

President's Message

NCCW Convention Overview

Rosa Ropers, MDCCW President

December, 2014

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 Gramann 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.