

President's Message

NCCW Convention Overview

The Michigan Councils of Catholic Women welcomed Catholic women from all over the United States to NCCW Annual Convention in Grand Rapids in September. You were represented by 13 women from the Madison Diocese. The bus ride gave us an opportunity to get to know each other a little better, watch good movies, enjoy games, food and a Rosary to guide our way.

Arriving at the convention site we found that our days were filled with many events. We were invited to start each day with a different reason to say the Rosary. We enjoyed the Rosary on the River one day and then the Living Rosary the next day. Each afternoon after meetings and/or business was completed, we attended a beautiful liturgy and thanked God for His presence in our world.

The NCCW's Officers updated us on their many endeavors to create a strong and vital organization always reminding us that we were founded by the United States Bishops in 1920 to give Catholic women a common voice and an instrument for unified action, to ensure Catholic representation in national committees and movements, and to stimulate the work of existing Catholic women's organizations to greater service in the needs of our times.

NCCW will be changing its website since Catholic Web will no longer be available. Our own website will change as well since we have been using Catholic Web. We are fortunate to have Karen Gramman as our webmaster since she is a professional designer. She has been providing wonderful service to MDCCW, and we can expect an even better website in the future. Please check out both websites from time to time to stay abreast of all we are doing.

At the convention we were reminded that every level of council is linked together, starting with the NCCW Board which represents the authority and brain work of the organization. It guides six million members through the NCCW Commission system. Next come the Province Directors who listen to the concerns of the diocesan councils. The Diocesan Councils listen to the requests of the Vicariates, and the Vicariates listen to the affiliate suggestions. At the affiliate level many ideas begin which makes them the most important member of the whole structure. If one of the links is broken, information stops; and the remaining members never get the needed information.

That is why it is so important to be sure that when you are given information in your role representing your vicariate that it is passed on. If you keep this information to yourself, other members of your affiliate will never benefit from it and ask "what good does it do to belong to NCCW"? What makes NCCW a national organization is when we keep these connections between all affiliates and members active. The NCCW board has created policies and programs that need to be passed on through its members.

Each Catholic woman is encouraged to become an individual member. The benefits of that membership is that she gets the same information at the same time as the president. The dues of \$60 must be sent to the national office. If every Catholic woman became an individual member, NCCW would be debt free with greater monies to contribute to all the Catholic projects that we hold dear. By the way, that \$60 is just \$5 a month.

The NCCW financial picture continues to be more positive. In 2013 the NCCW was \$750,000 in debt. After making many changes, it has reduced its debt by almost \$500,000. The board will continue—with our help—to become debt free. In 2009 NCCW lost almost half of all its affiliates. It is up to us to reach out to bring these back. Did you know that any women's group in your parish can become a member of NCCW as long as they are receptive to our mission and willing to respond?

Thank you for allowing me to represent you at convention. It was my fifth convention, and each time that I attend I come home with so many humbling feelings that I belong to this great organization which cares about the poor and those who need someone to speak for them. I am reminded that my actions do have some impact but when I add my actions to yours and others throughout the world they have an even greater influence to make a difference.

Next year's convention will be in Orlando, Florida, September 9-12. Consider giving yourself the gift of being among hundreds of women who are just like you and willing to share their faith.

Rosa Ropers

MDCCW President

From the Province Director

The National Convention is the official end of the 2014 Convention season, and planning is already taking place for next year for everyone. It was a busy but wonderful year for me, and I thank you for the opportunity to speak at your convention in Baraboo last May.

We were kept busy at the national convention in Grand Rapids with an agenda full of inspirational speakers, sessions, liturgies and overall time well spent with women from all the entire country. Our Province dinner gave all of us the opportunity to meet everyone from the archdioceses in Wisconsin. Many thanks to Coreen Marklein for organizing a bus to bring a wonderful group from Wisconsin to the convention!

If you were not there, please know that we kept you in our prayers. The convention is a time to spark your engine, to learn, and to bring programs, suggestions, and ideas back to the women in your diocese and act on them. It would be wonderful to have a representative from every parish there. What you learn to bring back to help your parish CCW is invaluable.

