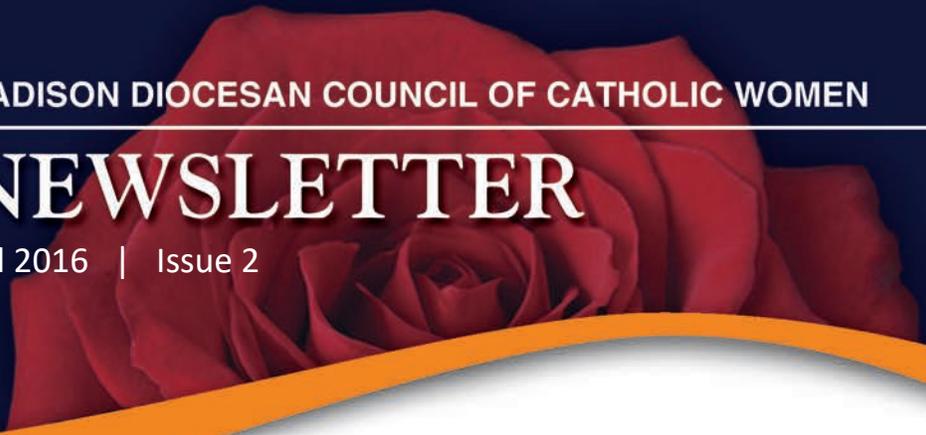




# NEWSLETTER

Fall 2016 | Issue 2



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## Message from Our Co-Presidents

### Let Us Build a Strong Foundation

With the theme of Women on Fire for the Lord, our 62nd annual convention in June marked the beginning of our co-presidency. Nearly 140 women attended the convention, including 29 first-timers, at All Saints Church in Berlin. celebrate our 62nd Annual Convention.

We had two powerful speakers. Marianne Skrobiak, a charismatic leader from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, gave the keynote and presented at a shareshop. Mary-Kate Martin, a young woman originally from a Jefferson Vicariate parish, told about feeling the call of Mother Teresa to go abroad and help out the less fortunate. She began an orphanage in Swaziland especially for young wayward girls affected by rape, poverty, and prostitution. Her use of video with the girls speaking about their past and dreams for the future met with many a tearful eye among the convention attendees.

Later in June, our MDCCW hosted a reception following the ordination of Fr. Joseph Baker at St. Maria Goretti in Madison. About 300 attended the wonderful event. Thank you to all who helped and donated money and food.



Ellen Martin and Sue Koch

In early September, 11 of us from MDCCW traveled by bus with women from the dioceses of La Crosse and Superior to participate in the 96th convention of the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) in Indianapolis. Over 600 women from all over the country met for four days and were inspired by wonderful speakers who focused on the theme of "Catholic Women: Instruments of Mercy." We were provided with information to take back to our parishes and vicariates from the three commissions. Each day, we had Mass which filled our souls and bodies with the words of Jesus.

The NCCW has worked very hard these past years to get out of debt. The good news is that it is now out of debt. But, the only way NCCW will be able to continue in the right direction is by bringing back membership. Therefore, it has lowered the cost of membership to \$50.

One thing that was discussed at the national convention was something we already knew. You parish ladies and

*Continued on next page.*

### NCCW MISSION STATEMENT

The National Council of Catholic Women acts through its membership to support, empower, and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership, and service. NCCW programs respond with gospel values to the needs of the Church and society in the modern world.

# Rise, LET US BE ON OUR WAY.

## Co-Presidents' Message

*Continued from page 1.*

your ladies groups are the foundation of the structure that is the National Council of Catholic Women. The other levels of the structure — vicariate, diocese, national, and international — cannot thrive or survive without you at the most basic level. We need your commitment, your spirit of saying “yes,” and your tooting your horn about the benefits of your council to other churchgoing women in your parish community. Whether you call yourself altar society, ladies sodality, or Catholic women’s club, you are all part of the important job of supporting, empowering, and educating your fellow Catholic women from 18 years to 108 years in spirituality, leadership, and service. Whether at the parish, vicariate, or diocesan level, if there is not a strong backbone of participation by many women, it will not matter if you strive to have the best programs, conventions, and meetings. Let us build a strong foundation to positively influence all the other levels of the organization.

