

2019-02 LON Equal Access to Permanent Resident Status, an Amendment to the Express Entry System under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act as it relates to Religious Workers

Community Life

Gifted by London Diocesan Executive/St. Michael's London

- 1 Whereas, Women who have been called to Religious life provide  
2 many benefits to society and the number of Canadian  
3 women responding to this call has been declining, and  
4
- 5 Whereas, Many of the Congregations in Canada are willing to accept  
6 women from various countries and support them  
7 financially and with a residence, and  
8
- 9 Whereas, Those wanting to make their final vows in a religious order  
10 are unable to do so unless they have Permanent  
11 Residency, and  
12
- 13 Whereas, As a result of the amendments to the regulations for  
14 admitting foreign nationals and the introduction of the  
15 Express Entry System, applications for Permanent  
16 Residency for these women have been rejected; therefore,  
17 be it  
18
- 19 Resolved, That the London Diocesan Council of The Catholic Women's  
20 League of Canada, in its 99th annual convention  
21 assembled, urge the federal government to amend the  
22 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act so that religious  
23 workers may apply for permanent resident status either  
24 through the express entry with accommodation for  
25 religious orders, or through the creation of a unique  
26 stream specifically to assess religious orders who do  
27 charitable work which benefits Canadian society in general;  
28 and be it further
- 29 Resolved, That this resolution be forwarded to the Ontario Provincial  
30 Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada for  
31 consideration at its 72nd annual convention.  
32

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1 **BRIEF**

2 Society reaps many benefits from women called to religious life. However, there is a  
3 documented decline of Canadian women responding to this vocation.

4 *According to a 2018 survey by the National Association of Vocation and Formation Directors,*  
5 *26 percent of men and women in Canada's religious congregations are not Canadian-born.*  
6 *But as religious orders become increasingly multicultural, they face a complicated and costly*  
7 *road block established in 2015 when the immigration application process changed. (Ko Din)*

8 In order for Religious Workers to be able to receive permanent residency in Canada, an  
9 exemption is needed to the new Express Entry rules by the Canadian Government. If such  
10 an exemption is not made possible, it is feared that this could result in great uncertainty for  
11 the long-term survival of the Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood in London, Madonna  
12 House in Combermere, Ontario, and Sisters Adorers in Calgary, as well as other monastic  
13 and contemplative orders across Canada, and the benefits they provide to Canadians in  
14 need. (Ko Din)

15 The Congregation of the Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood was first established in  
16 Canada in 1861. Their monasteries have actively assisted the poor and those in need,  
17 offering personal comfort, prayerful support and material aid regardless of the person's  
18 religion or background. The Sisters have been an integral part of the Diocese of London  
19 since 1913, giving well over a century of support and comfort to anyone who comes to  
20 them. (Sisters of the Precious Blood) They, like other monastic and contemplative orders,  
21 provide service to the most vulnerable in society, a benefit to the community in general.

22 Without the ability to welcome foreign nationals to the congregations, much of the good  
23 work they do for the community would decline and possibly cease. Congregations such as  
24 the Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood provide for all of the needs of these religious  
25 workers including food, shelter, medical care, etc. These women are not a burden on  
26 Canada. They contribute to society and are filling roles that Canadians do not want. (Walsh,  
27 Sr. Eileen Mary, R.P.B)

28 With recent changes to the Express Entry stream, the Sisters and other religious workers  
29 have had their applications for Permanent Residence rejected. The Comprehensive Ranking  
30 System that Canada has adopted to rank candidates has become a barrier to immigration  
31 for these women and indeed, for all religious workers applying to minister in Canada. The  
32 objective of Express Entry is to create efficiencies by making the submission of electronic  
33 applications for permanent residence mandatory. The process requires applicants to create  
34 an online profile based on age, language ability, education and Canadian and foreign work  
35 experience. (Desloges and Sawicki) According to the new Express Entry regulations, the  
36 religious workers do not fit the present "profile" that is required before being invited by the  
37 Government to apply for Permanent Residence. Revisions to the Express Entry stream are  
38 required to accommodate religious orders or, in the alternative, the creation of a unique  
39 stream specifically to assess religious orders who do charitable work benefits Canadian  
40 society in general.

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1 Action Plan:

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3 1. Encourage CWL members to become aware of the immigration issues  
4 affecting the life and sustainability of our religious communities and  
5 develop or join with other local efforts to find ways to help.

6

7 2. Support our local religious communities through prayer, financial  
8 contributions and material support wherever possible.

9

10 3. Write letters to appropriate ministers of the federal government to  
11 advocate for needed changes to the Immigration regulations that  
12 negatively impact the needs Canadian religious communities.