

Message from Our President

Linda Ripp

I am honored to have been elected as MDCCW President at the MDCCW convention, hosted by Columbia North in June 2022. I am proud to walk in the footsteps of all the women who have led MDCCW since its organization in 1946.

My theme is “**Jesus is the Light of the World, May we become a Light in the Darkness.**” It seems like there is so much division in the world today — us vs them; Democrat/Republican; red/blue; black/white; rich/poor.

Instead, I think we should be trying to work together and compromise to find ways to uplift all humanity and make the world a better place for everyone and show people the respect and dignity they deserve since we are all made in the “image of God.”

One of my goals is to connect Catholic women across the diocese, and I feel I am doing that with my monthly newsletters which feature Bible and inspirational quotes and information about events in the area. Even though we don't all have parish CCWs, we can still be part of MDCCW as individual members.

This past year, I attended

- four vicariate meetings: Sauk, West Dane, Grant, Columbia North;
- a Madison Catholic Women's Club event;
- a program for the KC wives at Saint Olaf's in De Forest; and
- the NCCW convention in November in Minneapolis.

All were great events to connect with Catholic women.

I want to spread the word about the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW). It was organized by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1920 to be a united voice of women across the United States and to help carry out the bishops' initiatives. Its mission statement follows: ***the NCCW 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.***

NCCW has been at the forefront of many concerns: human trafficking, respite care, women's relief services (Madonna Plan/Water for Life through Catholic Relief services). Many times, NCCW is the first to bring concerns to the public's attention.

Into the Deep

I see Bishop Hying's initiative “Into the Deep” as an opportunity to unite even more women as CCW members. I sent a letter to Bishop Hying (with Jane Grinde's input) to ask for a place at the table in discussions that could affect the MDCCW.

Bishop Hying isn't trying to make it harder to be Catholic, but to make us be **Better Catholics**. Are we willing to drive farther or go to a less favorable time to attend Mass? I think a priest said, “This isn't the time to be rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. We need to chart a new course.”

Finally, I want to thank my MDCCW board members and commission chairs: Carol Rogers, president-elect; Julie Zenz, treasurer; and Coreen Marklein, secretary; Sue Barker, leadership chair; and Judy Lyons, spirituality chair. I am still in need of a service chair (help with Boxes of Joy, promote service, and coordinate the Priest ordination reception).

I look forward to bringing the message of CCW to more women! Wishing a Joyful New Year to everyone!

From Our Spiritual Advisor

Msgr. Duane Moellenberndt

Mother Teresa, who is one of the Dear Members of the Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women:

I don't know about you, but I am not a fan of snow. Yes, I know we need snow for moisture. However, as I travel in the winter to various parishes when there is snow, I always wonder if I will arrive where I need to be on time and then return home without problems.

So, as I always said to the Sacred Hearts parishioners when I was their pastor, "Jesus didn't need to be born where there was snow. Hence, I don't need snow either."

As we enter more deeply into winter with the problems of driving this time of year, perhaps we should remember the phrase, it is not what happens to you but how you take it that matters.

Isn't it true as we face problems it is our attitude toward these challenges that makes all the difference? How we choose to react will greatly affect whether we are overwhelmed or if we cope positively to the difficulties that life presents to us.

Our life will never be free of issues and changes but if we look for ways we can address these issues in a positive manner, we will be a much happier person.

I am always happy to be present for your vicariate Masses and meetings. This is because of the faith and sense of joy that is always present for these gatherings.

Members of the Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women are joyful followers of the Lord Jesus. The more we maintain this attitude the more we will attract members to our organization.

Yes, part of our role is to tackle some of the current problems in our world and in the Church. However, if we do so with a positive spirit, we will know happiness personally and others will see that our faith impacts all that we do and that includes the attitude with which we face and work to overcome our problems.

God bless you for all you do to further the message of Jesus.

From Our Province Director

Lu Ann Miller

Milwaukee Province Director

Let us look forward to 2023 and the newness it will bring along with it. I hope for each of you a year that is exactly everything you want it to be and more.