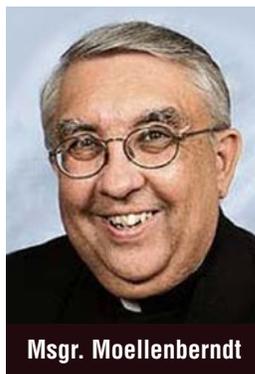
God does not call the qualified; He qualifies those He calls. Just think about the people Jesus chose to carry out His work. His apostles were not the most educated, eloquent speakers from the right families. They were unpolished fishermen. Look at Peter. He was certainly a bit rough around the edges. He rashly cut off a man’s ear, and then actually started swearing and lying that he didn’t know Jesus. But Jesus chose him to be our first pope. Don’t worry that you don’t know what to do or say. Jesus can do big things with each of us if we just say yes as the apostles did.

Good news is that Jefferson Vicariate with the help of Rock/Green Vicariate will be hosting the 63rd Annual MDCCW Convention. So, mark your calendars for June 14 to be in Ft. Atkinson at St. Joseph Parish.

## Sue Koch and Ellen Martin

MDCCW Co-Presidents

\* Please see “Theme of the Co-Presidents” on page 3.”



**Msgr. Moellenberndt**

## From Our Spiritual Advisor

### Wisdom of St. Teresa

Dear Members of the Council of Catholic Women:

The most recent saint canonized in the Catholic Church is Mother Teresa. Declared a saint on

Sept. 4, she is frequently quoted, and her words are profound. St. Teresa is indeed a woman of our time. She lived her life in the manner our Holy Father calls us to live.

As has recently been revealed, she knew great suffering in her spiritual life. St. Teresa said, “Keep in mind that our community is not composed of those who are already saints, but of those who are trying to become saints. Therefore, let us be extremely patient with each other’s faults and failures.”

Please note the word “extremely.” What a comfort to remember these words that we, as well as all members of the Church, are not saints. We are simply on the road. We are a pilgrim people on a journey by God’s grace to heaven. What a challenge in St. Teresa’s words to remember also that we must be patient with the “faults and failures” of other people. As we begin each day, may we call to mind these words of St. Teresa of Kolkata.

This saint for our time also said, “Holiness grows so fast where there is kindness. The world is lost for want of sweetness and kindness. Do not forget we need each other.” Never have truer words been spoken regarding our contemporary age. Our world suffers so greatly because of the loss of kindness. It seems to me that we have forgotten that we need each other even those we don’t like too much.

As members of the Council of Catholic Women, may the kindness and patience of which St. Teresa spoke be the hallmark of our lives. This witness in our daily lives is the best way to draw others to Christ and to the Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.

God bless you,

**Msgr. Duane Moellenberndt**

Spiritual Advisor



**Lucille Brandner**

## From Our Province Director

### NCCW Moving Forward

My Dear Sisters,

This Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy is a special time for all of us as members of the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW). We all do good deeds by serving and praying for others every day. What we would like you to do is record all of those good deeds that you do. Throughout this year, NCCW started counting every work of mercy we perform. We feed the hungry, pray for our friends and family, visit the sick, serve funeral lunches, and the list goes on. Jane Carter is asking us to tally up our works and send to her either by email or regular mail to be added toward the million works. I urge all of us to take part in helping reach this goal. Forms can be found on the NCCW website [www.nccw.org](http://www.nccw.org). Click on the link right in the middle of the home page.

As a member of the NCCW Board of Directors, I bring good news about our organization. We are solvent and moving forward; however, we need your memberships to maintain that momentum. As a way to say thanks to all of you who are current or potential Individual Members, dues have been decreased to \$50.00 annually. We need to increase membership to remain a viable organization. We as the Province of Milwaukee\* have a goal of increasing membership by 25 percent in each diocese by the next NCCW annual convention being held in Dallas, TX, next September. Membership information can be found at [www.nccw.org](http://www.nccw.org). Click on the Membership tab at the top of the page. Join now, and you will receive a new membership packet in addition to the benefits listed on the web page.

If you are a Facebook user, be sure to “like” the National Council of Catholic Women. The NCCW website is improved including more search features. When you become an Individual Member of NCCW, you can log in on the website and have access to your personal information. If you missed an issue of the Connect newsletter, you can download them after logging in. Learn all about the work of the Commissions.

I just want to share this with all of you. You as leaders are leading an organization of volunteers. The fact that people show up speaks volumes as to what we are doing. Employees show up because they are getting paid, but our CCW

sisters show up because of who and what we are. I want you to know that you are doing an awesome job and that any organization — whether it be work, church, family, the country — is run by the people who show up. You are leading volunteers and that has to make you feel pretty good. Jesus was the first leader of volunteers, and look how far they went.