Maybe your parish could have a bake sale or tea or some type of FUN-raiser to help send your president or a representative to next year's convention in Orlando September 9-12. Christmas, Mother's Day, and your birthday will all take place before convention next year. Let your family know that you would like to go, and perhaps your gift could be something towards it.

Individual membership in National is still only \$5.00 per month or \$60.00 per year. The quarterly Catholic Woman Magazine is a wonderful publication. You will also receive a monthly electronic newsletter that keeps you up to date with all the news you need to keep your council on top of everything about Leadership, Spirituality, and Service. Please consider joining if you have not done so. Contact me if you need more information.

We heard at convention from the World Union Catholic Women's Organization representative Maribeth Stewart. Her presentation showed the Spiritual Bouquet that was presented to Pope Francis. I know several of you sent in your prayers for that, and I want to thank you.

Jean Kelly

Director, Province of Milwaukee

National Council of Catholic Women Convention Highlights

Keynote Addresses

Catholic Women and the New Evangelization: Why Bother"

BY CAROL BRENNAN

The president of Renewal Ministries opened his keynote by noting the "significant confrontation in our culture." Dr. Ralph Martin, who also serves as director of Graduate Theology Programs in Evangelization at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, talked about those who are "trying to choke off our Catholic life" and "those destined to perish as they refuse to open their hearts to the truth."

Living in a time of conflict and apostasy requires us to attend to our own relationship with God which leads to sharing our faith. He said apostasy is the turning away from faith from those who had it. Sharing God and our faith is Evangelization--proclaiming the Word of God with Christian conversion as our aim. Conversion is accepting Christ personally.

Martin suggested that our Catholic culture has weakened inasmuch as our Catholic life and marriage don't encourage people to go to church. He outlined key elements of the New Evangelization.

- New Evangelization is aimed toward groups that have lost their faith, were baptized and confirmed but are not living it.
- Priests and nuns will continue to evangelize but every lay person should be involved. Be a witness to Christ. In baptism, Jesus has already asked us to live our faith.
- The four Elements of Lay Mission are: 1) Witness by living our Catholic life. Seek first kingdom of God, and God will provide. 2) Do works of Charity and Mercy: feed the hungry, clothe the naked; support Cross International, Catholic Relief Services, etc. 3) Renew temporal order. Be good citizens of the community, protect life at every stage, protect the environment, work for peace and justice. 4) Most Important, be willing to talk to people about Jesus, bringing them to Him or helping them to grow in their faith. You don't need extensive knowledge to share the love of God. This kind of preaching is for all of us.

Martin warned that many Catholics believe the path to Heaven is broad and wide and that the door to hell is narrow, but this is opposite of what Jesus told us in sacred scripture. You can't separate Christ from his teachings. A disciple follows his master; he is led by the Spirit of God. We need to Evangelize as there are many souls to be saved. You never know when something you say or do may touch someone's heart. "Remember the Bible — it is basic instructions before leaving earth!"

Families and the Media: Helping Families Navigate Today's Cultural Challenges

BY LINDA RIPP

The author and syndicated radio show host and EWTN personality, Theresa Tomeo, shared her concern that the media culture is leading to girls' low self-esteem. Children are bombarded with thousands of sexual and violent images objectifying women and girls. Many shows and ads portray women as a means of "getting something." To counter that we need to give the message: "Girls are a precious gift, wrapped in God's Love."

Tomeo said, "Leaving children alone with media is like dropping them off alone in a bad neighborhood in the middle of the night. . . . Know what your children are doing online and watching on TV. Don't let them have computers and TVs in their rooms."

She said we are not alone and that we shouldn't lose our joy. She advised living our life through the lens of the Catholic Church. We need to stand-up for the truth of the Catholic Faith, taking up our cross. We are tested every day by the media. The media are looking for the sensational. Their goal is to make money (business, stock-holders). They don't have a general understanding for Church hierarchy and think we are archaic and outdated and that the Church will eventually change. They don't understand we are teaching the same things Jesus taught 2000 years ago.

Workshops

Religious Freedom Spirituality: Motherhood, Martyrdom, and Faith Re-ignited

BY MARY STASEK

Joyce Coronel, a columnist for the Catholic Sun in Phoenix and the mother of five sons, spoke passionately about conversion and hope.