What was the end of the year like for your councils? Finishing up your last fundraisers/projects for the year, getting your parishes ready for the Christmas masses, working at funeral luncheons, and more. Plus, you always can be found reciting the Rosary, being a part of parish prayer chains, praying over those in need, and working with your fellow sisters to ensure the vitality and sustainability of Council of Catholic Women. Thank you for all of that and so much more.

The National Council of Catholic Women convention held in Minneapolis proved again to be an exciting time.

The hospitality the Midwest is recognized for showed through from the beginning of the convention to its closure.

Only one resolution was presented and passed this year, and it will be our project for 2023. It calls for praying the daily Rosary and practicing the First Saturday Devotions as requested by Our Lady of Fatima.

The diocesan presidents who attended convention understand this resolution. More information and ideas for promoting and implementing it at the diocesan, vicariate, and parish levels will be made available after our board meeting in February.

At the NCCW Convention each year, commissions and committees work on new programs and resources and enhance past resources and will make them accessible on the nccw.org website for all to use.

- Education Commission concentrated on the diversity within our councils and ideas on how to work with that.
- Leadership offered ideas on how to engage ladies to bring them into council meetings and how to recruit new leaders.
- Spirituality Commission released a "Praying the Rosary with NCCW" booklet.

Also, we have a new design for the NCCW scarf.

The NCCW 2023 Convention will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, and returns to being held in the month of August. Let us put our creative minds to work on ideas on how to send a couple more ladies to convention.

Memberships

This is our other project for 2023. If you have let your membership lapse or simply received the notification of your membership needing renewal and put the renewal email to the side, it is never too late to renew and re-join the NCCW.

Everyone is working very hard to get memberships back on the upswing. Information regarding memberships can be found on the main page of the NCCW web link.

If your council pays NCCW dues, your president will receive the Catholic Woman magazine, monthly newsletter, plus access to much on the website. For \$50/year you can become an individual member and will receive and be able to access the same information.

Let us each continue praying for the work of our councils, for the direction the NCCW provides to all councils, and for the part you play in all of this. I will be praying for a strong and successful 2023 for each of our councils. Many blessings upon each one of you

Leadership Commission

Sue Barker

Leadership Commission Chair

I joined ten other women from our diocese to attend the National Council of Catholic Women convention in Minneapolis in early November 2-5, and we returned home with new ideas and friendships.

Our Leadership Commission session was a take-off of the Mary Tyler Moore Show. Some of you may not know that this sit-com was set in a Minneapolis newsroom. The statue dedicated to Mary Tyler Moore is a block away from the Minneapolis Marriot we stayed in. Participants in the skit played the parts of Mr. Grant, Mary, Ted, Sue Ellen, Georgette and Murray.

"Regain, Retain and Grow" gave us many good ideas for regaining women who were

past members and retaining the members we have.

- Listen a lot, discuss, ask members what they would like to do.
- Ask older members to work with new members.
- Pair extroverts with introverts.

Experienced members always have a lot to give to someone who has never been a part of what we do. Introverts can blossom into extroverts when given the right information and task to work with!

Common mistakes we make with new and old members is a lack of flexibility for new ideas. Eliminate saying “that’s the way we always have done it,” and don’t compare today to 20 or 30 years ago.

Today’s women need a reason to do something new and must be made to feel a part of the organization. They don’t want to attend a meeting just to attend, they need to feel their input is important.

Retain, Regain Members

For those who don’t renew their membership or stop coming to meetings, consider approaching them in a different way. Send them a letter asking why. If no reply within two weeks, contact them in person. Have a response ready for them as to why they should return to CCW. Remind them of our mission.

Many women don’t know we were asked by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to establish the CCW in response to their needs 102 years ago. Another option might be offering a woman who is indecisive a year’s membership in your group.

If you don’t have a parish or vicariate newsletter, please consider starting one to get the word out. Set up a Facebook page or add your information to your parish page.

