

## Message from Our Co-Presidents

### Positive Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

Dear Faithful Women of the Diocese of Madison:

We had a busy spring and summer, getting out among the five active vicariates, speaking to them at their meetings, discussing the challenges they have for obtaining more members, and being listeners and advice-givers when we can. Our five vicariate presidents are doing a great job running their respective vicariates, and we encourage them to be set with their upcoming new officer nominations as well as being a voice for the women of their parishes and vicariates.

### Leadership, Mentoring Keys

We know that as elections come around many women are quick to say, "I'm busy." "I would never do a good enough job." "I would not know how to be (the President, Secretary, Treasurer)."

We would like you to consider the self-fulfilling prophecy by telling yourself that you can do something. Then, you can and will do it well. Tell yourself that the officer preceding you will work with you, mentor you, and show you the ropes. Doesn't your officer role already seem easier? Tell yourself that you have been a leader already, running a household, carrying out the duties of a job, teaching someone to do a craft, working in a trade, and the list goes on. Doesn't it seem doable when you approach a new officer job in this way? Believe in yourself. God already does, and He's calling you to be active in your local CCW.

During the summer, we had discussions with certain members of our four inactive vicariates, whether through emails, Facebook, phone conferences, or lunch dates. These are East Dane, Lafayette, Rock Green, and Madison. We want to draw in these women to their rightful places on our diocesan board. We want them to

step up to lead the women of their parishes and vicariates. With God's help, we feel this can happen. While difficult to jumpstart a whole vicariate, it can be done. Judy Lyons felt inspired at our MDCCW convention this summer and stepped forward to become Jefferson Vicariate president and now that vicariate is up and running once again.

### Meeting with Bishop

We had the honor of having a brief audience with Bishop Morlino in August at his office at Holy Name Heights. He asked us to share with the women of the diocese his call for more reverence when receiving the Holy Eucharist, such as receiving on the knees and on the tongue. He wants us to feel the child-like awe of being in the presence of Christ and having Him enter our bodies.

We asked the Bishop about having a link to the MDCCW website from the Madison Diocesan webpage, and this has been done. We discussed the Seven Sisters Apostolate with him. This initiative was founded by a woman in Minnesota who was praying for her son in the seminary. She felt she needed to do more so she thought of the idea of seven women taking one hour each week for a year to pray for their parish priest. As noted in the Nov 16 Catholic Herald article (page 5), Bishop Morlino endorsed this apostolate for the women of each parish in the diocese. More information is available at [sevensistersapostolate.org](http://sevensistersapostolate.org).

We visited the La Crosse Diocesan women at their executive board meeting in July. They wanted to know more about how a co-presidency works. We spoke and took questions for 40 minutes, and all seemed to enjoy our presentation. Has your affiliate or vicariate considered co-presidency? We would love to share our perspective with you!

### NCCW Convention

The 2017 NCCW convention in Dallas was a knockout. Very good information was shared by many wonderful speakers, NCCW officers, and the commissions of Leadership, Spirituality, and

Service. See the article in the Nov. 30 *Catholic Herald* as well as in this newsletter and on our MDCCW website ([www.mdccw.com](http://www.mdccw.com)). MDCCW's own Carol Brennan from Columbia North Vicariate, All Saints Parish, Berlin, was installed as the new Province Director for a two-year term!!

### **Membership ideas**

We want to touch upon a couple possible ways for you to grow your membership. If you have a men's group that meets each month (KC's, Holy Name), consider having your meeting day be on theirs. Each of you can have your own business meetings in your own section of the hall or room, but come together for refreshments and a speaker or program. Husbands come along with the wives; and vice versa. It can be a win-win for both organizations. Also, if you have a school affiliated with your parish, consider teaming up with the parent organization for events, such as Confirmation or Communion receptions and for special speakers whom both groups may enjoy and for sharing the cost. Brainstorm other ways to do joint activities. Look for new members to come out of your partnerships.

### **2018 Convention**

Save the date: 2018 MDCCW convention at Sinsinawa Mounds near Lancaster, Wednesday, June 13.

