

## President's Message

### Convention Thoughts: Sowers of Faith

The Madison Diocese once again was well represented at the National Council of Catholic Women Convention (NCCW) in September by the following members: Ellen Martin, Carolyn Zentner, Mary Stasek, all from the Columbia North Vicariate; Bernadette Schaefer, Grant Vicariate; Coreen Marklein, Sauk Vicariate; and me from West Dane Vicariate.

The theme of this convention was "Be the Voice of Catholic Women: Sowers of Hope." The NCCW Spiritual Advisor reminded us that "none of us follow the Lord by ourselves, we need each other to grow ourselves, and help one another." We are the "tender face of God, we welcome rather than exclude. The church needs each and every one of us."

We are the "Voice of Catholic Women." It is our responsibility to speak for the homeless, the poor, and the downtrodden; for we are the hands and feet of Jesus. It is important for us to leave our comfort zone to make our world a better place. You should never underestimate the work that you do. Every time you welcome a newcomer to your parish, support a local charity, serve on a committee you are sharing your God given talents .

Thank you for realizing the importance of sending a representative to the NCCW convention. Please call on the convention attendees if you would like further information on what we learned from this experience. I encourage you to go to the [nccw.org](http://nccw.org) website for more in-depth and excellent reading information on topics discussed at the convention. If you need a program for an affiliate meeting, consider reporting on a topic

from the NCCW Website. We came back with a wealth of knowledge from learning how to streamline our meetings to an update on CROSS International and Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Did you realize that 97 percent of what is donated to CRS goes directly to the people they are helping? These are the two international charities that NCCW encourages us to donate to.

It is my hope that you will make plans to attend the 2016 NCCW Convention in Indiana.

The following beautifully written statement can be found in the program *We Are Called to Witness* (available free at [nccw.org](http://nccw.org)). Our work in the NCCW is an opportunity for women throughout the country to come together in a spirituality of communion — one mind, one heart — to evangelize the truth of the message of the Gospel through the fulfilling of our mission.

Do you really believe our mission statement? Working together, side by side will enable us to help each other to support, empower, and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership, and service. You are a member of a Catholic organization that will enable you to respond with Gospel values to the needs of the church and society in the modern world?

Be proud that you belong to NCCW through your local organization of Council of Catholic Women. Evangelize — Spread the word. The Lord has given us work to do!

Wishing you all a wonderful Advent Season.

**Rosa Ropers**  
President

## From Our Spiritual Advisor

### Be a Sunbeam in Our World

St. Francis once said, "A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows." To me that means even a little kindness, an encouraging word, or simple smile can drive away some of the sadness of the world. In other words, you and I have the potential to make a difference.

Many people seem to think one person is so insignificant that they really can't change much of the darkness and shadows of our contemporary world. St. Francis reminds us we are that sunbeam. We do make a difference. We have an impact on the lives of other people one person at a time. If we are an individual of light, we can change the life of another. If we can be that sunbeam as individuals, imagine how much good we can accomplish together as members of the Council of Catholic Women. Through this organization we as members can bring a great deal of light into our world.

We must remember God is always working through us. What we can't accomplish on our own to make the lives of other people better, God can. The Holy Spirit is with us to help us be the Lord's instruments in the world. With God all things are possible.

God bless you for being a sunbeam in our world.

**Msgr. Duane Moellenberndt**  
Spiritual Advisor

## From Our Province Director

### Challenge to Increase Membership

Greetings and the Blessings of God to all of you. Our Lady of Good Counsel, pray for us.

It is with anticipation, joy, and humility that I begin my term as your Province Director. Thank you for putting your confidence in me. With God's help I will do my best to represent our Wisconsin dioceses well.

As Province Director, I am on the Board of Directors of the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW). During my term, I will be traveling to Washington, D.C., twice each year for board meetings. We also have board meetings at the annual convention. As my predecessor Jean Kelly has done during the past two years, I will bring our message back to you. I will be working to support our NCCW mission: to support, educate, and empower all Catholic women in Spirituality, Leadership, and Service.

My goals for the next two years are to promote the resolutions adopted at the NCCW annual convention, the NCCW website, and NCCW programs and work to promote membership. Resolutions (see page 8) deal with consecrated life, the persecution of Christians in the Middle East, influence of the media on marriage and family.