An email blast can reach many parishioners and can be sent out at any time. Don’t let your group be the best kept secret in your parish. Working together, whether a new, returning, or present member will help us “Regain, Retain and Grow” our CCWs!

Service Commission

Coreen Marklein

Past Service Commission Chair

MDCCW Secretary Coreen Marklein, who most recently served as MDCCW service commission chair, attended the service commission session at the NCCW convention and provided the following summary.

NCCW Service Commission Chair Yvonne Willie Pygatt led the service session. She began by reminding us that “Whatever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto me.” Different commission members spoke about various topics and what the Service Commission does. In essence, it engages members to address the works of need.

The first item was on human sex trafficking and human labor trafficking. Pope Francis emphasized the need to pray to support victims of trafficking. Trafficking ...

- happens in every state in America.
- happens in small town USA.
- is adaptable.
- affects children; every 2.5 hours a child is taken. The average age of missing children is 15.
- affects mostly women; 95 percent of victims are women.

We were told that we need to be educated to all signs of trafficking and advocate for

victims by holding events in our churches and providing victims with information and phone numbers. Resources and references are available through NCCW.

The service commission session also focused on domestic violence and encouraged CCWs to help victims by raising money for shelters.

We heard that the Purina Company is helping shelters to accept pets through its Purple Leash Project since some victims with pets may be reluctant to go to a shelter. We can learn more about the project through the company. Other ways to assist:

- Volunteer to answer phones and offer childcare.
- Interact with people in loving ways.
- Seek area hotels that will house victims.
- Ask for a weekend collection to collect money for a shelter.
- Use the resources on the NCCW website for more ideas.

Rhonda Kollman spoke about the Walking With Moms in Need project and provided examples on how we can help with this project. One example is to approach women with children at church and invite them to have coffee and share resources. Give phone number of a CCW member and priest.

In closing, the commission members proclaimed, "We are service — working for you, followed by our singing "Make Me a Servant" by the Maranatha! Singers.

Opportunity

MDCCW is looking for a **Service Commission Chair**.

Duties include

- coordinating the Priest Ordination reception (see article about 2022 reception in the *Catholic Herald*: madisoncatholicherald.org/mdccw-hosts-ordination-reception/),
- promoting, and organizing MDCCW service project(s), and
- offering suggestions on service projects to vicariate and parish CCWs

Coreen Marklein, who served in the position the last several years, will help and mentor the new chair. Contact President Linda Ripp at linmdccw@gmail.com.

Spirituality Commission

Judy Lyons

Spirituality Commission Chair

Greetings Sisters in Christ! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. As Bob Cratchit said to Ebenezer Scrooge, "I am behind my time, Sir." But I hope that your Christmas and New Year's celebrations were happy and peaceful.

We are again on to a new year. I think the word for this year is hope. And I think it is a great word for the year. Last year found us in a lot of confusing and fearful time. And the one thing I am sure that in whatever way it happens, God is still on the job watching out for us.

Commitment to Prayer

I would like to recommend a spiritual practice for this year. Please pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet as often as you can. It is appropriate for our time. You can do it daily, weekly, at adoration, or before mass. Find the time and make a commitment to saying this prayer. It is powerful.

Another good practice is to keep hope on our faces and in our hearts. It gives hope to others who may be discouraged. We are, after all, a people of hope. Be an encourager, an affirmer, a peacemaker. You are some of God's most beautiful work and I am so proud of you. I wish you the following blessing for the New Year:

The Lord bless you and keep you;

*the Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you;*

*the Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace.*

Coreen Marklein Nominee for NCCW Secretary

MDCCW secretary Coreen has received the nomination for the office of secretary to the national organization.

Coreen asks for your prayers as she makes her way through the voting process. Her candidate statement as published on the NCCW website follows.

"I'm Coreen Marklein, and I would like to be your next NCCW Secretary. I have held several positions within levels of Council and currently serve as our MDCCW Secretary. I am always taking notes whether at meetings, listening to speakers, or

planning my day. I still use shorthand when taking notes.

