Message from  
Our Co-Presidents

Membership and Convention

Our energies have been targeted towards obtaining and retaining membership. Acting upon a recent initiative of the NCCW to recruit young women for Diocesan and NCCW membership, we are looking to the colleges and universities in our diocese. Most have a Newman Center connected with them. Or, like Beloit College, if no Newman Center on that campus, students are linked to the nearby Catholic church.

We have connected with young women from   
St. Paul’s University Catholic Church on the   
UW-Madison campus, and young women appear to be interested in starting an affiliate. We have reached out also to UW-Platteville as well as Edgewood College in Madison. Groups of young Catholic women are present on most campuses nationwide. We feel this is a good starting point for us to educate them about MDCCW and NCCW.

We held an executive board weekend retreat for team building, membership brainstorming, and convention planning. We added lots of fun into the weekend and punctuated “work time” with spiritual and physical breaks. We came up with a summary of ideas for membership development from the weekend which we will share with vicariate presidents and local officers. We hope to hold more retreats of this kind with vicariate presidents and commission chairs.

An idea for designing an “elevator card” was discussed; and at the board meeting in March, we voted to purchase them for our board to disburse to our members.

Last year’s MDCCW convention theme was “Women on Fire for the Lord.” We were blessed to have two wonderful speakers: Marianne Skrobiak and Mary-Kate Martin. Marianne’s

message was to stop letting fear of what others think of you stop you from being on fire with the Holy Spirit. Mary-Kate inspired, energized, and amazed us with her work. In her early 20s, feeling the call of Mother Teresa to search out and minister to the poor, she started an orphanage in Africa.

We hope that the “fire” the Catholic women of the Madison diocese felt at that convention propelled them on to do great things in their parish communities as well as in the communities in which they live.

This year’s convention, set for June 14 at   
St. Joseph Parish in Fort Atkinson, will not disappoint attendees. The convention theme ties into our two-year term theme of “Rise, Let Us Be on Our Way.” Taken from the title of a book by Saint Pope John Paul II, these are the words spoken by Christ to his disciples. We want you to feel God’s presence at our convention and take back to your parishes the best version of yourself…giving, loving, and living out your faith to everyone you meet.

All the Catholic women of our diocese, from all nine vicariates — Columbia North, East Dane, Grant, Jefferson, Lafayette, Madison, Rock-Green, Sauk and West Dane — are stronger together and our voices heard better across many topics including abortion, human trafficking, elder abuse, respite, and so much more. In these trying times, we need to join together to do great things. This convention will be a great start towards that end.

Sincerely in Christ,

Ellen Martin and Suzanne Koch

MDCCW Co-Presidents

From Our Spiritual Advisor

Take the First Step

Many centuries ago a Chinese philosopher was quoted saying, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” I believe the name of the philosopher was Lao-tzu.

The theme of your June Diocesan Council of Catholic Women convention is “Rise, Let Us Be on Our Way.”

Putting these two thoughts together, we are reminded that the best way to be on our way is to take the first step. We can’t accomplish everything for the Council. We can’t improve everything in our world through the programs sponsored by the Council of Catholic Women. However, we can be on our way by taking the first step.

God doesn’t expect us to be perfect. He does want us each day to try to do something that helps other people and gives glory, therefore, to His Name. We take the first step each morning when we awake and then look for opportunities to carry on God’s work throughout our day. If we do this, then we are indeed on our way to what will be our final home in eternity.

Our life here on earth is all about preparing for the life to come. The best way to do so is not to be overwhelmed in all we are trying to accomplish, but rather to take things one step at a time. Perhaps your first step at this moment is to register and plan to attend the Diocesan Convention June 14.

God bless You,

Msgr. Duane Moellenberndt

Spiritual Advisor

From the NCCW Secretary

Rise, Let Us Be on Our Way

This is such an appropriate theme chosen by your Co-Presidents Suzanne Koch and Ellen Martin for their term of office. The women of the Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (MDCCW) are on their way in all areas.

This theme truly speaks of what the CCW does. We are on our way to help those in need, to comfort the sick and elderly, and to educate women on areas of human trafficking and domestic violence including teen dating violence to name a few.

The programs from the National Council are to be lived out in your parishes. Two new programs that were presented at the National Convention in Indianapolis are the Respite Program which allows the caregiver some much needed personal time and the Vocation Purse Club which helps Catholic women entering religious life pay off education debt or provide required funding.