The NCCW Website [www.nccw.org](http://www.nccw.org) features our excellent programs, including Media: What is the Message? and We Are Called to Witness, Women Healing the Wounds.

We all know that our basic rights of freedom of religion are being challenged. We need a voice to speak for us, and NCCW is that voice. This organization is part of who we are. Through affiliation with the U.S. Council of Catholic

Bishops, NCCW works to protect the God-given rights of all Catholic women. Our memberships in NCCW are vital to keeping our organization able to be that voice.

I am asking those parishes that are not currently affiliate members of NCCW to fill out an application and send it in. I am also asking for all women who are able to do so, to apply for Individual Membership. Individual Membership is only \$60.00 annually; that is just \$5.00 per month. To make things exciting, we have a Membership Challenge contest. Each member who signs up a new member will have the chance to win a full registration including banquet and hotel for the 2016 convention, plus up to \$400 travel expense. There is a "One Member-One Chance" form that must be used for the contest and be submitted by May 15, 2016. If you are not able to join now, please pray for NCCW.

I am issuing a challenge to each diocese to increase Affiliate Memberships by 25 percent and Individual Membership by 25 percent by the time of the 2016 National Convention. My hope is that all of us can reach that goal and even exceed it. We are "The Voice of Catholic Women: Sowers of Hope"

**Lucille Brandner**

Director, Province of Milwaukee

## Leadership Commission

### Another NCCW Resource

*The INTRODUCTION TO NCCW: The National Council of Catholic Women* is an 11-page program packed with useful information. It can be found in its entirety at [nccw.org](http://nccw.org) at the Convention 2015 site. This can be used for new

members and affiliates, but it is also a great refresher for established councils. It tells about our history, who we are, how our organization is structured, and what we are doing. It includes many resources and programs.

### **We Need You...And You Need Us**

It goes on to say, you, the individual member and parish affiliates are the backbone or foundation of CCW. Your leaders develop programs and resources, but you use them and sponsor the programs and service projects. You are the ones who get the work done. We need to work together, share our talents, and support each other as Catholic Women.

### **Together, We Are the Voice of Catholic Women**

- We promote an enriched prayer and spiritual life.
- We have a united voice in legislative advocacy.
- We stay up-to-date on Catholic women's concerns through a quarterly magazine and a monthly e-Newsletter.
- We share proven programs to use in your own parish community.
- We take advantage of opportunities to be of service.
- We form a real sisterhood of Catholic women.
- We spread the Joy of Gospel.

**We need each other...EVERY CATHOLIC WOMAN...to do God's work. Join Us!"**

Use your *We Are Called to Witness* program for Advent and Christmas ideas to share your faith. Use "Keep Christ in Christmas" car magnets and yard signs.

You are never too old to serve the Lord! PRAY LOVE SERVE AND SHARE GOD'S LOVE WITH A SMILE!

**Carol Brennan**

Leadership Chair

## Service Commission Opportunities

I want to encourage you all to visit the National Council of Catholic Women's website, [nccw.org](http://nccw.org), and download a copy of *Women Healing the Wounds*. This document contains over 50 pages of information on domestic violence against women and answers questions you may have on why we as Catholic women should be aware of this issue and how we should respond. Many of the pages are designed to be used independently, such as a flyer that you can customize with your own local women's shelter information. It is intended to be displayed in women's restrooms and other areas where their abusers cannot go.

As many of you are still saving stamps and cards, NCCW Leadership Chair Jane Carter reminds us that the holidays bring additional cards and stamps that can be used for fund-raising by charitable organizations.

The Sisters of the Holy Cross use the money raised from the **stamps** to benefit their Ministry With the Poor fund. Stamps should be trimmed with a 1/4"–1/2" border. Do not try to remove them from the envelope! Send the stamps to the following address.