I have attended ten of the last eleven NCCW conventions and believe NCCW will benefit from my organizational skills and overall knowledge of NCCW. I bring my faith in God and love of Council and family to this position."

Coreen's list of accomplishments, services, and interests are diverse. A past president of MDCCW, she has chaired the legislative and service commissions and helped with many diocesan and vicariate meetings. As service commission chair, she chaired and coordinated the reception for the newly ordained priests for several years and coordinated Boxes of Joy as well as promoting other service projects.

Active in her local parish, Saint Joseph, Baraboo, Coreen works as a payroll/benefit specialist for the UW-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health. She holds a bachelor's degree from Lakeland College.

Voting starts Monday, April 3, and closes Monday, May 1.

An electronic link will be emailed to all individual members and current presidents of affiliates (diocese, deanery, vicariate, parish) who have provided an email address. Members who do not have an email address will receive a ballot in the mail. Election results will be announced by June 1.

Voting eligibility in the upcoming elections requires an individual member to be current in her dues and affiliate presidents (receiving two (2) votes) must be listed on the record 60 days prior to the electronic voting (renewals must be received on or before January 30, 2023).

Convention Overview

Over 450 women from throughout the country, including ten from the Madison Diocese, participated in the annual convention of the National Council of Catholic Women in Minneapolis November 1-5. The convention theme was “Open Hearts Abiding in Faith, Hope, and Love.”

MDCCW President **Linda Ripp** led the MDCCW delegation which included **Sue Barker**, Verona, and **Kathy Roelke**, and another **Sue Barker**, Waunakee, from the West Dane Vicariate; **Kathy Loy** and **Carol Rogers**, Fennimore, Grant Vicariate; **Coreen Marklein**, Baraboo, from Sauk Vicariate; and **Barb Mehling**, **Sue Koch**, **Ellen Martin** and **Carolyn Zentner** from the Columbia North Vicariate. Past MDCCW president Judy Lyons was registered to go but unable to attend because of illness.

At the opening Mass, Archbishop Bernard Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis encouraged the congregation to use their gifts to help priests and bishops find the lost sheep, including Catholics who haven't returned to their parishes since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It's really only when we're able to demonstrate a deep charity that we can ever have the hope of attracting people back to our Church, and you my sisters, do that in spades,” Archbishop Hebda said in his homily, thanking the women for their commitment to faith and service. “We're so grateful for the ways in which you demonstrate charitable concern for our sisters and brothers.”

Hope, Love

The convention's theme was inspired by Pope Francis' teaching on hope in his 2020 encyclical letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, and on Saint Paul's writing on love in 1 Corinthians chapter 13, said NCCW President Patricia Voorhes of Salt Lake City.

In her opening remarks, the NCCW president encouraged women to “celebrate the many ways

you respond with Gospel values to the needs of the Church and society, and go forward from this convention with open hearts, ready to try new things to brighten and enliven your councils.”

Organizers draped the convention stage with colors to inspire reflections on spirituality, leadership, and service, along with ways to strengthen and empower other Catholic women, the Church and society, said Beth Mahoney, of Taunton, MA, NCCW president-elect.

Talks throughout the week focused on the theological virtues that inspired the convention theme. Liz Kelly Stanchina's presentation emphasized love, and Immaculate Heart of Mary Sister Xavier Mariette Ezeokoli described her ministry of service at Sharing and Caring Hands in Minneapolis in a talk focused on hope for the homeless.

As part of a panel discussion titled “Discover your Fiat,” Therese Coons, Kristin Molitor and Susan Stabile shared their faith stories. On the final day of the convention, Yen Fasano, associate director of the archdiocese's Drexel Mission Schools Initiative, tied the virtues together and sent the participants out on mission.

Resolution Promotes Prayer

Attendees approved a resolution to encourage and promote praying the rosary daily and to promote the First Saturday devotion of the rosary, Mass, and confession requested by Our Lady of Fatima.

Those attending the convention brought boxes of hygiene items for Sharing and Caring Hands, a ministry in Minneapolis that serves the homeless, including families.