Have a GREAT day and know that all you do matters!

Be sure to mark your calendars for Sept. 6-9, 2017, for the national convention to be held at the Hilton Anatole in Dallas, Texas.

May God give you special blessings as we continue toward Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the start of a New Year.

### Lucille Brandner

Director, Province of Milwaukee

\*The Province of Milwaukee encompasses all of Wisconsin.

## Theme of the Co-Presidents

For the first time, MDCCW has co-presidents. Ellen Martin, a member of Good Shepherd Parish, Westfield, and Suzanne Koch from All Saints Parish, Berlin, chose the theme “Rise, Let Us Be on Our Way” for their two-year term. The theme is taken from the title of a book by St. John Paul II written when he was bishop of Krakow, Poland, during a time of Communist control.

Ellen and Sue want members to add on to the phrase. For example, Sue said, “Let us be on our way to serve the needs of the parish, to get through this problem, to pray more, to help out the elderly person next door, to spare a couple of hours a month to go to my church’s women’s club meeting, be it CCW, altar sodality, Catholic Women’s Club.”

They emphasized that the theme “includes us. Jesus and me and you doing whatever it is we need to be on our way to do. He is always with us in all areas of our lives.”

They are looking forward to visiting all of the vicariates and welcome any suggestions as they lead the MDCCW in growing in membership and representing Catholic women of the diocese.

# Rise, LET US BE ON OUR WAY.

## Leadership Commission

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### NCCW Offers Leadership Resources

As your MDCCW Leadership Commission Chair, I want to thank you for allowing me to represent you at the NCCW Convention held in September in Indianapolis. We were reminded of the quote from Therese of Avila that “Christ has no body but yours here on earth.”

Did you know that NCCW selects three charities through CROSS International each year to encourage their members to support with donations and prayers? Two of them are for projects in Haiti where 80 percent of the people live in poverty. The third charity is St. Joseph Nutrition in Guatemala where life-needed resources of nutrition and hope for orphaned children are provided.

I encourage you to recruit new members. As you do so, go to the website [NCCW.org](http://NCCW.org) for many ideas and information on all levels of council. Each of the levels of — parish, vicariate, diocesan, province and national — relies on each other to be the voice of Catholic women wherever they may live.

The NCCW has an excellent brochure, described below, that can be ordered from NCCW.

**An Introduction to NCCW.** The National Council of Catholic Women was created to provide you with a resource to use in recruiting new parish affiliates and reaching out to groups of Catholic women. Designed to be printed and placed in a folder; the cover sheet can be affixed to the front. It is suggested that several NCCW Membership Brochures (order from the national office) be placed in the front pocket of the folder. This concise look at our organization includes NCCW's mission, structure, history, current programs and an invitation to visit our website and become a part of the Voice of Catholic Women and more. We hope that this resource proves to be an effective part of your outreach and affiliate recruitment initiatives. [An Introduction to NCCW — The National Council of Catholic Women](#)

Please continue to grow your affiliate with new ideas, projects, different ways to conduct a meeting, getting new officers, and how to increase your active member base, and so much more. Resources to help you do this can all be found on the websites: [NCCW.org](http://NCCW.org) and [MDCCW.com](http://MDCCW.com). Please also email me at [rosa.m.ropers@gmail.com](mailto:rosa.m.ropers@gmail.com) for further information.

You indeed are challenged to be the voice of Catholic women wherever you may be.

**Rosa Ropers**  
Leadership Chair

## Spirituality Commission

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### Focus on Faith and Prayer

This was my first time attending a NCCW Convention, and I must say it was very overwhelming meeting so many women of faith from all around the United States. I tried to take notes and listen to the wonderful speakers, but it all goes so fast.

I came away with many ideas that we can do on a local level and share with other women. With the Year of Mercy ending soon, I heard the many works of mercy that our fellow women were doing in their parishes and vicariates. One thing that kept re-sounding was to pray, pray, and to pray more. We cannot expect to take back our country without our many prayers and Rosaries. We need to pray for our Pope, cardinals, bishops, priests, seminarians, and sisters.

To help young women who want to become sisters to pay off their college loans, the Vocation Purse Club has been started. Just like the seminarians, the convents will not take young women until their college debt has been paid off. We Catholic Women can get involved at a local level to help raise money for this worthy program.

