

# Message from Our Co-Presidents

Ellen Martin and Sue Koch

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## 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