Information on Human Trafficking, a Book of Prayers for Vocations, a Retreat on Mercy, and a PowerPoint on the National Council of Catholic Women were other helpful tools that were presented at the convention and taken back to your diocese by those who attended. Thank you to the members who attended.

It would be wonderful for every vicariate and parish, too, to send a representative to the national convention. With the direction of your Co-Presidents and Commission Chairs along with the members of your MDCCW, these programs can be implemented and be a benefit to your entire diocese!

Thank you to Carol Brennan for accepting the role of Province Director. It is always an honor to hold this position and represent the entire state of Wisconsin on the NCCW Board. The last Province Director from the Madison diocese was Rita Macewicz. We were saddened to hear of her passing earlier this year. She supported the Council of Catholic Women to the very end. She was a remarkable woman.

Thank you for “Rising and Going on Your Way” to support, empower, and educate all the women in the Diocese of Madison.

Blessings

Jean Kelly

NCCW Secretary, Past Milwaukee Province Director

From Our Province Director

Updates from NCCW

I hope you had a blessed Lenten season and look forward to new life with the risen Lord on Easter Sunday.

In a few weeks we will celebrate not only our own mothers but also our mother Mary, the mother of Jesus. For Mother’s Day, the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) gives us a special way to honor our mother, daughter, daughter-in-law, sister, aunt, niece, godmother, or any woman who has played an important role in our lives. By making a contribution in their honor to NCCW, they will be remembered in Masses celebrated on Mother’s Day weekend at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. The donation request form can be found on page 9 or can be downloaded from the NCCW website at <http://nccw.org/Public/Public/Mothers_Day_2017.aspx>

Membership Contest

WIN BIG!! [Sign up](http://nccw.org/Public/Public/Member/Benefits-Revised.aspx) as a new Individual or Supporting Member (membership form can be found on page 8), or [rejoin](http://nccw.org/Public/Public/Member/Benefits-Revised.aspx) (if your membership is expired a year or more), and you will receive an entry to win a registration for the 2017 NCCW Annual Convention in Dallas, TX, a free hotel room at the Hilton Anatole for Sept. 6–10, and one Closing Banquet ticket! Contest began April 1 and ends June 1. Winner will be drawn on June 2 at the NCCW Board meeting in Washington, DC.

Membership in the National Council of Catholic Women, means you are part of a national organization that speaks for your Catholic values and supports, empowers, and educates all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership, and service. I thank all of you who are currently Individual members of NCCW and encourage any who are not to go to http://www.nccw.org and take this opportunity to join and possibly win a trip to the annual convention in Dallas.

New Programs

Just a few of many new programs being provided to us by NCCW are:

**Vocation Purse Club.** The purpose is to raise funds in support of Catholic women wanting to pursue a religious vocation. These women are eager to answer their call to holiness and to begin their journey with a specific religious community. Host a fundraiser or take up a collection in your group.

**Respite.** NCCW chose the acronym RESPITE to designate “renewal: spiritual/temporal” which the program provides to families who receive the services of a RESPITE volunteer. Respite means temporary intermission of labor, and interval or rest. Volunteers serve as companions to the elderly; come to the home on a regular basis; are sympathetic listeners (no medication administration nor household chores).

**Women Healing the Wounds.** Raise awareness of the signs of domestic abuse. Educate yourselves and invite speakers from local resource agencies to your meeting. Donate to shelters such items as personal hygiene kits, towels and bedding, diapers, and first aid supplies.

Honoring Mary

Also special this year, in May we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima. The message of Fatima highlights many central truths and devotions of the Catholic faith: the Trinity, the Eucharist, Penance, the Rosary, and sacrifices for the conversion of sinners. There is special emphasis on the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which is a refuge of maternal love for us all and a sure path that leads us to God. In the end, Mary’s Immaculate Heart will triumph because Mary is full of God’s grace and is all pure. She has the heart of a mother who cares for her children and wishes them to be saved by her divine Son, Jesus.

God’s blessings to all as we celebrate these special events.

Lucille Brandner

Director, Province of Milwaukee

\*The Province of Milwaukee encompasses all of Wisconsin.

From the Editor

MDCCW lost a dedicated and long-serving member with the passing of Rita Middlecamp Macewicz. She died at her home January 17, 2017.