The NCCW is supported by its Gold Sponsors which were recognized at the convention. They include Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Cross Catholic Outreach (CCO), and The National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help in New Franken, WI (near Green Bay).

Parts of the above article were excerpted from the diocesan newspapers.

NCCW CONVENTION

National Council of Catholic Women Celebrates 102 Years of Ministry and Service at Minneapolis Convention

Convention Reflections

“There were so many highlights of the convention — great Liturgies, speakers, meeting other Catholic Women, and learning about NCCW programs and projects that it is hard to just pick one,” said MDCCW President **Linda Ripp**.

Attending her first convention, President-Elect **Carol Rogers** said it wouldn't be her last. Of her experience, she wrote, “The most important lesson I learned was that NCCW is comprised of women living ordinary lives who have accepted a call to be leaders in the Church. I had expected a roster of high-priced speakers, each with her own national following, with exciting life stories that would inspire the audience to want to be just like them.

“What I got was ordinary women living ordinary faith-filled lives, who still inspired me to want to emulate their faith.”

Linda Ripp, Coreen Marklein, Kathy Loy, Sue Barker and Carol Rogers arrived early and participated in pre-convention activities, including a nearby trip to St. Paul for a tour of the State Capitol and/or attendance at an All Saints Day Mass at the Cathedral of St. Paul.

They arrived back at the Marriott in time to attend an LTD (leader trainer development) pre-conference training session which was geared around a football themed tailgate. The presenters, dressed in sports gear, said every team needs a game plan.

Members, Leaders

Participants were asked, “What are two things every organization needs? Members and Leaders.” The session gave ideas for attracting members and mentoring members to be leaders. **Coreen Marklein**, MDCCW secretary and past president, said discovering the root causes for lack of membership is key.

Coreen Marklein, who is a past MDCCW president, said, “We need to discover the root causes for our lack of members and then break down the root causes to bring the women what they want to increase our membership.”

Linda Ripp added, “We should choose projects/programs that address current values, not just based “on this is the way we always do it.” Make it fun, be creative, we need excitement — maybe wine and cheese party. Spirituality should be at the forefront of all meetings, projects.”

Grateful to Attend

Past MDCCW President **Ellen Martin**, Westfield, said, “How grateful I am that I was able to attend my eighth NCCW convention. It was so wonderful to see old friends and meet new ones. The ladies of NCCW use the talents within themselves to come up with new ideas each year to educate us on all the good works that they do. Plus, it is so encouraging to hear stories from different CCWs on how the women are trying to keep their councils alive.”

Ellen said the province dinner was the highlight. "It is where we can visit with each other, enjoy a nice meal, and play some games. LuAnn Miller from the La Crosse Diocese is the province director for Wisconsin. Her smile and enthusiastic attitude are contagious. We are grateful for her leadership. My roommates this year were wonderful ladies who like to have a fun time."

Life Journey Stories

Suzanne Koch appreciated hearing speakers share their life journey stories. She said, "Many speakers also asked us to reflect about our own unique life journey stories: the twists and turns they took, how God was present in the events that shaped them. Speakers asked us to consider and reflect on the rest of our life's journey, through prayer and meditation, to form even a closer relationship and friendship with Jesus Christ."

Barbara Mehling, president of the Saint Ann's CCW, Montello, was grateful to attend her second national convention and to travel "with a great group of ladies from three of our other parishes in the Columbia North Vicariate."

Barbara especially liked meeting ladies from all over the country to compare notes of things they are doing and how they are gaining memberships and events they are holding at their local parishes. She liked that the convention helps us "serve better in our local communities."

Barbara enjoyed getting to know President Linda better and to "appreciate all she does for our Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women."

NCCW Charities

Kathy Loy, past MDCCW treasurer, shared information on donations made by NCCW

members to charities. Through its members, NCCW gave \$29,000 to Madonna Plan and Water for Life. It supported Catholic Relief Services (CRS) by donating over \$56,000 dollars to aid in the relief efforts in the Ukraine.