After the Oct. 31,2010, bombing of the Al Najat Catholic church in Baghdad that killed a priest and two deacons, Coronel contacted the pastor of a Chaldean Church in Phoenix. The Chaldean Catholic Church is an Eastern Rite Church prevalent in Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon united with the Roman Catholic Church. The Phoenix Diocese has seven Eastern Rite churches.

Coronel met Fr. Felix Shabbat, the pastor of one of the churches and learned that he knew well Fr. Rageed Gammi, the priest who was killed. They were in the seminary together, and they communicated with each other via email. The last mail he received from his friend said, "How can I close the Church of God?" In 1987 there were 1.4 million Christians in Iraq. Since 2003, only 200,000 to 400,000 remain.

Fr. Shabbat invited Coronel to Mass at this church. "Our people want to share our faith with you. You should come to our Mass, said in Aramaic... It is the language Our Lord spoke."

Fr. Shabbat told about his own abduction and torture in 2008. After nine days, his captors threw him out of their car a few blocks from his church. The priest said, "The Lord loves us individually. He wants us 1000 percent. He's going to give us the grace when we fall, unconditionally."

Encouraging her audience to use their own stories to reach others, Coronel relayed the miracle story of her husband and his diabetic sister who had lost her eye sight in her 40s. Her husband has had a lifelong devotion to St. Lucy. After Coronel found a first class relic of St. Lucy and gave it to her husband, he called his sister in Venezuela and prayed over the phone to St. Lucy that his sister would get her sight back. That night his sister went to bed with a severe headache. When she got up during the night to use the bathroom, she realized that she could see. When she got up the next morning, she told her husband she could see. He held up three fingers and asked her how many fingers she saw, she

said “three.” God allowed this miracle to happen, and they were so happy!

Joyce concluded her presentation by making the Sign of The Cross and saying the Our Father in Aramaic. When she was finished, she allowed us to touch and say a prayer to St. Lucy.

The Culture of Life — the Mission of the Faithful

BY BARBARA K. SEAMANDEL

Two representatives from Cross Catholic Outreach talked about efforts being made in the Caribbean and Central America to care for those who are most vulnerable.

Marie Aleman, senior church development officer, and Gigi Krauser, director of church, school and community development, focused on the Catholic teaching that says that all human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. The culture of life means that human life is to be respected at all stages.

These principles form the basis of evangelism as Cross Catholic Outreach works to provide food, shelter, medical care, water, education, self-help programs, care for orphans and emergency relief to the poorest of the poor in dioceses around the world in the name of Christ.

The definition of “charity” is participation in tangible acts of loving kindness towards all others (friend or enemy) in unconditional and self-sacrificial ways. Cross Catholic Outreach brings human dignity and religion to the people of Haiti and Guatemala. For more information on the ministry to the poor, go to: <http://www.crosscatholic.org>.

Healing –The Church Will Set You Free: Understanding our Wounds

BY LINDA RIPP

Vicki Thorn, who has a degree in psychology and is a certified spiritual director, founded Project Rachel in 1990. Project Rachel offers post-abortion services such as training for care providers, 800 phone number for pre- and post abortion, men’s audio and printed materials, and “healing vision” conferences.

Thorn said that we are a “wounded society.” We have seen many societal changes since the 1960s that have impacted our lives in a negative way. She cited

- The Pill--leads to changes in libido, damages health; changes partner choice.
- Abortion--started a long time ago in Greece; traumatic loss; 50 million abortions in country.
- Mobility--loss of family system; people may move 11 times per lifetime
- Evil child movies (e.g., Rosemary’s Baby; Exorcist). Parents are more hovering and over protecting their children, so they don’t learn survival skills as we once did.
- Zero population growth. Children used to be a gift; now parents plan for kids’ future; no sense of accomplishment.
- Daycare. Families used to have attachment figures who stayed in our lives (grandma, aunt); in commercial daycares hard to build relationships.
- Divorce--enormous grief issue; lose our history, lose relatives such as cousins.
- Impact of media--technology that is not personal; makes you believe you have friends.

Thorn talked about existential wounds that are deep in our soul and said children of divorced parents may:

- Have increased divorce rate
- Suffer from more depression
- Struggle with relationships
- Suffer from insecurity
- Can’t communicate true feelings
- Don’t know how to resolve conflicts
- Struggle with forgiveness
- Fragmented families. No role model for how families work.