A lot of the things convention speaker Beth Mahoney talked about, I was proud to hear that we are already doing on a local and diocesan level. We are involved with the protesting at the abortion clinic in Madison; we support the Women's Care Center in Madison; we support the Hope House for abused women, just to name a few.

I want to thank all the ladies who welcomed me and made me feel part of their team from Wisconsin. I have many wonderful memories and hope more women will want to go and experience this for themselves. Next year, the convention will be in Dallas, TX. Our very own Carol Brennan from Berlin will be sworn in as the new Province Director replacing Lucille Brandner of Medford.

**Mona Matijevich**  
Spirituality Chair

# Service Commission

## More Ideas for Year of Mercy

I am going to focus on a different approach to the subject of service. All of the parishes have done a wonderful job of financially supporting many groups. In this year of mercy, I will give you some choices on how to serve your parishes with their needs. Hope you will find this helpful in your efforts. First is a short article by Chris Heiderscheidt, NCCW Service Commission Chair, on the RESPITE program.

### Begin Respite in Your Parish

Part of our focus this year has been to revive and update the Respite Program NCCW began in 1982. Some members of the Service Commission Committee have been busy updating the Respite Brochure (FREE) and the Respite Manual available for \$10. These resources are now available for you on the [NCCW website](#) and through the NCCW store.

Did you know that only 5 percent of those over age 65 are cared for in nursing homes? While it is a rewarding act of love to care for a family member, one can become exhausted, not only physically but emotionally and mentally. NCCW Respite Program makes it possible for families to continue this act of love by offering the caregiver some time off.

I encourage ALL of you to prayerfully consider implementing the RESPITE program in your parishes. NCCW chose the acronym: RESPITE to stand for Renewal: Spiritual/Temporal. Another way to think of it is that we are caring for those who care for others. What a wonderful opportunity to live out the Gospel as Jesus asks us to love one another.

**Wondering how to begin?** Simply follow these steps:

- 1.) Identify the need in your area.
- 2.) Read the Respite Manual.
- 3.) Select a Respite Project Coordinator.
- 4.) Recruit volunteers.
- 5.) All volunteers must go through their Arch/Diocesan required clearing and background checks and go through training.
- 6.) Yearly, Liability/Volunteer Insurance is paid to NCCW for volunteers to be protected through an insurance policy as low as \$3 a person.

Respite is really a double act of mercy as you take time to sit and visit the elderly while giving the caregiver some time for themselves. What could be more fitting during this Year of Mercy than starting a Respite program in your parish?

*And the king will say to them in reply, "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these, least brothers of mine, you did for me." —Matthew 25:40.*

## Mercy in Motion

Our actions need to authentically reflect God's Mercy. As the Jubilee Year of Mercy continues, here are some resources and reminders on how to show others the mercy of God. Visit the USCCB website of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) at [www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/jubilee-of-mercy/index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/jubilee-of-mercy/index.cfm) to explore the different ways that you can live out that mercy every day!!!

- **Corporal Works of Mercy** are found in the teaching of Jesus and give us a model for how we should treat all others, as if they were Christ in disguise.
- **Spiritual Works of Mercy** guide us to "help our neighbor in their spiritual needs." (USCCA)
- **Mercy with Francis** enables us to explore the "Jubilee" signs of mercy that Pope Francis has done throughout the year.
- **Meditations on Mercy** help us reflect more deeply on God's call to mercy through these monthly scripture reflections.
- **Moments of Mercy** give short monthly suggestions for working mercy in your everyday life.

Looking for a book selection to help with reflecting on mercy? Pope Francis: A Guide to God's Time offers an introduction to the biblical themes Pope Francis sees as being more important and show the Pope living what he preaches, bringing God's love and mercy to those in need (also available in Spanish).

### Barbara K. Seamandel

Service Commission Chair



**Women's Care Center**

An unexpected pregnancy can be a hard thing to face alone. Women's Care Center can help.

- Pregnancy Testing
- Information on All Options
- Ultrasounds to Verify Pregnancy Viability
- Referrals to Medical and Social Services

**Toll-free Helpline: 1-877-908-2341.**

## Good to Know

### Rest in Peace, Sr. Jude



MDCCW lost a faithful follower on June 29, 2016, when Sr. Jude Seaman unexpectedly passed away. Most recently, she had been the president of Columbia North Vicariate and could often be seen out and about the Madison Diocese. She had a strong presence at the June MDCCW convention held at her parish, All Saints, Berlin.