Its partnership with Cross Catholic Outreach (CCO) enabled NCCW to support its programs both spiritually and materially. In 2021 CCO served 32 countries with 320 different projects. One of these projects is Boxes of Joy which has been a service project for MDCCW the past two years.

Convention Highlights

Speakers inspire, teach

In her remarks to open the NCCW convention November 3 in Minneapolis, Liz Kelly Stanchina referred to the day's Gospel about the Christ the Good Shepherd (Luke Chapter 15). "I think we all think of the Good Shepherd passage as Jesus coming to save us. Of course, he does, but I do wonder how often he asks us to go in search of the lost in his place,"

A retreat leader, speaker, author and columnist for her diocesan newspaper, Kelly Stanchina encouraged those gathered to pray for the grace to make the virtues of faith, hope and love visible in their lives, which was the message of the convention theme of "Wide Open Hearts: Abiding in Faith, Hope and Love."

The day before the official start of the convention, the Very Reverend Miguel Gonzalez, chair of the NCCW Spiritual Advisors, celebrated and preached at a welcome liturgy on the Feast of All Souls Day.

A veteran of many conventions, **Coreen Marklein** was among those attending the

Mass wrote about the homily in her reflections on the convention. The homily focused on purgatory.

Purgatory

Coreen reported that Fr. Gonzalez compared purgatory to driving your vehicle through a car wash. The car is imperfect and covered with dust, pollen, dirt, and bugs on the windshield. Before the vehicle can be cleaned, the vehicle needs to go through a painful experience to regain its brightness and be clean. Just think of the steps a vehicle goes through to get clean. First there is the water pressure, then chemicals are thrown at car, followed by a rinse, more water, more soap and then followed by more chemicals. Before exiting the car wash, the vehicle goes through a high pressure blow dry! The result is a sparkling clean vehicle — what an accomplishment.

Coreen said, “If we go to purgatory, we know we are on our way to heaven! However, we have a stop along the way. We need to be cleansed due to the poor choices we have made. Remember the faithful departed must be purified and crystal clean. We must do our part every day.”

Noting that the theme of convention was “Wide Open Hearts, Abiding in Faith, Hope and Love,” Coreen said, “Fr. Gonzales reminded us to exercise this act of life and love. We must pray for those who have died before us. We hope one day they will intercede for us on our journey to heaven. Our life is a journey of preparations. We must embrace teachings, serve others, follow the message of the Gospel, and persevere on our journey. We must prepare and seed. Thank God for the gifts of His Son.”

Blessed Carlo, Eucharistic Miracles

Kathy Loy and **Linda Ripp** were inspired by the presentation on “Blessed Carlo — An Influencer for God.” The traveling display features the Eucharistic Miracles of the World and includes a relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis who died at the age of 16 of leukemia. Dedicated to the Eucharist, Carlo was beatified in 2020.

As a young boy, the English-born Italian Catholic was very interested in the Eucharist. He used his skills as an amateur computer programmer to document Eucharistic miracles from around the world and cataloging them onto a website. He designed 37 panels of Eucharistic Miracles, which are currently traveling around the Madison Diocese.

Linda told about Carlo’s concern that after being confirmed, too many kids stop going to Mass and receiving the Sacraments and yet they are willing to wait in long lines for rock concerts and other events. Carlo said, “Jesus transforms us every time we receive Him.”

After his diagnosis of a rare form of leukemia, he died a few days later October 12, 2006. He said, “I am okay with dying because I haven’t wasted a moment of my life on earthly things.”

Faith-filled Journey with God

Kathy Loy and **Carol Rogers** wrote about three women who shared their faith-filled journey with God.

Kim Padan from the Peoria, Illinois, Diocese led the three-person panel of Therese Coons, Kristin Molitor, and Susan Stabile who told of their personal roadmap journey to their relationship with God.

Kathy said, “We were told that it is up to each one of us to figure out what God’s plan

is for us. It takes a real leap of faith and daily prayer to discern what our own roadmap should look like on our journey in this life.”