### Office of Development

**Stamp Room 407 Bertrand Hall – St Mary's Notre Dame, IN 46556-5000**

The children at St. Jude's Ranch cut and paste and use the cards to create new cards which are then sold. **All card fronts** are needed — Birthdays, Valentines, Thanksgiving, Anniversary, Get well, and of course, Christmas! Send **card fronts** (with no handwritten notes)

**St. Jude's Ranch for Children**  
100 St Jude's St.  
Boulder City, NV 89005

**Sandra Hull**  
Service Chair

*Start by doing what is necessary, then do what is possible; suddenly you are doing the impossible.*

— St. Francis of Assisi

## Rural Life SPIRITUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE Exploring the Vocation of the Agricultural Leader

In the past few years, the Catholic community has placed a significant emphasis on developing an understanding of the vocation of the business leader in a changing and dynamic global economy. But there is also a need for leadership, informed by faith, in an equally important area that's shifting just as rapidly as the business sector: food and agriculture. Up until this point, the vocation of the modern agricultural leader has been underdeveloped, despite the bounty of related wisdom from the Catholic tradition.

In just a year's time, Catholic Rural Life had partnered with the National Farmers Union, the University of St. Thomas, and the St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity to get the project up and running. The organizations presented a proposal to Cardinal Turkson (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace leader), and the cardinal gave his blessing to partner in the initiative.

The first leg of the effort took place this fall. A national symposium entitled "Vocation of the

Agricultural Leader: Faith, Food, and Environment” was held in St. Paul November 5-7. The symposium brought together agricultural leaders, theologians, and environmentalists to address the challenges facing the farming community today. An international symposium in Rome will follow the year after.

The developments that emerge from both symposiums will be used to create a comprehensive set of resources to help agricultural leaders around the world navigate their vocation in the shifting landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Much of the conversation focused on the impact economic, technological, and cultural changes have on agricultural practices and rural development, often in ways that don't promote the common good or the wellbeing of local communities and farmers. The symposiums developed practical solutions rooted in Christian wisdom by relying on the expertise of both food and agricultural leaders and theologians.

This collaborative effort is long overdue — especially considering that food issues affect literally everyone on the planet. If we don't come together to address problems facing the agricultural sector, we run the risk of failing to meet the ever-increasing demand for food production using sound environmental approaches and ethical models.

At the symposium, farmers and rural residents actively engaged with people they don't normally hear from in their daily lives, and academics and activists will have the opportunity to learn from the practical experience of the people most directly connected to the farms.

Our farmers have a lot of challenges and a lot of responsibilities. They're called to develop strong rural communities, work year-round in

ever changing climates to support their families, and also share in the responsibility of feeding the world. Faith allows farmers to survive and thrive through the ups and downs of each year.

**Barb Seamandel**

Rural Life Chair

## **Spirituality Commission**

### **Preparing for Advent**

In preparing ourselves for the birth of Jesus, we might like to think about something special that we could do. Perhaps we could do extra Scriptural reading at a particular time each day. Or, maybe we could refrain from one food that we like to munch on that's not exactly good for us. Don't just accumulate it until Christmas ; stop eating it! Choose something else that's good for you to replace it if you really have to.

Here is an Advent prayer that I found from Loyola Press back in 2012, that you could say each day. It's short and easy to learn. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do. Have a joyous Advent!

God of Love,  
Your Son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.  
He is a sign of your love.  
Help us walk in that love during the weeks of  
Advent,  
As we wait and prepare for his coming.  
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior.  
Amen.

**Mary Stasek**

Spirituality Chair

## Legislative SPIRITUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE

### **Saving Our Life and Freedom**

It was my pleasure to attend the NCCW Convention on behalf of the Madison Diocese and the Sauk Vicariate. The convention was filled with wonderful speakers, uplifting messages, and great liturgies.

One speaker, however, shared some very disturbing news on the "Right to Life." The National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) has been very strong and passionate supporters of the Right to Life. Now, there is a very strong movement sweeping across America that is affecting not just the unborn but individuals who are faced with a terminal illness or long-term health conditions such as ALS and Alzheimer's.

Richard Doerflinger, associate director of the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), spoke on "Fighting Assisted Suicide: The Life and Freedom We Save May be Our Own."

The Hemlock Society USA was a national right-to-die organization formed in 1980. Since that date, the organization changed its name to *End of Life Choices* in 2002, and in 2003 merged with another organization to become *Compassion & Choices*.