All Saints CCW president Carol Brenna said about her friend St. Jude, “She volunteered for everything and anything — and had a tendency to volunteer others. She realized her physical limitations but would volunteer where she could sit. She had so much enthusiasm and was a wealth of knowledge. She was always trying to evangelize and bring people into or back into the Catholic Church.

“When thinking about if and how to do something, she’d say, ‘We’ll have to pray about it.’ Other favorite sayings of her were: ‘PUSH — Pray Until Something Happens!’ ‘God will provide.’”

#### Obituary for Sister Mary Jude Seaman

Sister Mary Jude Seaman, age 80, of Berlin, was taken into the arms of the Lord on Wednesday, June 29, 2016, at Berlin Memorial Hospital. Sister Jude attended St. Michael’s Catholic School in Berlin and graduated from Good Counsel High School in Chicago, IL. She became a member of the Sisters of St. Felix of Cantilice (Felicians) in the early 50s. She graduated from Loyola University and Northwestern University with Master’s degrees in Theology and Mathematics. Later, she continued her education and became an Associate Pastor. She served in St. Paul, MN; Joliet, IL; and Polonia, WI. Her entire life was spent in the service of others. She gave her all to helping others. Her motto was “God will Provide.”

She was actively involved as the religious education instructor at St. James Catholic Church in Neshkoro, St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Princeton, and as past religious education instructor at All Saints Catholic Parish in Berlin. During the time of the merger of the three Catholic parishes in Berlin, Sister Jude was instrumental in helping the women’s groups transition into one new group called Council of Catholic Women (CCW). She served several terms as Spirituality Commission chair and two terms as president of All Saints Council of Catholic Women. She was particularly proud of being the president of Columbia North Vicariate

CCW which consists of all the Catholic parishes in the counties of Columbia, Marquette, and Green Lake. As a Vicariate president she was also a member of the Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women board. She was also involved with the Berlin Blood Drives, the Berlin Food Pantry, Teens Encounter Christ (TEC), Funeral Circles, parish rummage sales, bake sales, mini-retreats and Soul Food, as well as a private math tutor. She also served on the All Saints Catholic Parish Education Commission and was very active in bringing people back to the Catholic faith. .

A memorial to Sister Mary Jude’s memory has been established.

### Carol Brennan Province Director-Elect



Congratulations to Carol Brennan from Columbia North Vicariate, All Saints Parish in Berlin! Carol is our Province Director-Elect who will be installed at the 2017 National Council of Catholic Women in Dallax, TX. Wisconsin is made up of five dioceses, and the Province Director is chosen from the diocese that is next in line to elect one.

Carol said she is “late bloomer” since she didn’t join CCW until her husband retired in 1999, and they moved back to Wisconsin. At her first NCCW convention, she heard two outstanding speakers — Matthew Kelly and Susan Conroy. “That just affirmed to me that this is an organization I want to be part of. I feel CCW helps us grow spiritually, guides us in ways we can reach out and serve the less fortunate, helps us develop a network with our sisters in faith as well as keep a sense of humor on our faith journey.

“My faith has always been very important to me although I must admit I have been more of a Martha than a Mary. It has always been easier for me to put my faith into action and help or serve others than to sit back and pray and meditate. I always felt my profession (as a nurse) was even Martha at work and yet I was still doing God’s work in helping others.”

Carol and her husband John have been married for 51 years and have three children and seven grandchildren. Because of many moves with her husband’s job, she has experienced different parishes and dioceses.

Carol served as MDCCW president and just recently two terms as Leadership Commission Chair.

## MDCCW Parish Donations

Treasurer Kathy Loy provided the following information on donations made by MDCCW parishes and vicariates for the year, starting May 1, 2015, saying "I thought we could put the overall numbers in the newsletter to thank everyone for their generosity. It shows that no amount is too little when combined with the other parishes in the Madison Diocese.