Carol summarized the comments of each of the three who were led by God to serve Him in different ways.

Therese Coons was one of eight girls raised on a farm by faithful Catholic parents. She abandoned her faith in high school, college, and her career as a lawyer. She found God again at the birth of her son. In her search for a deeper spirituality, she became a member of a small group in which faith sharing was natural. Fr. Gallagher on EWTN inspired her to explore Ignatian spirituality, which introduced her to practical application to grow her Catholic Faith. She feeds her soul and grows daily now through lectio divina, the daily examen, and discernment of spirits.

Kristin Molitor was likewise one of eight girls who grew up on a dairy farm in St. Cloud with no desire to leave the safety of Minnesota. She, however, had developed a deep belief that her life was in God’s hands. She prayed Mary’s fiat, “Be it done onto me according to Thy word.” Her desire was to be completely surrendered to God’s plan for her life.

When God called, He asked her to move east, from Minnesota to Pennsylvania. There amid the twists and turns of life unfolding, she heard another call — to become a Consecrated Virgin Living in the World. She said yes. Kristin said that we never know what God can do; we just need to remain available, listen, and trust Him. We can expect, she noted, that we can expect discomfort in the space between doing God’s will and moving on to a new call from Him.

Susan Stabile knows firsthand that a fiat given to God is never a once and done

promise to be faithful. God allows our hearts and minds to experience significant points of conversion throughout the journey of our lives. She was a New York City girl from Brooklyn, growing up in the 60s. Though she had a very Catholic childhood, she lost her faith as a senior in high school. Her faith disappeared completely at Georgetown University, a Catholic institution. In the study of many religions, she chose to become a Buddhist and was one for 20 years. She spent two years in Buddhist nations and became a Buddhist nun for a time, but this was not for her.

Her life journey took her back to New York. One day her eight-year-old daughter asked to be placed in Catholic education, saying “You take Buddha, I’ll take Jesus.” This was her call to revert to her Catholic Faith. At this time, she also became interested in Ignatian spirituality, which led her to participate in retreats, eventually lead retreats, and become a spiritual director. She currently serves in this capacity at Saint Thomas in Minneapolis. She recognizes that God, not despite her background but because of it has called her to serve the church. All of us are called to discern God’s plan for us.

Linda Ripp reported on the presentation by Ellen Bachman, chair of the NCCW Education Committee. Her presentation was entitled “Peek-a-boo, I see you.” Her children and grandchildren loved to play Peek-a-boo (the surprise, “you remembered me”).

The speaker challenged the women to ask if they are being inclusive in their groups. She said we need to look at councils with new eyes. We need to see all God’s creation in all people. We are made in God’s image. We need to do projects that meet the needs of the people in our parishes (e.g., dance for elders, Spanish Mass).

Kathy Loy and her sister **Coreen Marklein** wrote about the presentation by Yen Fasano, associate director of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Titled her presentation, “Knock, Knock... Who’s There?”, she said her children told her she had to say a couple of “knock, knock” jokes to get the attention of her audience.

The speaker focused on the painting, “The Light of the World,” by William Homan Hunt (1827-1910). Fasano said the painting is as relevant today as it was back in 1851 when it was painted. It shows Jesus with a crown of thorns on his head and carrying a metal lantern. He is standing at a door as to knock, but the door has no door handle.

Fasano said the door can’t be opened from the outside and only from the inside. Jesus doesn’t impose on us; he waits for us to open wide the door and fill our hearts with his love.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

With the Eucharist we take on the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Eucharist is the spirit of love and gratitude. The Crucifix shows us how he loved us back then and the Eucharist shows us how God loves us now.

God uses the Holy Spirit to mold and shape us. It is up to us to journal how we feel and touch God in the different things we do and say as to understand what God is trying to tell us.

The speaker quoted the late Bishop Sheen who said God does not choose the strong but chooses the weak so he can mold us. We must have wide open hearts and let go of would haves, could haves, and should haves.