On November 1, 2014, Brittany Lauren Maynard took her own life "when the time seemed right" after being diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. Organizations such as Compassion & Choices provided financial support on her journey as she moved from California to Oregon where assisted suicide was legal.

Washington, Vermont, Oregon, and Montana have legalized physician-assisted suicide. California also approved physician-assisted suicide in October 2015. New Mexico passed physician-assisted suicide in 2014, but the Court of Appeals ruled against the decision in

September 2015. Bills have been introduced in 25 jurisdictions including Wisconsin.

In most instances, the physician decides who qualifies, who is terminal and controls all reporting. Why should we worry?

- Many times individuals are clinically depressed, believe they have lost their dignity, and believe they are "a burden on others."
- Witnesses may have a financial motive in the patient's death, i.e. family, heirs, or health facility. It may be a result of elder abuse in society.
- Individuals may have governmental insurance or no insurance at all, have only Medicaid and/or Medicare, and are unable to seek treatment alternatives to increase their quality of life, provide better pain management, etc.
- Government has removed legal protections afforded to other's lives, which include removal of provisions in California to protect a hospital from denying assisted suicide.
- Median age is 71 (less than one percent are under 35).

Why must we pray against assisted-suicide and contact our legislators? At some point in time, our physician may make a decision that affects our life. We may not be able to make a decision on our own, and others will make a life-and-death decision for us, whether because of pain, suffering, mental incapacity, or lack of or limited medical insurance. The decision to survive and fight to live may not be in our hands but rather be an economic decision. As Mr. Doerflinger noted, "The life and freedom we save may be our own."

**Coreen S. Marklein**  
Legislative Chair

## From the Editor

### What do you want from your newsletter?

As a former editor of several publications, I often wonder how many people actually read newsletters. If you are like me, you don't always read the publications the day you get it—whether sent by regular mail or email. And, sometimes, you may even forget to read it.

Karen Gramann does an excellent job of formatting the newsletter to make it readable, but even that doesn't guarantee readership. Those of you who are reading this, please tell us what you like and don't like about the newsletter — content, format, and delivery. Talk with others in your council about the newsletter and give your suggestions. Email me at [janegrinde@gmail.com](mailto:janegrinde@gmail.com). I will share the results in the next newsletter.

Last month I emailed MDCCW board members about Advent. Spirituality Chair Mary Stasek, in her beautiful message, suggests giving up something for Advent in preparation for the birth of Jesus. As a child, my mother told us the same thing. As an adult, I have the luxury of enriching my faith during Advent and am fortunate that my parish, Good Shepherd in Madison, has an Adult Formation program on Proverbs this season. Another program will start in Lent.

Our parish also has a wonderful retreat just for women on the first Friday evening of December. It will feature a time for reflection, music, and refreshments including wine. The women will gather at tables so they can get together to know each other better. (Unfortunately, I will be taking care of my one and only grandchild, nine-month-old Sonja Jane, in Minneapolis so will miss this opportunity.)

Sue Koch suggests going to Dynamic Catholic web site (<http://dynamiccatholic.com/year-of-mercy/best-advent-ever/>) and signing up for

the daily messages. It is an initiative of Matthew Kelley. I signed up!

Rosa Ropers brings out her favorite books about what Christmas is all about and reread them. She said, "These are books that are special to me as they hold memories of my family and Christmas stories of others and all they did to welcome baby Jesus. Many of these books were gifts given to me by people special in my life, and when read, I remember these caring people."

## Save the Date for 2016 MDCCW Convention

Ellen Martin and Mona Matijevich are co-chairing the 2016 convention to be hosted by the Columbia North Vicariate June 7 and 8 at All Saints Church, Berlin. The spring newsletter will include details and the registration form.

## Day of Renewal a Success!

Those that attended the Day of Renewal co-hosted by Madison DCCW and the Madison Catholic Women's Club held October 12 at St. Peter Church, Madison, experienced insightful speakers and musicians, good food, and the joy of sharing their faith with others, said MDCCW President Rosa Ropers.

Both groups displayed information about their organization, showing how their work is important to the church and community. The displays featured the history and work of the Women's Care Center in Madison and The Donkey Project which helps women in Ghana to support their families. Each of the charities received \$836 from the proceeds of the day. Ropers hopes that members of the MDCCW and Madison Catholic Women's Club will continue to support the work of both the Care Center and the Donkey Project in the future. Contributions can be sent to MDCCW Treasurer, Joan Slate.