Between May 1, 2015, and April 30, 2016, MDCCW parishes and vicariates contributed a total of \$12, 897.70 to the following projects:

- Donkey Project, \$4,586.69
- Water for Life, \$4891.01
- Madonna Plan, \$1,450.00
- Help a Child Africa, \$1,060
- Help a Child India, \$60
- Help a Child Latin America, \$60
- Refugee Women Emergency Fund, \$580
- Cross Catholic Outreach, \$100



## SAVE THE DATES:

### **Green Bay Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention**

April 22, 2017

St. Jude Parish; Green Bay, WI

### **Milwaukee Arch Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention/Conference**

April 29, 2017

St. John the Evangelist Parish;  
Greenfield, WI

### **Superior Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention**

May 4-5, 2017

St. Patrick Parish; Hudson, WI

### **Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention**

June 14, 2017

Hosted by: Jefferson & Rock/  
Green Vicariates

St. Joseph Parish; Ft. Atkinson, WI

### **NCCW 97th Annual Convention**

September 6-9, 2017

Dallas, Texas

### **La Crosse Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention**

April 7, 2018

St. Michael Parish;  
Wausau, WI



## National Council of Catholic Women Convention Review

### Convention Overview

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#### Women Focus on Mercy

MDCCW Co-Presidents Ellen Martin and Sue Koch led the MDCCW delegation to the NCCW convention in Indianapolis in early September. Joining them were MDCCW board members Linda Ripp, secretary; Coreen Marklein, legislation chair; Carol Brennan, parliamentary advisor; Mona Matijevich, spirituality commission chair; and Rosa Ropers, leadership commission chair. Also representing MDCCW were Barbara Stanek, Bernadette Krentz, Alice Paul, and Mary Stasek.

Returning from the convention, Sue and Ellen said, “We are all re-energized to live out the NCCW mission statement: ‘To Support, Empower and Educate all Catholic Women in Spirituality, Leadership and Service.’”

In convening the convention, NCCW President Sheila Hopkins welcomed women from around the United States “to pray, learn and share ideas,” focusing almost exclusively on the mercy theme to coincide with the Holy Year of Mercy.

#### Mary, Mother of Mercy

The opening Mass was celebrated on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, principal celebrant, emphasized Mary’s key role in Divine Mercy, and praised the convention’s timely theme of “Catholic Women: Instruments of Mercy.”

Archbishop Tobin told the convention attendees that when Pope Francis introduced the Year of Mercy, he called Mary the “Mother of Mercy. He said that she will help us rediscover the joy of God’s tenderness, for her entire life was patterned after the great presence of mercy made flesh within her.”

The Indianapolis Archbishop (now Cardinal-designate) reminded the women, “My sisters and brothers, at the foot of the cross, Mary, together with John, who was the disciple of love, witnessed the words of forgiveness that were spoken by Jesus. This supreme expression of mercy toward those who crucified him show us the point to which

the mercy of God can reach. Mary is witness that the mercy of the Son of God knows no bounds and extends to everyone without exception. Because of her, we come to know Jesus, our savior...the face of the Father’s mercy.”

Throughout the four-day convention, the workshops, presentations and numerous opportunities for prayer focused on the theme of mercy. The NCCW, which is celebrating its 96th year, has placed renewed focus on the spiritual and corporal works of mercy during this jubilee year. Specifically, the organization has challenged its members to count such individual acts and reach a collective goal of 1 million works of mercy by the end of the Year of Mercy on Nov. 20.

That challenge extended to the annual service project associated with the convention. Organizers in the host city selected Holy Family Shelter in Indianapolis to receive donations of new clothing items — particularly underwear and socks — brought by the women for their project, “Under the Clothes and Over the Toes.” The homeless shelter is specifically dedicated to families.

#### Resolutions

Delegates voted on resolutions concerning human trafficking, children in abusive situations, immigration, and ensuring the future of NCCW. The NCCW has been a strong advocate against human trafficking, and its resolution calls for continued support of victims with prayer and ministry. You can see the complete resolutions at [nccw.org](http://nccw.org).

Its immigrant resolution supports the pastoral statements and guidelines of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, promoting awareness of Catholic Social Teaching on Immigration reinforcing “our moral obligation to treat the stranger as we would treat Christ Himself.”

On children, the delegates resolved that NCCW members work “to eliminate all forms of abuse involving children,” partnering with Catholic Charities Offices or other social service agencies to educate themselves on the needs of children, and support or initiate programs to help families in abusive situations.”

Looking to sustaining the organization’s future, the NCCW will develop a complete plan to be used by those wishing to

start or incorporate a high school or college age group into the NCCW structure.