A past MDCCW president, province director and winner of the coveted Our Lade of Good Counsel Award from NCCW, Rita attended her last convention in Middleton in 2015, along with her then 100-year-old husband Ed who preceded her in death the next year.

I had the privilege of knowing Rita through my mother who traveled and roomed with Rita on various trips. She even stayed at my house once. She was easy to talk with and very interesting. She had diverse interests and very concerned with social justice. Her full obituary is available on-line. It is worth reading. (http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/wisconsinrapidstribune/obituary.aspx?pid=183681478)

How Rita accomplished all she did is a wonder, but maybe not, considering her intelligence, zest for life, and faith in God.

In 1945, Rita married Ed who had three children. Together they had nine children. She taught her children well and became engaged in their activities and school including becoming

active in PTA at the local and state levels. Later, Rita earned a Bachelor’s degree in journalism and political science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and established a career, yet continuing her volunteer work with her community, especially her church and the Council of Catholic Women.

A native of Wisconsin Rapids, she spent most of her life in Beloit where she was an active member of St. Jude Parish.

The Council is blessed with many women of faith who give freely of their time and talents. Surely, each one of the board members and all of you reading this newsletter can be singled out as being amazing and have interesting stories of your involvement. I tell people that I inherited the MDCCW newsletter job from my mother, and I really don’t have a choice with her looking over me. But, I feel blessed to be involved with MDCCW as well with other volunteer activities. It is a privilege to be able to volunteer. The challenge is how do we help our sisters in Christ who aren’t as fortunate as we?

How can we connect to women who would enjoy attending a meeting or volunteering at an event, but simply don’t have the time nor resources? Perhaps they work an hourly, low-wage job that offers little or no paid time off.

Special thanks to Karen Gramann for her excellent design work for the newsletter. We are fortunate to have her volunteer her time and talents!

Jane Lepeska Grinde

Editor

Leadership Commission

Remember: You Are All Leaders

As leaders within MDCCW, we want to continually grow in our role as members of this great organization that we call Council of Catholic Women (CCW). If you still own the television set that you purchased 20 years ago, perhaps you are missing out on a few updates. That is the way it is with CCWs. We need to grow with our organization as the world changes. We, too, might need some changes to become a different, positive, and vital member.

Consider taking the time to attend the MDCCW Convention June 14 at St. Joseph Church and Parish Hall, Fort Atkinson. The Jefferson Vicariate and your MDCCW Board have worked to create a day for you to experience growth in your understanding of what your CCW can do. It will be a day of spirituality and time to share your friendship and ideas with other women who care and are willing to stand up for what they believe.

Please go the extra mile, register, and attend your one-day convention in June. Attend for your own growth and learn about how you can change our world. Invite others to attend with you. Become a mentor for our younger women/daughters, many of whom are desperately looking for a direction in their spiritual growth.

Let’s never say, “I am only one person; what can I do?” You can join with other women who care and do great things.

Hold firm and grasp the NCCW Mission: to support, empower, and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership, and service. Our programs respond with Gospel values to the needs of the Church and society in the modern world.

Rosa Ropers

Leadership Chair

Spirituality Commission

Questions to Ponder

When I was praying on what to write, I thought of how many New Year’s resolutions I have made and failed. Lent is a lot like this also. I start out with good intentions; and before I know it, Holy Week is here.

Did I help my neighbor? Did I visit the homebound? What about the extra prayers I had planned to say? Jesus died for me, and how do I repay Him?

Each year goes by faster and faster, yet I still don’t follow through with all my good intentions. I am thankful we have a loving and forgiving God. I am grateful to live in a church family that accepts me the way I am.

In this day and age, when we are losing women of faith, it is time for us to step up to the plate and do more. I know what you’re thinking: how can I do more? By being the one to say yes and mean it. By smiling and welcoming a new parishioner. By being the person God made me to be. Go ahead, ask God to point you in the direction He wants you to go. He will lead, and you only have to follow.

May our loving Father Bless and Guide you today and every day of your life.