Healing can happen when we forgive ourselves and those who gave us our “wounds.” She said awareness of who got wounded in divorce is important. She said, “Ask for forgiveness. Go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Write a letter to one who wounded you (don’t need to mail it). Surrender our problems to Our Lady. Say this often: ‘God I give you permission to heal me’.”

It Tastes Good to Do Good

BY SANDRA HULL

“Every economic...action must set about providing each inhabitant of the planet with the minimum wherewithal to live in dignity and freedom, with the possibility of supporting a family, educating children, praising God and developing one’s own human potential.” — Pope Francis

What does this quote actually mean for us as Catholics? In this workshop Courtney Lare, Economic Justice Program officer and Kimberly Mazyck, relationship manager, both

representing Catholic Relief Services (CRS) gave a brief background on CRS and explained how fair trade works and how we can get involved.

Catholic Relief Services began after World War II as War Relief Services. Catholic Social Teaching serves as the foundation of CRS' Guiding Principles, with life and dignity of the human person as the core. We are all created in the image of God.

CRS has partnered with NCCW on four major projects:

1. **Maternal Health with the Madonna Plan**, monitoring the health of women and children from prenatal care through age 5.
2. **Help a Child**. One of the problems currently being worked on is trafficking. Through education, especially educating girls and women, the community does better.
3. **Refugee Women**. CRS is providing medical help, food, shelter and help to return home when it is safe to do so.
4. **Water for Life**. Supplying water tanks to villages help women and children since they don't have to carry water as far. The tanks are like our water towers.

Fair Trade

"The economy should serve people and not the other way around." -Economic Justice of all. Fair Trade recognizes the dignity of the work of artisans and farmers, ensuring they earn a fair wage. Fair Trade producers care for God's creation by treating the environment with respect. When you purchase fair trade products, you are standing for solidarity with the poor and vulnerable. Eighty percent of those who benefit from fair trade are women.

In the conventional value chain for coffee the following people are involved; 1) the farmer, who under this system can receive as little as 3 cents a pound for their coffee, 2) the buyer, often referred to as the coyote', 3) the exporter, 4) the importer, 5) the roaster, 6) the wholesaler who is responsible for roasting and packaging, and 7) the retailer.

A demonstration was given showing how the profits under this system are divided with the last three in the chain receiving about 30% each. The remainder is divided among the rest with the farmer receiving the least, just a fraction of a percent.

In a Fair Trade value chain, only three people are involved; 1) the farmers who under this system will organize with other farmers forming co-ops, getting the coffee ready for export, 2) Equal Exchange which roasts and packages the coffee for retail, and 3) the retailer. Under this system each person receives virtually an equal share. The minimum paid

to farmer through fair trade is \$1.90 a pound and can be up to \$4.00. A 30 cent premium is paid for organic coffee, and 20 cents a pound (the social premium) goes back to the community. It can be dangerous to switch from a conventional method of sale to Fair Trade as under the conventional method the coyotes' (buyers) are often mafia or gang members.

CRS has 15 Fair Trade partners including Serve, Equal Exchange, and 13 others that deal with coffee companies. All Fair Trade items are labeled. It was explained that Direct Trade is also okay, but the obligation to the farmer differs from Fair Trade. Also, items that are Rainforest Alliance such as Peets and Caribou ensure that the farmer is paid fairly and the environment is cared for, but there is no obligation to stay with a particular farmer.

Upon leaving the workshop, we received samples of Fair Trade chocolate. It truly did taste good to learn how to do good!

For more information and to view accepted Fair Trade labels, please check out "learning from labels" at www.crs.org.

NCCW Resolutions

Support of the USCCB Plan:

THE NEW EVANGELIZATION—JOURNEY WITH CHRIST: FAITH-WORSHIP-WITNESS

Purpose: To encourage the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) membership to follow the guidelines of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and their call to evangelize.