In closing, please consider the self-fulfilling prophecy anytime you feel you are not able to do something. Tell yourself, "Yes I Can" and by the grace of God, you will.

### **Ellen Martin and Sue Koch**

**MDCCW Co-Presidents**

## **From Our Province Director**

### **New Director from MDCCW**

I was recently installed as Milwaukee Province Director for the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW). Many of you know me from my past years in CCW, but I will share a little more information about myself.

John and I have been married for 52 years, have three children and seven grandchildren. We were transferred around a lot, resulting in our living in four different states, seven cities, and several different dioceses. I learned to adapt to change. We enjoyed every place we lived; and being a registered nurse, I could find a job wherever we went. When John retired, we moved back to Wisconsin to be near family. We settled in Berlin and are members of All Saints Parish. I joined CCW 17 years ago and haven't looked back. This is an organization that challenges me to grow spiritually and to put my faith into action.

### **Responsibilities**

In my position, I serve and represent all five arch/dioceses in Wisconsin as liaison from NCCW to the dioceses. NCCW's mission statement is to "act to support, empower and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service." Other than my work on and with the NCCW Board, my job is to promote NCCW, keep us all connected and informed. If you have issues or concerns don't hesitate to contact me.

The NCCW Convention theme was "97 years Living the Joy of the Gospel." You will hear the theme "Joy" often in the future. Our new NCCW President, Maribeth Stewart, has named her themes for her term: "NCCW: Reflecting the Joy of God..." with a different emphasis each year.

Jean Kelly, a past Milwaukee province director, was installed as NCCW president-elect. It will be a joy working with her. Wisconsin has had so many active NCCW members, who have been great examples for us. Special thanks to Lucille Brandner for all she did for us these past two years as province director.

We would like all women to unite in prayer to pray daily for 1) all lapsed Catholics and 2) our country — for its safety and for a return to Godliness.

## Save the Date

**AUGUST 4 is the date for LTD (Leadership, Training, and Development) Workshop** in La Cross which will be sponsored by the entire province. I look forward to working with all of you and attending your conventions and special events. Please keep me in your prayers these next two years as I continue my faith journey.

Blessings,

**Carol Brennan**

Milwaukee Province Director

## From Our Spiritual Advisor

### The Most Important Prayer

I know in some ways I am preaching to the choir. However, as we prepare for another Advent Season and the start of a new liturgical year, I want to reflect on the most important prayer we can ever offer and that is the Sacrifice of the Mass. Padre Pio, a newly canonized saint of the Catholic Church, once said, "It is easier for the earth to exist without the sun than without the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass."

I don't understand how some people treat participating at Mass in such a casual manner. Some weeks, they are present but if something comes up that they want to do, they think nothing of missing Mass. How is this possible if we realize what we are given at Mass? At Mass, we become one with God. The human and the divine meet. In Holy Communion, the host and wine become God. We then partake of Communion, and God Himself comes to us. What could be more important than being present for this miracle which takes place in Catholic Churches around the world each day? In fact, if we truly took to heart what it

means to participate in the Mass, I think our churches would be full every single day for Mass.

Yes, I know as members of the Council of Catholic Women, you deeply treasure the Mass. However, we must be careful we don't take this great gift for granted, or ever allow ourselves to approach the Mass or Holy Communion in a casual way. As we come into God's presence, may we always do so with awe and deep reverence.

**Msgr. Duane Moellenberndt**

Spiritual Advisor

## Leadership Commission

### You Can Make a Difference

As our world continues to change, there is much that we as members of the National Council of Catholic Women can do to be sure that the change is on the side of our Gospel values. You can make a difference in your own families, your own communities, your own nation, and in the world. Always! Always! know that you can make a difference by standing up and speaking out for your convictions. Always! Always! know that you can make a difference when you do nothing

If unsure how to be a more active, consider the following suggestions from Jane Carter, the NCCW Leadership Chair.