## National Council of Catholic Women

### 2015 Convention Resolutions

NCCW delegates approved four resolutions at the convention in Orlando in September. They are included below. For ideas on how to act on these resolutions, go to the following website: [http://www.nccw.org/Public/Resolutions/Action\\_Points.aspx](http://www.nccw.org/Public/Resolutions/Action_Points.aspx)

#### Consecrated Life

Purpose: To celebrate and Support Religious Vocations to the Consecrated Life.

Resolved, That National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) members participate in and offer assistance with open houses, tours, and receptions held in convents, abbeys, monasteries, and religious houses;

Resolved, That NCCW members join religious apostolates on special service projects such as assisting the elderly, ministering to the poor and homeless, and caring for the less fortunate; and

Resolved, That NCCW members support vocations to the consecrated life through the offering of prayers, spiritual bouquets, and appropriate gifts.

#### Influence of the Media on Marriage & Family

Purpose: To provide information to the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) members about the increasingly fast-paced use of technology by the media that can be either beneficial or destructive to marriage and the family structure, depending on its use.

Resolved, That NCCW members look at all technology through the eyes of our Catholic faith and moral values and use resources such as those listed below to

assure the content of information that they and their families are engaged in is appropriate and helps to strengthen their marriages and family structures, allowing them to grow in their relationship to God.

Resolved, That NCCW members get involved in a conversation with their families and friends by talking to them about the inappropriate, unsolicited, and unwanted content they are, and will be, exposed to by providing information consistent with our Catholic faith.

#### NCCW Website [www.nccw.org](http://www.nccw.org)

Purpose: To encourage members of the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) to use and promote the NCCW website, an important vehicle of communication for both NCCW Individual and Affiliate Members.

Resolved, That all NCCW members and affiliations actively promote frequent use of the NCCW website;

Resolved, That the leaders at all levels of Council encourage their members to print/download programs and resources as they become available; and

Resolved, That the NCCW website be utilized as a marketing and outreach tool for membership development and leadership training.

#### End Persecution of Christians in the Middle East

Purpose: To promote daily recitation of the Angelus Prayer for the intention of bringing an end to the persecution of Christians in the Middle East, especially Iraq and Syria, by invoking the powerful intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary.

Resolved, That the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) Board and members promote daily praying of the

Angelus Prayer for the intention of bringing an end to the persecution of suffering Christians in the Middle East through the powerful intercession of our Blessed Mother, Mary; and

Resolved, That NCCW makes available through its website the Angelus Prayer\* for distribution to pastors, local parishes, schools, CCD classes, Adult Ed. classes, and their families and ask them to pray it a least once daily.

### **\*Angelus Prayer**

The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary:

And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord: Be it done unto me according to Thy word.

Hail Mary . . .

And the Word was made Flesh: And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary . . .

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

### **NCCW Leaders from Wisconsin**

Congratulations to Lucille Brandner, new Milwaukee province director representing the five arch/diocesan Councils of Catholic Women in Wisconsin. Lucille is from Superior diocese and a member of Holy Rosary Parish, Medford. She has served the council in offices at the parish, deanery, and diocesan levels. The director position rotates among the five dioceses in Wisconsin, so every 10 years, the director is from the Madison Diocesan CCW.

Thank you and congratulations to Jean Kelly who served previously as province director and was elected NCCW secretary this summer. Jean is from the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women.

### **More on the NCCW Convention**

To learn what went on at the national convention, go to the [nccw.org](http://nccw.org) website. It includes presentation information from the keynote and workshop speakers, as well as more information on the resolutions passed. It is wonderful sources of information! (*editorial comment from jlg*)

## **MDCCW at the NCCW Convention**

Jean Kelly, newly elected NCCW secretary from Elm Grove, WI, joins representatives attending the convention from the Madison Diocese. From left to right are Bernadette Schaefer, Lancaster; Coreen Marklien, Baraboo; Mary Stasek, Green Lake; Rosa Ropers, Waunakee; Carolyn Zentner, Green Lake; Kelly; and Ellen Martin, Westfield.