of being a ‘protector’ means protecting all of creation – respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live. It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, and those in need. Whenever human beings fail to live up to this responsibility...the way is opened to destruction and hearts are hardened. We need to be protectors of one another and the environment.”

Encountering the limits of today's culture: In today's culture, we need to grow into seeing the human race like as parents see their family and not think of just of ourselves as No. 1 We are social by nature, we depend on community and on one another. In our economic system, this does not show the vision. Consumerism is the most aggressively promoted part of culture, and it “sells” an attitude of always needing something more, something new. We get so distracted that it keeps our focus on the primacy of first assuring that everyone's basic need can be met. It has now come that the consumer expects instant gratification – and our dazzling technology does its best to provide it. We expect more and more. Combined with an overload of information from our channels of fast communication, we are trained into short term-thinking that can blind us to serious, long-term questions. i.e. the emerging danger presented by climate change.

We are never left without signs that we remain God's children, capable by nature and by grace of generous action in faith, love and hope. When natural disasters strike or unexpected acts of

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terror occur in community, the people all pull together. People find joy in helping however they can, even in the face of potential danger to themselves.

Can leaner times be good news? We need to carefully discover new limits to our use of resources for the sake of restoring health and balance in our natural environment. Degrowth advocates would express the good news this way: "The downscaling of production and consumption, not only preserves the conditions necessary for long-term ecosystem and human survival, but also fosters living better here and now. Work sharing, consuming less, inventing creative ways of living together, and devoting more time to art, music, family, culture and community, and voluntary simplicity are all important elements of sustainable degrowth. Pope Benedict emphasized in *Caritas in Veritate*, namely that economic activity must foster "solidarity and responsibility for justice and the common good among the different economic players." Much new possibility can come out of this. 1) relocalizing our agricultural economy – could be the beginning of a widespread discovery of the preciousness of land and water; 2) The community Shared Agriculture movement, between farmers and signed-on families in the city, could grow different gardens; 3) a movement that began in Ireland and England, is popularly known as "Transition Towns"- has grown into an international network of communities that are working to build resilience in response to concerns about fossil-fuel dependence, climate destruction and economic instability. 4) the efforts of some local governments to introduce changes to open the way for a cleaner economy – i.e. – Ontario is shutting down its last coal-burning electric power plant and is converting the Atikokan Station to generate electricity from wood pellets sourced from sustainable forestry practices. We need to be mindful of that is surrounding us.

Ancient wisdom for our time: Jesus surprised the wise people when he pointed out that you can't serve two masters – God and money. Today, the social sciences are noticing the lack of correlation between higher income and happiness. Once basic needs are satisfied, happiness tends to be undermined by competition in lifestyle matters and by other problems that come with too much consuming.

In South America, there is a whole new/old understanding of "development" being promoted first of all by indigenous leaders, church people and politicians. *Buen vivir* – meaning "to live well" – insists the good life begins with care for community, harmony with nature, deliberate simplicity and steady clarity about core values. Not consumerism.

Jeff Rubin quoted, "We can still shape the future we want, but only if we are willing to relinquish the past we've known. As the boundaries of a finite world continue to close in on us, our challenge is to learn that making do with less is better than always wanting more."

Hard times ahead can become joyful times of rediscovery. If we follow wisdom and draw strength from God's world-embracing grace, today's economic struggles could become the birth-pangs of an era with more community, more justice and more peaceful joy.

Text taken from "Living with limits, living well."  
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