- Pray to Mary and ask her intercession. We pray together.
- Commit to building membership. We learn from each other, become active yourself as you continue to mentor others.
- Promote NCCW mission to bring our voices and values to our hurting society. As an organization, we do great things.

Please access and read the NCCW's Website ([nccw.org](http://nccw.org)) for suggestions that are intriguing and will "ignite" the women in your parish to

work together. Go to the Leadership titles and click on the "Circles Handout."

The "Circles Handout" gives ideas of how to unite small groups within the parish. The challenge is for us is to unite these smaller groups. Consider assigning some of your members to read over the suggestions and see if this just might work for your organization. Plan the change and enjoy the results.

Wishing you a blessed Advent. We indeed have so much to be thankful for.

### **Rosa Ropers**

Leadership Commission Chair

## **Service Commission**

### **Projects from NCCW**

NCCW has put together service projects that we would like to focus on. To learn more please visit [nccw.org](http://nccw.org).

### **Women Healing the Wounds: Domestic Violence**

Abuse takes many forms: emotional torment, verbal, sexual assault, threats and, physical force or injury.

*Domestic violence is a learned behavior that increases in frequency and severity.*

Battery is the single greatest cause of injury to women of all ages, more common than auto accidents, muggings and rapes. Most assaults are never reported. In this country, a woman is beaten every 15 seconds. One-third of all female homicide victims are killed by their husband or partner. *One out of four women will be abused during their lives.*

*Domestic violence occurs in 33%-66% of all adult co-habiting relationships regardless of age, race, sex, religious affiliation, marital status, education, income or social standing. Similar statistics apply to teenage date abuse.*

*Abusers tend to exhibit "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" behaviors, showing extremes in both kindness and cruelty. Others seldom see or suspect this person of explosive rage.*

Pregnancies have been terminated due to abuse.

### **Respite Program**

RESPITE trains local volunteers to help family members care for loved-ones at home by offering relief and renewal to the family caregivers. The NCCW program includes a curriculum to train volunteers, materials to promote the program, and a group insurance program for Respite volunteers. Upon implementation by a diocese, the NCCW Respite program is regulated by its own safe environmental criteria. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops mandated that each bishop select which program to use, and the vast majority use the program called Protecting God's Children (PGC). All volunteers must complete this PGC class, which is a once in a lifetime class, and they must have a current criminal background check on file with their parish or diocesan office. It is necessary for each diocese to know what is required in their diocese. All volunteers must complete Respite Care basic training and have all safe environment criteria in place before being placed with a client. Since NCCW provides our insurance, we must have all components in line and cannot misrepresent NCCW or any of our dioceses.

### **Media — What is the message?**

Media provide great opportunities and great dangers. It requires an intelligent and sensible approach to use it properly in a healthy balanced life. It is also incumbent that there be strong supervision of youth and adolescents in their use of all kinds of media and an awareness of the good and bad aspects media offers to adults. There must be frequent and open discussion in families when they encounter unavoidable exposure to value-negative messages through media such as in

commercials, magazine articles and ads, and billboards that glorify violence, sex, extreme commercialism, and other inappropriate influences as normal and desirable. Parents need to assume this duty to explain why such messages are unacceptable and not accurate portrayals of what a normal healthy life should be.

## Human Trafficking

**Human trafficking is modern-day slavery** that subjects children, women, and men to force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of exploitation. This horrific practice can include prostitution, pornography, and sex tourism as well as domestic servitude, factory work, migrant farming, and mining. Human trafficking is not the same as smuggling; it does not require movement across borders.

**Human trafficking happens in all 50 states.** The U.S. is a source and transit point for trafficking and is considered one of the major destinations for trafficking victims. Anyone can be trafficked regardless of class, education, gender, age, or citizenship when lured by false promises and the desire for a better life.

## Legislative Updates (as of Nov. 1)

### Choose Life Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Family Council and Pro-Life Wisconsin have recently announced the availability of the Choose Life Wisconsin license plates. These plates are now available in 30 states. The plates indicate Choose Life as well as a baby's foot print.