Whereas, The USCCB calls all Catholics to be evangelized and then go forth to evangelize;

Whereas, Our mission as Catholics is to reach out to those who have never heard the Gospel as well as to those who have been baptized but have lost a sense of faith in their daily lives; and

Whereas, The mission of the NCCW includes support and education of all Catholic women;

Resolved, That members of the NCCW commit to study and prayer for personal evangelization;

Resolved, That NCCW affiliates include elements of the New Evangelization Program, provided by the NCCW Leadership Commission, in their annual planning as a means of

spreading knowledge of our faith and the love of God within our families and communities; and

Resolved, That the NCCW membership promote the USCCB's plan: The New Evangelization—Journey with Christ: Faith-Worship-Witness through utilizing any pertinent NCCW or USCCB publications and through supporting any programs or presentations made at the NCCW annual meeting.

Adopted Sept. 26, 2014, NCCW Annual Convention, Grand Rapids, MI

Leadership Training

Purpose: To encourage participation in the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) Leadership Training.

Whereas, Leadership development is an integral part of the mission of the NCCW;

Whereas, Effective leadership training provides Councils with skills and tools to maintain and grow their members and organizations into the "best versions of themselves"; and

Whereas, NCCW established the Leadership Training Development (LTD) Team in 2008 to provide training modules that are written by Council sisters for Council sisters to assist in this mission;

Resolved, That all Provinces, Dioceses, and Subdivisions give serious consideration to hosting an LTD Program in their areas, even if they have hosted a portion of one in the past;

Resolved, That Councils are encouraged to plan ahead and prepare their budgets so that they are able to host an LTD program and keep it affordable for all their members; and

Resolved, That alumnae of the LTD program be encouraged to share their experiences and successes with other members of their Councils at every opportunity.

Adopted Sept. 26, 2014, NCCW Annual Convention, Grand Rapids, MI

Pornography Addiction

Purpose: To provide information to the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) members on addressing the alarming problem of pornography addiction made accessible by the media.

Whereas, The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "Sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for

itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes." (CCC 2351);

Whereas, Children are bombarded by pornography via different media channels that provide misinformation about sexuality that often results in a distorted developmental process; and

Whereas, The bulk of pornography shown often depicts violence and abuse, and as society becomes more desensitized to such sexual violence, pornography becomes more tolerated;

Resolved, That NCCW members become more informed about addressing pornography and pornography-related legislation and the media's assault on today's families through pornography by accessing information from Morality in Media (www.moralityinmedia.org), the NCCW website (www.nccw.org), as well as the USCCB website (www.usccb.org); and

Resolved, That NCCW members share information and instructions on how to place filters on private media devices.

Adopted Sept. 26, 2014, NCCW Annual Convention, Grand Rapids, MI

Advocating for Just Wages for Workers

Purpose: A call to address poverty in America by advocating for just wages for workers.

Whereas, The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 2434) teaches, "a just wage is the legitimate fruit of work ... (it) should guarantee man the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and his family on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level ...";

Whereas, Today over 46 million people in America live in poverty, and 22% of all U.S. children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level; and

Whereas, Work is fundamental to the dignity of people, and just wages build the economy and advance the common good;

Resolved, That the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) members support the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' efforts to advocate in Congress for a just minimum wage so families can meet basic human needs;

Resolved, That the NCCW members support the multi-year goals of Catholic Charities USA's national campaign to end poverty and which are:

- To **call upon the government** to improve public policies that strengthen and support families.
- To **educate** policymakers and the public about the struggles of those living in poverty and the good work of those who serve them in local communities.
- To **engage** those who are most impacted by government policies to be active participants in developing solutions to reducing poverty.
- To **work with** individuals and organizations across the country to address poverty in our country.
- We **call upon** all in our nation to address the issues that impact the most vulnerable and act now to reduce poverty in our nation; and

Resolved, That NCCW members act in their state and local communities to support efforts to enact a just minimum wage.

Adopted Sept. 26, 2014, NCCW Annual Convention, Grand Rapids, MI

Leadership Commission Report

In response to Pope Francis' New Evangelization and NCCW's commitment to support the pope's recommendations, the NCCW Leadership Team put together a new program for us on Evangelization, titled "We Are Called to Witness."

Available online by going to www.nccw.org, it is a wonderful program you can use in your parish CCWs. You can use one section a month or use one section over a couple months.

