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DEAR FRIENDS

A Letter from the CLA President



Taking Initiative

The annual NCEA/CLA convention went well and was most enjoyable. I only wish that more of our members could have been with us in San Diego to enjoy its benefits. To this end, some of the presentations will be posted online in the members-only section of the CLA website. Contact the CLA office for help accessing them.

One of the initiatives the CLA Executive Committee discussed at the convention was the ALA "Libraries Transform" campaign. Considering that our faith is all about conversion, this theme is most appropriate to our members. The CLA Membership and Publicity Committee will be charged with implementing a "Catholic Libraries Transform" version of the campaign to help promote the importance of Catholic libraries to our constituencies. In the meantime, we hope every library and librarian will post to the CLA Facebook using #CatholicLibrariesTransform to share how their Catholic Libraries transform patrons.

Advocacy is the paramount thing the Association can do to continue to serve CLA members. During the era of Catholic Action, the CLA worked to make sure that every Catholic school had a library. The CLA also encouraged the creation of Catholic libraries for lay adults (e.g., the parish library) as part of its service to the community. CLA members can reach out to bishops, pastors, school superintendents, parents, and principals to advocate for Catholic libraries. We can emphasize the need for every Catholic school to have a library with a trained librarian. For those parishes that don't have a school, we can emphasize the need for a library that is available to parishioners. The Catholic Libraries Transform campaign will provide CLA members with tools to do this.

Which brings me to the second initiative. Catholic librarians in elementary schools and parish libraries have a need for training that the CLA can support. First, the Association maintains that having a trained librarian who is given a living wage, professional development, and time off to network with other librarians is essential. Second, we want to emphasize the importance of professional development and training by offering development opportunities to our members. In particular, we are investigating the possibility of creating and supporting a certification in Catholic librarianship.

In order to further these initiatives, we need member participation. Therefore, we are asking for volunteers to serve on various committees and boards.

- **Publications Committee** will edit the *Church Librarian's Handbook* and other CLA publications (with the exception of *Catholic Library World*).
- **Continuing Education Committee** needs one representative from each of the four sections, and will expand to create a curriculum and an implementation plan for the Catholic Librarianship certificate.
- **Catholic Library and Librarian Advocacy Committee** will devise ways to support Catholic librarians and promote Catholic libraries to bishops, pastors, school superintendents, principals, and the wider Catholic community. Letter writing campaigns, op-ed pieces in Catholic journals, and contacting previous award winners are a few ideas.
- **Volunteers for the boards of all the sections (Academic, Children's, High School, and Parish)** are needed for leadership positions. Training will be provided.

A formal call will go out to the membership at the beginning of the academic year, but please be thinking of answering the call. ■

Mary Kelleher, President