The initial fee to purchase the plate will be the regular registration fee, plus a \$15 issuance fee, and \$25 tax-deductible donation that the state will send to Choose Life Wisconsin, Inc. After the first year, the cost is the regular registration fee and the \$25 tax-deductible donation (unless the applicant wants a personalized plate, which

is an additional \$15). Choose Life Wisconsin will then distribute the funds to Wisconsin's Pregnancy Resource Centers. In order for the plate to remain an option for Wisconsin, at least 500 plates need to be in circulation at any one time. The next time your license plates are up for renewal, consider obtaining a Pro-Life plate.

### Pending Pro-Life Legislation

Testimony in Support of SB 154 — Abortion Prohibitions for UW Employees (Oct. 17, 2017). The Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of Wisconsin's bishops, strongly supports Senate Bill 154. This bill would prohibit the University of Wisconsin (UW) System or the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority from allowing their employees to perform or assist in the performance of an abortion outside of a hospital setting. In short, the bill would put an end to Wisconsin taxpayer support for elective abortions. By paying employees to work at Planned Parenthood, the UW is, in essence, jointly operating an abortion facility, which violates both the letter and the spirit of Wisconsin Statutes s. 20.927. Overall, the bill indicates that public authorities should not be facilitating the unjust taking of human life. Watch for more details in the news.

### Immigrants and Refugees

Address root causes of migration, establish easier avenues for legal immigration, legalize existing unauthorized immigrants, follow humane enforcement policies and protect human and legal rights of all migrants.

#### State

- Oppose Assembly Bill 127 that would unnecessarily limit ability of local governments to discern how to engage immigrants.

#### Federal

- Support Bridge Act: Bar Removal of Individuals Who Dream and Grow Our Economy (S. 128/H.R. 496) to help hundreds of thousands of young immigrants. Act would provide temporary relief from deportation

and employment authorization to individuals who are eligible for the Department of Homeland Security's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

- Passage of the Dream Act: Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors Act. Help individuals who meet qualifications to enlist in the Military or higher education to have a path to citizenship.
- Protecting Life from the Womb to the Tomb (natural death)
- Fetal Remains Respect Act (LRB-1754). Prohibits any person from knowingly acquiring, providing, receiving, or using fetal body parts obtained from induced abortions.
- Unborn Child Disposition and Anatomical Gift Act (LRB-1755). Facility where an unborn child has died due to stillbirth or miscarriage must inform mother that mother may request child's remains for final disposition or to make anatomical gift for research, experimentation, study, or transplantation.
- Increase funds for treatment services to sex-trafficked children
- Right to Die with Dignity (Wisconsin Assembly Bill 216): Bill which would permit certain individuals to make requests for medication for purpose of ending their lives.

## References

### United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

USCCB: [http://www.usccb.org/Issues & Actions](http://www.usccb.org/Issues%20&%20Actions)

**Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC)** is the public policy voice of Wisconsin's Bishops and a source of information on Catholic Social Teaching. The website (<http://www.wisconsinccatholic.org>) provides a monthly "at a glance" Legislative Updates. You can also subscribe to its email updates.

**Catholics at the Capitol**, sponsored by the WCC, is convened in spring of each new legislative session (odd numbered years) and features workshops and networking to bring a united Catholic voice to the Capitol.

### Coreen Marklein

Legislative Chair

## From the Editor

### Lead Us to Your Light; Lead Us out of Darkness

As Mass began on the first Sunday in Advent at St. Mary Church in Evanston, IL, we sang this prayer: Lead us to your light; lead us out of darkness.

Beautiful music filled the church, and the words of the pastor's reflections in the bulletin continued the theme of light.

"We find ourselves seeking peace, seeking joy, and seeking the life that has been promised to us by God. We cry out to God, 'Lead us to your light. Lead us out of darkness. Come Jesus come.' This is what we must remember in these troubled times, that God is with us in our time of trials and tribulations. In this time of waiting and in this time of expectation, we continue to travel as a people out of darkness to the light of Christ."