Sections of this program are:

1. Finding the Joy of Jesus in Yourself
2. Sharing the Joy of the Gospel with Other Catholics
3. Hospitality and Welcome
4. Hearts to Love and Hands to Serve
5. Holy Holidays
6. Reach Out to Young Women in College and Beyond
7. Faith Sharing in Everyday Life
8. Social Justice Shows God's Love
9. Learning Never Ends

Each Vicariate president will receive a printed copy.

Getting together at our CCW gatherings and conventions can be a time of spiritual growth and growing closer to our sisters in faith. It is also a time of renewing our personal faith and sharing it with others.

Share Your Faith in Everything You Do!

Carol Brennan

MDCCW Leadership Commission Chair

Service Commission Report

Do you remember the Donkey Project? The Global Solidarity Partnership began in 2002 with the Diocese of Novrongo-Bolgatanga in Ghana. The Donkey Project was to supply donkeys, along with plows and carts, to the women there to help with their farming which would otherwise be done by hand. In 2009, a self-sustaining donkey farm was begun, with an annual budget of \$20,000 a year to keep it going.

Interest in this project has gone down, and your help is needed to keep it going. In the past many parishes have sold Fair Trade chocolate with the proceeds going to this project. You may also want to consider other fair trade items by hosting a SERRV sale. Information on SERRV can be found at www.serrv.org.

For more information on the Donkey project, contact Clarence Mougín, coordinator of the Diocesan Global Solidarity Partnership at clarencemougin@charter.net or by phone at 608-850-4084. Also, see the article by Jennifer Hansen to learn how her parish successfully raises funds for the project.

To contribute to the Donkey Farm Project, send a check payable to the Diocese of Madison, Donkey Farm Project, P.O. Box 44983, Madison, WI 53744.

Caps of Love is a service project being promoted by the National Council of Catholic Women. Through this project, recycling plastic caps raises money to buy wheel chairs for disabled children.

As there are only a few places in the United States that recycle this type of plastic, all caps will be shipped to the founder of Caps of Love in Florida. More information will be forthcoming on possible shipping methods.

Get started in your parish by visiting www.nccw.org and clicking on Caps of Love under Commission Recourses at right of the page. There you will find a wonderful flyer to display. More information can also be found at capsoflove.com.

Start saving those caps today!

Sandra Hull

MDCCW Service Commission Chair

Spirituality Commission Report

SOMETHING FOR ADVENT

Looking for something to do for Advent that's simple and doesn't take a long time? Pray for your Priest, Bishop, and Pope. Pray, also, for our Spiritual Advisors.

As you pray The Our Father, say the name of the person you are praying for when you come to, "give us this day." Say, "give Pope Francis (or other name) this day his daily bread, and forgive him his trespasses, as he forgives our trespasses, and lead him not into temptation, but deliver him from evil. Amen." Mention each one individually.

Also pray for your loved ones using the Hail Mary. When you come to "Holy Mary, Mother of God, add your loved one's name: pray for NAME now and at the hour of his/her death. Amen." For a deceased loved one, you say, "pray for NAME at the hour of their death and now. Amen."

It's quite simple, and you can do this even before you get out of bed in the morning! You will soon find other people, situations, things, and problems to pray for. Have a Blessed Advent!

Mary Stasek

MDCCW Spirituality Chair

Legislative Commission Report

Many of us are glad that the elections are over. Why? So that we do not have to listen to the negative campaign advertisements through the media, whether on television, radio or newsprint. Voting is only one aspect of being a good citizen.

With elections now over, we need to move forward and work with our federal and state legislators to inform them about your concerns about issues, whether right to life, abortion, mining, gun control, etc. The following tips are from the USCCB website on how best to communicate with them.

DO

- Identify clearly the subject matter of interest (not just the House or Senate Bill #).
- State why you are concerned about an issue(s). Draw on personal experience.
- Restrict yourself to one or two topics and concentrate your arguments.

- Communicate while legislation is in committee and subcommittees where legislators have more influence over the legislation.
- Establish a relationship with your elected officials as an individual constituent.

DON'T

- Be star struck – resist temptation to be wowed by a legislator.
- Threaten – but present best argument in favor of your position.
- Pretend to yield vast political influence.
- Become a pen pal or infomercial for their office

Mark your calendars for Catholics at the Capitol April 18. The Wisconsin Catholic Conference convenes this conference in the spring of each new legislative session (odd-numbered years). The day consists of a prayer session, keynote speaker, breakout sessions, and an afternoon general session. After workshops, attendees can visit their legislators in the Capitol.