Mona Matijevich

Spirituality Chair

Service Commission

Suggestions for Helping Families

1. I would like to pass on some information I obtained from the NCCW website. I hope you will find it beneficial to those you serve. It is adapted from “Ten Things the NCCW Service Commission Can Do for Families,” prepared by Karen Painter, NCCW Service Commission 2013-2015
2. Become an individual NCCW member; by doing so, you will receive the quarterly Catholic Women’s Magazine, the monthly NCCW Connect, as well as receiving news, legislative alerts, and information from your NCCW National Office.
3. Contact the Wisconsin Pro-Life Office and Catholic Charities. Ask to be placed on their mailing list, share information, and collaborate on projects.
4. Contact the Wisconsin Catholic Conference and ask to be on their email list to receive legislative updates.
5. Read and subscribe to Catholic family publications—e.g. Catholic Digest, Marriage and Parenting—to get ideas for programs, articles, and workshops.
6. Communicate regularly with parish, vicariate, and diocesan leaders. Make certain that information flows through all rings of council. Use newsletters, email blasts, local parish bulletins, diocesan newspapers, and magazines. (Always ask permission from your local priest before publishing information, and correctly identify your sources.)
7. Use NCCW, www.nccw.org, and USCCB, www.usccb.org, websites to keep current on family issues.
8. Be knowledgeable about NCCW programs, particularly those that are family oriented, and share them with your organization. Adapt them to your local needs. Use the NCCW Service Commission, Family Concerns Resources, and Links Information page. Ask questions of and request information from your NCCW and MDCCW commission chairs.
9. Monitor the media. Find ways to help parents monitor home computers, cell phones, iPads, iPods, Facebook, and Twitter.
10. Stay current on issues facing families today such as: Domestic Violence, Pornography, Human Trafficking, Marriage and Family, Abortion, Respite, and Alzheimers.
11. Pray for all families and the strengthening of family values.

Barbara K. Seamandel

Service Commission Chair

Vicariate News

**Columbia North**, **Grant**, and **Sauk Vicariates** held spring meetings in April.

**Sauk Vicariate** women met the Tuesday morning after Easter and heard from Je Hoeben, Executive Director of Camp Gray in Baraboo, as he shared his story as a two-time cancer survivor. The collection during the Mass went to Camp Gray.

**Columbia North** met the morning of April 27 at St. Faustina Parish, Pardeeville.

The theme was “Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus.” Fr John Hedrick, pastor of St. Jude Parish, Beloit, gave a slide presentation of his trip to the Holy Land. The offertory collection went to Water for Life.

The **Grant vicariate** held its meeting April 25 at St. Joseph Parish, Hazel Green. Mass was offered at 5:30, followed by dinner and program featuring the Sister Strings.

**West Dane** opted to encourage women to attend the MDCCW convention in Fort Atkinson June 14, but may also hold a meeting in August. West Dane’s meeting last fall attracted 30 ladies who participated in a mini-retreat on Women of Mercy presented by Linda Ripp, MDCCW secretary, and Rosa Ropers, MDCCW leadership Chair.

St. Peter parish women will assemble the new MDCCW banner to which several West Dane parishes have contributed quilt blocks



Convention Preview

63rd Annual MDCCW Convention

Rise Let Us Be on Our Way!

June 14, 2017

Saint Joseph Catholic Church • 1660 Endl Blvd, Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin

The Jefferson and Rock-Green Vicariates have joined forces to deliver an inspiring one-day gathering at St. Joseph Parish Hall and Church in Fort Atkinson, Wednesday, June 14. The convention theme of “Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way,” ties into the theme of co-Presidents Ellen Martin and Suzanne Koch’s two-year term of service.

Past MDCCW President and long-time leader Dorene Shuda co-chairs the convention with Alice Paul. They have the help of over 25 volunteers, including registrar Linda Rosiejka, another long-time active MDCCW member.

Over the years, Dorene has seen many changes in the convention. A key purpose has remained the same, though, she said, that of “passing on the ideas, ideals, and programs that the diocesan women have received from their trip to the NCCW convention.”

The first convention was held 63 years ago with hundreds of women attending. Even in the 1970s to the late 90s, Dorene said, “Attendance was well over 200 with 30 to 40 priests concelebrating the Mass.”

For many years, the convention was held at the Bishop O’Connor Center and included a banquet with entertainment on day one of the two-day event. With the changes made in the center, conventions are now held throughout the diocese hosted by vicariates—previously referred to as deaneries—on a rotating basis. The host vicariate picks the date, location, facility, food, registration, decorations, and such. The MDCCW Board sets the theme and agenda and invites the speaker who must be approved by the bishop.