*Fr. Kevin McCray*

While in Chicago for the weekend, I visited the Art Institute and saw the 18th century Neapolitan crèche that is displayed only at Christmas. The nearby galleries featured European religious art and a special exhibit through Jan. 3 of "Doctrine and Devotion," art of the religious orders in the Spanish Andes. "The 13 paintings by South American artists from the 17th through 19th century introduce visitors to the Catholic orders at work in the Spanish Andes as they vied for devotees and dominion." How fortunate I was to spend the first Sunday of Advent taking in the beautiful art.

### God Waits for me in the Darkness.

The theme of light also penetrated the annual Women's Advent Retreat sponsored by my Parish, Good Shepherd Catholic in Madison. Held the Friday evening before Advent, its theme was "Journey to the Light" and attracted nearly 200 women. The promotion for the

event said, "Give yourself the gift of this beautiful evening of reflection."

The St. James Church basement looked lovely with each table decorated and hosted by a parishioner who invited others to join her to share food, drink, and conversation while musicians performed on the stage. The program featured reflections and songs in both Spanish and English. All were welcome, whether they were parish members or not, whether they registered on their own or were invited by a table host. As we left, we were given a bookmark with the prayer/reflection: God Waits for me in the Darkness.

### **Well Attended**

Two hundred was also the number that the Columbia North Vicariate welcomed at its fall meeting which was co-hosted by the All Saints CCW. Carol Brennan reported a possible record attendance although she suggested that "back in the day they probably had a couple hundred as well. I believe for MDCCW conventions they would have 200-400 and for NCCW convention they would have over 1,000."

The "big draw" was Janie Jason, renown speaker and author of the best-selling book, *The Littlest Christmas Tree*.

Carol credited their pastor, Fr. David Greenfield, for encouraging them to publicize. They sent out fliers, "Light Up Your Life with Love, Laughter, and Janie Jasin," to all vicariate parishes as well as surrounding Protestant churches and Catholic churches in the neighboring diocese. The local newspapers and Catholic Herald included articles, and they put an ad in the shopper. Catholic teachers were encouraged to attend the evening event.

Carol summed it up, "Fr. David seems to always encourage us to do more. Anyway, the evening turned out great thanks to the many ladies volunteering for various jobs and for several guys who came and helped serve and clean up."

### **Catholic Herald Articles**

If you missed the MDCCW convention, you can read about it in the June 29 and July 13 issues. The Nov. 29 and 30 and Dec. 6 issues feature articles on NCCW convention and MDCCW news. Thank you, Mary Uhler, editor, for her excellent leadership with the Catholic Herald.

### **In Gratitude**

How blessed and grateful we are to know and serve with each other. Again, I thank Karen Gramann for her design work and for distributing the newsletter.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!

### **Jane Grinde**

Editor

# 2017 National Council of Catholic Women Convention Review Highlights

## MDCCW Member Reflections

Five of our members joined more than 600 other women from around the county at this year's national convention in Dallas in September. Its theme was "Catholic Women: Living the Joy of the Gospel."

Participating in the 97th annual convention were Co-Presidents Ellen Martin, Westfield, and Suzanne Koch, Berlin; President-Elect Bernadette Schafer, Lancaster; Jefferson Vicariate President Judy Lyons, Fort Atkinson; and newly installed Milwaukee Province Director Carol Brennan, Berlin.

Co-Presidents Ellen Martin and Suzanne Koch share some of their reflections of the convention in their column on page 1 of this newsletter. The Nov. 30 issue of the Catholic Herald includes a review of the convention, and the NCCW website ([nccw.org](http://nccw.org)) includes a media release that sums up the convention. Following are edited personal reflections from our members who attended.

### **Judy Lyons, Jefferson Vicariate CCW President**

This was my first NCCW Convention, but I thought I needed to attend to see more of the "big picture" of CCW. And, boy did !!! I especially enjoyed meeting other women involved in this very special work that we do. The convention was well organized and fun.