I encourage you to set the following links as your favorites so you can keep up-to-date on legislative issues.

Wisconsin Catholic Conference:

<http://www.wisconsincatholic.org>

United State Conference of Catholic Bishops:

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/index.cfm>

Catholic Mobilizing Network:

<http://catholicmobilizing.org/about/>

Wisconsin Legislature: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov>

Coreen Marklein

MDCCW Legislative Commission Chair

Donkey Project Well Worth It!

BY JENNY HANSEN

I want to share with you the most rewarding project I have ever been involved with in the hopes that you, too, will get involved with it. This will be our 10th year at Holy Mother of Consolation (OMC) in Oregon helping purchase donkeys for women in Ghana, and it saddens me that this could also be our last year.

The funds are running low, and at this point there isn't enough money to sustain the donkey farm. This is such a simple way to make a difference in so many lives. These donkeys don't just help the women that receive them; they also help so many others. They help the families from whom these women buy supplies, and they offer a way for children to go to school. These donkeys bring hope and peace to an area of the world that so desperately need it. Please consider starting up a donkey project of your own in your faith formation classes. The children in our parish look forward to it every year.

For many years, I was the coordinator of the 1st grade faith formation program at Holy Mother of Consolation Catholic Church in Oregon. For the past nine years, the 1st graders along with our parish family have raised almost \$16,000 to give donkeys to the women in Ghana. In addition, we have raised almost \$1,800 to purchase mosquito nets for our friends in Malawi. That is a total of almost \$18,000. How do we do? It is simple. We work together.

In August of 2005, my good friend and fellow long time 1st grade catechist Dawn Kirley died from cancer. We wanted to do something special to honor her memory. At that same time, I heard about the donkey project in Ghana. I couldn't have imagined a more wonderful way to honor Dawn than by helping others in need.

What we do is quite simple. I go to each of the 1st grade classes the first week in January. I show them a short pictorial video that I made with pictures from Ghana of the donkeys that we have purchased. Then I explain to the children what these donkeys do for these women and how much they improve their lives.

The next step is talking about what we can do to help. The children each receive a picture of a donkey and some stickers. Each sticker is equivalent to a set amount of money determined by each child and parents. For example, every time the 1st grader makes his bed, he will put a sticker on his donkey. If he makes his bed 10 times and each sticker is worth \$.50, then he has earned \$5.00 for the donkey. At the

end of the month, the students brought the money they had earned to class and pooled it together to purchase a donkey. The favorite part is that the kids are able to name their donkey. We have a "donkey wall of fame" that we put up each year with certificates of all the donkeys we have purchased. It is amazing to see how much it has grown!

I personally love this project because the 1st graders themselves are doing the work. Mom and dad aren't purchasing a school supply or food item for them to donate to a cause. They are vested. The harder they work the more people we can help...and hopefully the cleaner the house is.

On the first Sunday in February, the 1st graders have a special liturgy. They hand out bulletins and sing special songs. The best part is when they all walk into the church at the beginning of Mass, proudly holding up a donkey picture with all of the stickers. They are so proud of their work, and they should be. By working together they make a difference in the lives of many people. What an accomplishment.

For more information, you can contact me at (608)276-8701 or knjhans@charter.net or see Sandra Hull's report in this newsletter. God Bless You!

In Memory of Dorothy Lepeska

BY JANE GRINDE

Long-time MDCCW newsletter editor and past MDCCW President Dorothy Lepeska passed away at the age of 94 on October 31. While physically fragile after breaking her hip last November, she still attended two MDCCW board meetings and the convention this year. Jane Berhardt, another former MDCCW president and newsletter editor, shared the following memories of Dorothy:

“Dorothy and I were partners in work and fun ever since I was Grant Deanery president (‘73–‘75), and we discovered we were both Marquette University College of Journalism grads. Dorothy and I often arranged for our Madison CCW group’s hospitality room and “refreshments” at national conventions where there was always lots of laughter and relaxed commenting and sharing of ideas. When husbands did not accompany us to national conventions, we were roommates; and it was also a given at diocesan conventions. One thing that was always part of Dorothy’s routine was a time out each night before bedtime during which she went through the little packet of prayer cards and novenas that were just part of her life.”

