

Catholic Conference Report

The Catholic Conference 2010 *Stand in the Light* was held March 12-13 at the Mayfield Inn and Suites Conference Centre in Edmonton. As representatives of the CWL Diocesan Council Officers, June Fuller and I (Caroline MacDougall) attended this conference.

The keynote speaker was David Wells from Devon, England. The title of his address was "Home is a Holy Place". His message was one of "LOVE" and it begins in the home. He spoke about what it means to be a Catholic at home. God's presence graces all creation and is a gift of the spirit at work in our lives. You can find Him not just in the grandeur of our world but in the ordinary and mundane, in everyday situations. David shared personal family experiences and related them to what it means to be a Catholic at home. His presentation was spiced with humour, wit, and heart-warming stories that we could relate to. He spoke from the heart.

June and I also attended a session by Bishop Frederick Henry titled, "The Prayer of St. Francis and Radical Freedom". This very popular prayer and hymn is deep in spirituality. This prayer illustrates love/care/concern for others – There is no thought for one's image (ego). The ego interferes with freedom and humility, which are interlinked. The ego also interferes with one's ability to forgive for it is forgiving that you are set free. To face the truth of about yourself leads to freedom and humility. We are always a work in progress.

I also attended "Catholic Education: Inspiring Students to Live as Resurrection People" presented by Fr. Mike Dechant. Fr. Mike involved us in discussion and hands on activities. A Catholic School is a place for students to discover the Kingdom of God, a place that helps them to know God, and helps them to be good people.

"Embracing the Gospel: Engaging our World" presented by Archbishop Richard Smith addressed the topic of evangelization. Archbishop Smith feels there is a real energy for the gospel in our Diocese. We need to funnel it – need to deliberate. The new evangelization requires three steps to proclaim the Gospel:

1. Method – how?
2. Ardor
3. Language – the concept of beauty is the new language. The "Nothing More Beautiful" program in our diocese embraces this new language. There is nothing more beautiful than Christ's message.

His Grace then encouraged dialogue to explore ways in which we might evangelize.

The Catholic conference concluded with a beautiful closing Eucharistic Liturgy.

Submitted by Caroline MacDougall

Diocesan Education and Health Standing Committee Chairperson