The presentations/keynote speakers were outstanding and included the women's role in the church. Inspiring speakers included:

- Stacy Tomlinson who shared her faith journey and the work she is doing in the missionary field;

- Dale Recinetta who spoke about his death row ministry to convicts and prison workers-- an amazing ministry and one with which I had little familiarity.
- Mother Susan Catherine Kennedy who founded the Daughters of Divine Hope in Texas, a religious order that is open to women 25 and older.

There was an especially useful presentation on Mentoring within our vicariates and local groups. I expect to implement some of the suggestions for our vicariate. The national organization provides numerous and excellent training resources.

The Masses and prayers were very meaningful for me. Again, just seeing the solidarity was amazing. I like worshiping with these folks and being part of that. I also appreciated the great respect and caring that was shown across the board.

The biggest take-away for me was that we are all connected and basically dealing with the same issues on the local level. I know that it is worth the time and effort we all put into it. I am determined to attend the next convention in Pittsburgh, PA, Aug. 29 – Sept. 1.

### **Bernadette Shafer, MDCCW President-Elect**

I was most impressed by the beautiful Masses offered every day at the convention. Two bishops and many priests concelebrated the Masses. Choirs from the area, including a high school choir, provided the music. I found it very uplifting to be a participant along with all the other women in attendance.

It's amazing and inspiring to hear about the projects NCCW supports and the good work it



does through partnership with Catholic Relief Services and Cross Catholic Outreach. One of these is the Box of Joy program, a ministry of Cross Catholic Outreach. Toys, school supplies, and other useful items are packed into boxes and sent to children in developing countries. I brought back information about this program to our vicariate. We will be packing boxes at our fall meeting and sending them to children who may not receive any other gift for Christmas.

Dale Recinella, who works in prison ministry, spoke on the topic *Can the Joy of the Gospel Penetrate the Darkness of our Prisons and Death Rows?* He talked about how difficult it is to be Catholic in prison because they are bombarded with messages against the Catholic Church. He said the families of prisoners are in a kind of prison on the outside. They don't talk about it because they don't feel safe talking about it. He told a heart-wrenching story about the conversion of a prisoner who was kept in solitary confinement because he was so dangerous. After becoming a Catholic, he said, "This is the first good decision I've made in my life." Eighteen months later, he was put into the general population. I think this talk made the biggest impression because it demonstrated that there is room for joy even in the darkest places.

### **Suzanne Koch, MDCCW Co-President**

What I really enjoyed about this year's convention was that all three commission sessions (spirituality, leadership, and service) involved all the commission members, not just the chairperson. There were many lighthearted skits and videos, and some even reminded me of the great skits and "outside-the-box thinking" we had at our 2017 MDCCW convention.

Leadership, Training, and Development (LTD) Live was a particularly entertaining segment, and my notetaking yielded the following: People don't always want to change what they are doing. They should ask themselves "do I still do the same things as I've always done?"; "have I updated or enhanced my job?"; "do I prevent others from participating?"; "would others

know my job (if I couldn't continue to serve)?"; "is there another job out there for me?" All very thoughtful questions we need to ask ourselves and honestly answer.

Mentorship was a big topic at convention; and again, I thought of how we have been making that a priority in our diocese and spreading the word about the need for mentoring the new person who took your position at the diocesan, vicariate, and affiliate levels. Particularly inspiring was this quote we were given by Steven Spielberg: "The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves."

### **Worldwide Mission**

The World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO, pronounced "wook wo") has had a presence at convention since "Friends of NCCCW for WUCWO" was established in 2002. NCCW formed the group to help support our representative to WUCWO as there is much travelling required for this position currently held by our new NCCW President Maribeth Stewart. I had never taken the time to go to the convention's WUCWO meeting, but did this year and liked what I heard. WUCWO's aim is to "promote the presence, participation and co-responsibility of Catholic women in society and the Church in order to enable them to fulfill their mission of evangelization and to work for human development." Annual dues are \$25. Please check them out at on the NCCW website under WUCWO.