While MDCCW membership and meeting attendance are down from the earlier years, the gathering continues to be a time for “prayer and socializing, a time to network with our sisters in the diocese.” Daughters and nieces of some of the early members continue the legacy started in 1950s.

The convention’s keynote speaker can always be counted on to provide inspiration, said Dorene. This year is no exception with Fr. John Tourangeau, a nationally-known priest from St. Norbert Abbey in De Pere, speaking about his after-life experience, following a heart attack. He will also give the homily during the Liturgy.

Co-Presidents Ellen and Suzanne are enthusiastic about the shareshop they will facilitate in the afternoon with Rosa Ropers, Leadership Chair, and other MDCCW leaders. “We have mysteriously entitled it, “We are Called….”

The silent auction and big ticket raffle provide a fun way to raise money for MDCCW’s charitable giving.

A catered lunch is included in the registration fee. Following lunch, speakers will provide updates from the national council on issues that are important to Catholic women.

Members are encouraged to invite ladies who have never attended. Registration form is included in this newsletter and also on the web site of Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (www.mdccw.com). To encourage first-time attendees, the MDCCW board approved a lower registration fee.

Registration deadline is June 1.

Keynote Speaker

THE REVEREND JOHN TOURANGEAU

An ordained Norbertine priest for nearly 30 years, Fr. John Tourangeau had a life-changing event at the age of 35. While saying Mass at his church in New Mexico, he experienced pain which he ignored until later that night. He ended up in the emergency room, and what happened in that room convinced him that heaven is real.

Since 2012, Fr. John Tourangeau has been traveling around the country, sharing his life story in a presentation entitled “Heaven: Is it for Real?” From 2012-2015, over 10,000   
people attended more than 35 presentations. The success with which these presentations were received resulted in the publishing of   
“To Heaven & Back: The Journey of a   
Roman Catholic Priest,” co-written with   
Travis Vanden Heuvel.

Upon ordination, Fr. John served several parishes in Archdiocese of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and then returned to St. Norbert College where he was vocational coordinator and pastor. In 2015, he left parish work to focus on the final phase of his Ph.D. in Organization Development through Benedictine University. He is developing a preaching ministry to clergy and parish communities.

Fr. John did his undergraduate studies at   
St. Norbert College in De Pere. He holds a Master of Divinity Degree with Mission Specialization from Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in Chicago (1986), a Master of Social Work Degree (MSW) from New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, NM (1997), and is currently a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in the State of Wisconsin.

Raffle Tickets Available NOW!

MDCCW raffle tickets are on sale until June 14, the date of the annual convention. This is MDCCW’s only sponsored fundraiser, with all profits going to charities in your vicariates and Madison Diocese. Tickets are $5 each or 6 for $20. The top prize is $300 in cash. Other prizes include a statue of the Blessed Virgin, two Badger Football Pre-season tickets, a print by Fr. Wankerl, and various cash prizes. Please sell/purchase tickets from your CCWs and help us help others.

If you have questions or need tickets, contact Rosa Ropers, raffle chair, at rosa.m.ropers@gmail.com.

Silent Auction Baskets

Always a favorite activity at the convention is the raffling of donated specialty baskets. This year, the raffle will be a silent auction. Alice Paul, chair of the silent auction, asks vicariates, parishes, and individuals to donate baskets.

Alice encourages creativity in the donations. In the past sporting tickets have been popular, as well as wine and chocolates, garden items, and gift certificates.

Bidders will receive a number to use for the silent auction and will have from registration until after lunch to bid. For questions, contact Alice at 608/295-4732 or capaulfarms@gmail.com.

**La Crosse Diocesan Council   
of Catholic Women Convention**April 7, 2018  
St. Michael Parish, Wausau, WI

Convention Agenda

Wednesday, June 14

8:00am Registration/Continental Breakfast

9:00am Call to Order, MDCCW Board Updates, Introductions

10:00am Keynote: Fr. John Toureganau   
 “Heaven: Is it for real?”

11:15am Liturgy

12:30pm Lunch and Speakers

1:20pm Break and Silent Auction Bidding

1:45pm Silent Auction ends

1:45pm Leadership Share Shop (We Are Called…)

2:45pm Patriotic Rosary

3:15pm Raffle Drawings/Silent Auction

3:30pm Closing Prayer