Below is the eulogy delivered by Fr. Jim Murphy, pastor of St. Thomas Church, Montfort, where her funeral was celebrated the morning of November 3. Concelebrants were Msgr. Thomas Baxter, pastor of Good Shepherd in Madison; and Fr. Jay Poster, pastor of St. Joseph, Baraboo.

At the end of Mass, Fr. Jim specifically recognized the Council of Catholic Women and its wonderful work for the diocese.

Eulogy for Dorothy Lepeska

by Fr. Jim Murphy

“Dear Lord, please help me.” This was a common prayer for Dorothy. There is a time for almost everything, but we are always in need of God’s help. There was a time to leave Milwaukee and come to Southwest Wisconsin. Here, Dorothy found a life, a husband, Joseph, and a career. There was time to stay on the farm — to garden, to can, to bake bread and pies. We will enjoy a slice of poppy seed cake downstairs for lunch. Dorothy always brought a poppy seed cake to every funeral here at St

Thomas. There were times to leave the farm for CCW meetings, college graduations or a family wedding. There was time to travel far — to Europe and Australia. There was time to teach — not only at school, but to teach at home the love for faith and the church. There was daily time for prayer from her numerous prayer cards. There was time to write — there were birthday and anniversary cards, CCW newsletters, and Catholic Herald articles. 94 years is a long time for people, but an instant for God. The Dear Lord helped Dorothy for 94 years and the Lord will help us through this death and burial.

In our 2nd reading St John reminds us that we are children of God. We exist in the love of God — care, protection, consolation, forgiveness and understanding are gifts to all God’s children. That love allowed a Southside Milwaukee girl to graduate from Marquette University in the midst of World War II, to strike out across the state and create a home and a family. God’s love brought Dorothy and Joseph together on the steps of St. Thomas Church. God’s love was shared with 6 children, 18 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. As children we grow in appreciation and understanding of God’s love. And the more we grow, the more we realize what we don’t know and how amazing is all of God’s creation. Only now does Dorothy understand David’s early departure from this life and how it fits into God’s plan. St John tells us that what we shall be has not been revealed, but we will — thru perfect love — be like God. As children created in the image and likeness of God, we will share eternal life. Now, Dorothy has fully become what God intended. The beatitudes are sometimes called a summary of Jesus’ teaching. We are blessed, we are happy, but not with earthly gifts. We are blessed with poverty, sorrow, hunger, thirst, mercy and persecution. How do you feel after a vacation when returning to the common routine. We are people of hope. Our blessedness is not intensions, or feasts or triumph, but hope. The beatitudes tells us of future fulfillment.

For Dorothy the time of fulfillment has arrived. Mourning, hunger and persecution have ended. Dorothy is with God in a new way. Dorothy is like God in a new way. As of Friday, there is no more time, for Dorothy shares eternal Glory.

Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women

Annual Dues Statement for 2015

Dear Vicariate Affiliates/Individuals:

The annual MDCCW dues for 2015 are due. As is previous years, you will receive one bill notice for the MDCCW treasurer and other from NCCW.

MDCCW dues are \$50.00 per year. Individual Membership dues are \$10.00. The dues deadline is December 31, 2014.

This notice is being sent to the president on file; however, if you have changed officers, please forward this to the current CCW parish president. If your CCW is no longer active, please indicate on the form below and return to me so I can update my records. This form is being sent via e-mail or USPS. Please print out the form and return the bottom half to me.

Thank you for your membership and supporting Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.

Ellen Martin
 MDCCW Treasurer
 W8126 Elk Avenue
 Oxford, WI 53952
 608-296-4094

For your record:
 Amount Paid _____
 Date Paid _____
 Check Number _____

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 Make your check payable to **MDCCW** and return this part to me: Ellen Martin, W8126 Elk Ave Oxford, WI 53952

Affiliate/Individual Name (Vicariate or Parish) _____
 City _____
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 Active or Inactive (Please Circle)
 Amount Sent _____
 Check Number _____
 Date Received (For Treasurer only) _____