A speaker I especially found inspiring was Chaplain Dale Recinella who, along with his social worker wife, serves in several of Florida's prisons. Among his books are "Now I Walk on Death Row..." and his personal story, "When We Visit Jesus in Prison."

In conclusion, NCCW convention 2017 was a moving, wonderful experience made even better by sharing it with other ladies and religious of the diocese and province. If you've never gone, put it on your bucket list.

## **Carol Brennan, Milwaukee Province Director**

I was grateful to be at convention with women from around the country who have strong faith and a sincere desire to put their faith into action. They are concerned about local, national, and international issues such as human trafficking, pornography, and domestic abuse. They create programs that call attention to these issues and work to find solutions whenever possible. They are involved in pro-life efforts and prison ministry. They raise funds for women who want to enter a religious community but have debt that delays their vocation. (Information about these issues and programs is available at [www.nccw.org](http://www.nccw.org).)

This year the homilies really jumped out at me. Each homily emphasized our convention theme of “97 Years Living the Joy of the Gospel.” I would like to share some of this with you and hope the priests and bishop will forgive me for reducing their homilies to a few sentences.

**Fr. Richard Dawson**, chair of Spiritual Advisors: Pray for the Joy of the Gospel. Because of your energy, works, hardships, this all helps make CCW what it is. Your talent, energy, and enthusiasm for our faith results in our programs. Larger we are stronger, have a deeper faith, and empower each other.”

**Fr. James Stemler**, past chair of Spiritual Advisors: We often don’t feel worthy to serve, but trust God. He knows what He is doing. God is more powerful than any unworthiness we have. Trust and share your story. Love enables us to do what we are called to do.

**Bishop Gregory Kelly**, Dallas: Live the joy of the Gospel. There is humor and laughter in the Bible. Share the joy. We need God’s Grace as children of God to help others.

One convention speaker offered practical advice on being a faithful disciple in stressful situations, like waiting in a slow line. “Remember that God wants you where you are

at this time; your presence might be important to someone else.”

Members of NCCW find ways to bring joy to others, like the Boxes of Joy sent to children in developing countries. They celebrate their faith at beautiful Masses offered every day at the convention and gather outside early in the morning to pray the rosary. After spending several days with them, I came home feeling uplifted and grateful for the friendships that developed during those days.

## **NCCW Convention Keynote Speaker Focuses on Joy**

### **Mary Rice Hasson**

Reflections by Carol Brennan

Mary Rice Hasson gave a keynote address on “How to be a Joyful Catholic Woman in a Post-Christian World. A Notre Dame Law School graduate, she directs the Catholic Women’s Forum, an initiative that responds to Pope Francis’ call for Catholic women to assume a higher profile within the Church.

Hasson thanked us for being Catholic women because it’s a tough time to be a woman and it’s a tough time to be a Catholic woman. Our culture tells us we need to be the same as men; confuses us about women, sexuality and motherhood; gets in the way of our fulfillment as women; and tells us we lead oppressive lives.

### **Created with Equal Dignity**

However, we are created with equal dignity and in the likeness of God. As women, we bring our own gifts. Our culture says we are unfulfilled because we don’t demand enough, but we get fulfillment when we give to others.

CCW is a testimony to belonging, being rooted in something bigger than ourselves. We witness to a world that is based on data and numbers, but as Catholics we believe truth comes from God and that the Catholic church is a source of Truth and Grace.

People want joy. How do we be a “joyful” woman? “Joy is at the intersection of faith, hope, and love.”

**Faith.** Have trust and faith in God to increase faith and have joy. Take your struggles and sit with God. Pray for those struggling. Let God do what needs to be done.

**Hope.** Trust. Walk with the Lord. Bring your real self and difficulties to God and trust Him to take care of things.

**Love.** To Love and forgive is always a challenge. God is forgiving us continually. How can we not give and forgive more?

Don't discount the good that will come from your struggles. Haddon thanked us for being Catholic Women, whose lives are filled with love and service and who have the ability to trust God.