The lantern symbolizes the source of all goodness which is freedom and light. It is up to us that we don’t hide the Light of

Christ. The lamp/lantern is to help us see what we are doing. We should walk by faith at Love’s door.

Linda Ripp also wrote about Yen Fasano’s presentation at the closing session on Saturday morning. The Holy Spirit comes where he is invited, loved, or expected. Love/God stands knocking at our door. Are we opening it? A good friend doesn’t judge us, we don’t have to be at our best, have a perfectly clean house with friends. They are just there for us.

Jesus always invites us to a deeper relationship. Give Jesus a wide, open door! Jesus won’t ever bang on our door, but he aches to be invited in.

Resolution approved at 2022 NCCW Convention

Daily Rosary and First Saturday Devotions

Purpose: To encourage and promote the practices of praying the daily Rosary and the First Saturday Devotion.

Whereas, Our Lady has led nations repeatedly out of situations of pestilence, violence, spiritual and moral decline, and

Whereas, In Pope Francis’s New Year 2022 homily, he states, “At the beginning of the New Year, then, let us place ourselves under the protection of this woman, the Mother of God, who is also our mother. May she help us to keep and ponder all things, unafraid of trials and with the joyful certainty that the Lord is faithful and can transform every cross into a resurrection.”

Resolved, That, at this critical time for our Church and our nation, it is vital for NCCW members to pray the daily Rosary and

practice the First Saturday Devotion that were requested by Our Lady of Fatima and

Resolved, That NCCW members recognize this urgent need and with pastoral coordination, engage others in these devotions and form cenacles of prayer before Masses, on First Saturdays, or at times of Eucharistic Adoration, and request that each province director makes every effort to disseminate this resolution within their provinces and be prepared to report their successes at the 2023 NCCW Convention Board meeting.

Connie Andrews, NCCW Resolutions Committee co-chair, wrote the following on the resolution approved by delegates to the NCCW convention.

The resolution adopted in November promotes the Daily Rosary and First Saturday Devotions. Daily Rosary is easy, but First Saturday Devotions may be new to some. Our Lady explained to Sr. Lucia, a Fatima visionary, "...make reparation to me, on the First Saturday of five successive months, go to Confession, receive Holy Communion, say five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for a quarter of an hour, meditating on the mysteries of the rosary." There are eight first Saturdays before our next convention. Set a reminder on your phone so you can accomplish this goal.

2023 NCCW Convention

August 23-26, 2023, Salt Lake City

Path of Renewed Encounter

The 2023 convention theme, Path of Renewed Encounter, is based on Chapter 7 of Fratelli Tutti with sub-themes of peace, forgiveness, harmony, social justice, end to the death penalty, violence, and war: plus, the Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church.

Editor's comments

I found editing this issue of the newsletter a challenge. Why? Because those who attended the National Council of Catholic Women's convention in Minneapolis in early November wrote a great deal about their experiences at the convention. My task was to organize and edit it.

My predecessor as editor always attended the national convention and taped many of the sessions and then spent hours writing articles for the newsletter. She also asked for articles from other convention goers. I am not sure if she was the one who started the tradition of having the winter newsletter feature the national convention, but whoever did that tradition continues.

I have yet to attend a convention, but I am inspired by what those who attended and are sharing their experiences.

My concern is that this newsletter is long and is too easily set aside for reading later, but does later ever come?

I appreciate getting to know President Linda Ripp. Her one-to-two-page newsletter is easy to read and inspiring. I especially like her new year's resolutions. I must admit I struggle with finding Christ in everyone. Following is part of her message in her January President's Pen News. It is well worth re-reading.

My resolution is going to be to see God in everyone (we are made in his image — Genesis 1: 28), and see the Good in everything (God uses everything toward Good.). Through the lens of God, we find ways to bring justice into the world when we see injustices. Perhaps in our suffering or loneliness, we can sympathize and reach out to others who are also suffering.

Part of my New Year's Resolutions includes my efforts to turn a negative into something positive.