### Convention Speakers

General session speakers were Kateriina Rosenblatt, Ph.D., author and survivor of human trafficking; Cuban-born author Maria Morera Johnson; Judy Hehr, a spiritual motivator and inspirational speaker and Sister Donna Markham, O.P., President and CEO of Catholic Charities USA.

## Keynote Speaker Sr. Donna Markham

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### Ministers of Mercy

“Catholic Women as Witnesses to and as Ministers of Mercy” was presented by Sr. Donna Markham, O.P., President and CEO of Catholic Charities. She is the first woman to hold this position in the organization’s 150-year history.

She asked us, “How might God be calling us through our journeys to do more for the compassionate care of our neighbors?” She told us the story of the Good Samaritan and the good Inn Keeper and how they showed compassion and mercy. This injured “enemy” wasn’t just dropped off. They did more. They picked him up, took care of him, paid for his care, and also checked up on him to see how he was doing.

“Mercy shows compassion, inclusion, and accompaniment. We need to do more than just thinking about helping and praying, or helping once and then moving on — even if it means disrupting our plans,” said the Adrian Dominican Sister who has a doctorate in clinical psychology.

“We must open our own hearts to receive mercy in order to extend mercy,” the speaker said as continued with the story of Kendra who as a youth was abused, on drugs, didn’t trust people, and thought everyone wanted something from her. Catholic Charities helped her to recover from all this trauma, and this experience made her want to go out and help others.

Through our own or through organizations such as Catholic Charities, Sister Donna said, “we can help others in our journey through life.

Concluding, she asked, “How are we extending God’s mercy to others? Mercy provides forgiveness. ‘Let us go and do likewise.’”

**Reported by Carol Brennan**, Province Director-designate

## General Session Speaker Judy Hehr

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### ‘A Slave in her Kingdom to a Servant in His’

General session speaker Judy Hehr spoke of her personal life journey from the depths of despair and contemplation of suicide to being a seminary graduate in religious studies and now a professional speaker, trainer, and radio host.

Judy started life in a home where she experienced abuse and craved attention, love, and acceptance. This led her to many poor choices and “breaking every Commandment.” She then channeled her energy into a sales career, becoming a millionaire. In her marriage, she felt unworthy to be a wife and mother. When infidelity challenged her marriage, she was able to recognize the need for mercy and forgiveness, and salvaged her life.

Judy describes Mercy as not getting what you deserve. It took her many years to realize that what she was or wanted or did in the past did not matter. She was able to surrender herself totally to God and finally be able to experience his infinite Love and Mercy. She encouraged all of us to be the best we can be and to allow God to Love us and be a miracle in our lives. Continuing to grow in Faith and share this with others.

**Reported by Barbara Stanek**

## General Session Speaker Maria Morera Johnson

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### Befriending the Saints: An Exercise in Mercy

Maria Morera Johnson was a refreshing speaker who wove a beautiful speech around her connection with lesser known saints and her personal life. An author and Catholic Mom blogger, she spoke about really looking at people, into their eyes, which is not always happening in this world of technology where some of this closeness is missing.

Johnson said that we are relational beings, seeking relationships with others. She quoted Scripture and popes about the need to see one another: “Look to one another, seek his face always”; “I have looked into your eyes with my eyes”; and “...the look of love which they crave.” She spoke about “saints at our table” and told us that to include Jesus in our purpose or plan in life.

*Continued on next page.*

# Rise, LET US BE ON OUR WAY.

Johnson's recent book — *My Badass Book of Saints — Courageous Women Who Showed Me How to Live* — looks at lesser known saints: St. Phillip Neri; St. Rose of Lima, and Sister Blandina Segale (on the path to canonization) and about the unexpected emergence of some of these saints into her life in “coincidental” ways. She spoke about her family life and husband's dream to fish on the ocean and how now, with her husband five years into his diagnosis of ALS, they are living out their dream.

**Reported by Suzanne Koch** , MDCCW Co-President

## Workshop

### Leadership, Training, and Development (LTD)

The LTD Team, led by Linda Clark, LTD Lead Coordinator, shared the “Gifts of LTD - Leadership, Training and Development.” The team showed how we could unwrap the gifts our membership has to offer, through technology, image, and clergy support and so much more through LTD workshops!