This extremely intelligent, educated, and successful woman has also experienced personal challenges. At age 40 her husband was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. During her 6th pregnancy she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She says whatever happens, “Trust God. Whatever happens God loves us and will bring good.” She is certainly an example of Faith, Hope and Love.

## Officers Installed

### Two from Wisconsin!

Maribeth Stewart from the New Haven, CT, diocese, was installed as the new president and announced her theme as “NCCW: Reflecting the Joy of God...” with a different emphasis each of her two years.

Also installed were Jean Kelly from the Milwaukee Archdiocese as president-elect and our own Carol Brennan, past MDCCW president from All Saints Parish, Berlin, as Milwaukee Province Director.

NCCW has divided the nation into provinces or districts and currently has 26 active Provinces. The Milwaukee Province is made up of the state of Wisconsin and its five dioceses. Some Provinces are made up of several states.

Province directors are part of the NCCW Board which meets three times a year as a group. They also participate on commissions, special committees, and numerous conference calls.

### Director's Role

As a liaison from the NCCW to the arch/diocesan CCWs in the state, Carol is responsible for communicating regularly to all the presidents and presidents-elect through semi-annual province meetings, emails, phone calls, and by attending the arch/diocesan conventions and special events as schedule permits. She also writes a column for the newsletters.

Carol said, “I will be promoting NCCW and keeping us all informed and connected and sharing programs that the vicariates and parishes can use for their members to put their faith into action and be the hands and feet of Jesus.”

National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) was organized in 1920 by the U.S. Catholic bishops to be an umbrella to unite all Catholic Women's organizations and all Catholic women. Its mission is to “Support, empower and educate all Catholic women in Spirituality, Leadership and Service...”

## NCCW 2017 Resolutions

**Cultural Diversity Resolved,** That NCCW members will celebrate the diverse gifts that women of all cultures bring when participating in Council meetings and programs; and **Resolved,** That the Spirituality Commission will offer resources on the NCCW website and in NCCW publications with information to help members develop an appreciation of the gifts of each Council member

by incorporating a celebration of cultural diversity into the NCCW structure.

**Mentoring Resolved**, That NCCW will encourage the utilization of a mentoring program at all levels of the organization which encourages the mentee to act outside her comfort zone while trying new tasks; and **Resolved**, That NCCW will encourage all levels of council to utilize the mentoring program by publishing articles about mentoring in *Catholic Woman* magazine and *Connect*.

**RESPITE Resolved**, That each Province promote the RESPITE Program materials within their Arch/Diocesan Councils to offer relief and renewal to the family caregiver.

**Legislative Advocacy Resolved**, That NCCW members become aware of pertinent legislative issues by signing up with their State Catholic conference, accessing the USCCB website and the sites of other Catholic agencies and organizations concerned with proposed and pending legislation; and **Resolved**, That NCCW members study legislative issues, read and act on legislative alerts, becoming aware of actions taken by the USCCB that pertain to Catholic Church ethics and doctrine; and **Resolved**, That NCCW members work with their local, state, and federal legislators through visits, letters, phone calls and emails to advocate for legislative processes and lawmaking that will positively impact the moral character of individuals in our society and protect human dignity.

**United to Pray for our Country Resolved**, That the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) promote praying every day at a convenient time, the *Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel*, the *Our Father*, *Hail Mary* and *Glory Be* for the intentions of the safety of the United States, protection from evil actions and a return to a godly nation; and **Resolved**, That NCCW makes available these intentions and prayers on its website, [www.nccw.org](http://www.nccw.org).

**Return of Lapsed Catholics Resolved**, That NCCW members and affiliates request Masses for the intention of the return of lapsed Catholics throughout their arch/dioceses; that said Masses be publicized in arch/diocesan and parish bulletins; and that members attend said Masses whenever possible; **Resolved**, That members will continue to evangelize by their example of living the joy of the Gospel and being active in the Church; **Resolved**, That NCCW members and affiliates use the NCCW resource “We are Called to Witness” ([www.nccw.org](http://www.nccw.org)) and access additional resources at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).