The LTD team provides information on programs designed by NCCW women for NCCW women to meet the needs of our membership and councils. The programs are designed to set up your councils for success. Topics include:

- Membership Recruitment & Retention
- Group Dynamics, including generational differences
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making
- Project Assessment
- Team Building
- Communication Skills

For example, did you know that committees should have an odd number of people on them — not odd people! All topics have spirituality throughout the segments. Programs are geared towards the councils' needs and can combine one or more topics.

In early 2017, the LTD team is coming out with its newest program: Technology. It will include 1) Publications, including brochures, fliers, posters, invitations, using PowerPoint.; 2) Use of App's (applications): what are they and which ones are best to use; and 3) Social Media, including YouTube, Drop Box, Twitter, and Facebook.

Contact the LTD team at: [nccwltcontact@gmail.com](mailto:nccwltcontact@gmail.com) or at the NCCW website — [www.nccw.org](http://www.nccw.org).

**Reported by Coreen S. Marklein**, Legislation Chair

## Resources from 2016 Convention

### Available on [nccw.org](http://nccw.org)

To support its resolutions and policies on human trafficking, immigration, Catholic women entering the religious life, and family caregivers, NCCW has developed resources available on its web site, [nccw.org](http://nccw.org) that can be downloaded and printed.

A Human Traffic Tear-Off poster is intended for display in places that might be seen by victimized. Noting, “Every 30 seconds another person becomes a victim of human trafficking,” the poster asks critical questions and then gives the following information to get help: Call 1-888-373-7888 or Text INFO or HELP to BEFREE (233733).

### Immigration

The handout on Immigration begins by saying, “Christ teaches us to welcome the stranger, to love...even our enemies.” The two-page information sheet outlines the three basic principles of Catholic social teaching on immigration.

**First Principle:** People have the right to migrate to sustain their lives and the lives of their families.

**Second Principle:** A country has the right to regulate its borders and to control immigration. By this principle the Church recognizes that most immigration is ultimately not something to celebrate. Ordinarily, people do not leave the security of their own land and culture just to seek adventure in a new place or merely to enhance their standard of living. Instead, they migrate because they are desperate and the opportunity for a safe and secure life does not exist in their own land.

**Third Principle:** A country must regulate its borders with justice and mercy. The second principle of Catholic social teaching may seem to negate the first principle. However, principles one and two must be understood in the context of principle three. And all Catholic social teaching must be understood in light of the absolute equality of all people and the commitment to the common good.

## Vocation Purse Club

In response to a 2015 resolution to support Consecrated Life, NCCW is participating in the Vocation Purse Club to help Catholic women entering the religious life to pay off educational debt or provide funding to enter into the religious life. NCCW is collaborating with the National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations (NFCRV) on the project. The downloadable brochure invites “all to consider raising funds” and provides ideas.

Women considering a vocation will apply for funding through their chosen order to the NFCRV on an application marked “Support provided by the National Council of Catholic Women”. Only women will be considered for funding provided by NCCW.

## RESPIRE Program

Another downloadable brochure on the [nccw.org](http://nccw.org) web site provides information on the RESPIRE program of NCCW. The program has been designed “to spiritually and temporarily renew the family caregiver.” NCCW began its RESPIRE program in 1982 to address a need that has become widespread.

NCCW chose the acronym RESPIRE to designate “renewal: spiritual/temporal” which the program provides to families who receive the services of a RESPIRE volunteer. The brochure lists steps to establishing a program and includes information about the RESPIRE Manual from NCCW which provides the details for implementing a program.



New NCCW logo was unveiled during the General Session.



Madison Diocesan of Catholic Women members attending the National Council of Catholic Women Convention in Indianapolis are from left to right, front row: Coreen Marklein, Mona Matijevich, Bernadette Krentz; middle row: Linda Ripp, Mary Stasek, Sue Koch; back row: Ellen Martin, Barb Stanek, Carol Brennan, Alice Paul, Rosa Ropers.



## Prayer to Our Lady of Good Counsel

*God of heavenly wisdom, you have given us Mary, Mother of Jesus, to be our guide and counselor.*

*Grant that we may always seek her motherly help in this life and so enjoy her blessed presence in the life to come. O Mother of Good Counsel, patroness of the National Council of Catholic Women, intercede for us, that we may be wise, courageous, and loving leaders of the Church. Help us, dear mother, to know the mind of Jesus, your son. May the Holy Spirit fill us with reverence for God's creation, and compassion for all God's children. May our labors of love on earth enhance the reign of God and may God's gifts of faith and living hope prepare us for the fullness of the world to come. — Amen*