

From Our President

Happy Thanksgiving!

At this time of giving thanks I am so thankful for all of you and the good work you do for and through the Council of Catholic Women. I'm thankful to be part of an amazing organization with faithful, prayerful, hard-working members. I had the pleasure of meeting many of you at the fall vicariate meetings. You are the branches producing abundant fruit in the Lord's vineyard. Thank you!

As president of MDCCW, I would like to encourage us to focus on three goals.

1. Explore ways to welcome inactive women into our councils by finding new opportunities for them to use their skills, talents, and creativity.
2. Promote attendance at the diocesan convention on June 6 in Wisconsin Dells and the national convention August 21-24 in Atlanta. Can you find sponsors for women who would like to attend?
3. Plan a celebration in 2020 for the 100th birthday of NCCW that calls attention to this great organization and the good work we do in the Lord's vineyard.

The diocesan board will be giving these goals our attention, and you will hear more from us in the months ahead.

May our Lady of Good Counsel and her Son be with us, our councils, families, and friends as we celebrate Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas. Blessings on all during this beautiful season.

Bernadette Schaefer

MDCCW President

“He is the vine; we are the branches.”

On becoming MDCCW president, Bernadette Schaefer distributed business cards with the words, “He is the vine; we are the branches” along with her contact information on the front. On the back of the card are words from John 15:4-5:

“Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.”

From Our Spiritual Advisor

Dear Members of the Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women,

This is quite a name for our organization. Often we just say MDCCW because it is easier to do. However, I think at times spelling out the full name emphasizes the power and authority that can come from our Council on the local, vicariate, diocesan, and national levels.

We know there is power in numbers. Always remember you belong to an organization that can influence both Church and State. What makes this possible is that we can speak with one voice on the issues of our time on which we are united.

What unites is our love for Christ Jesus risen from the dead. What unites us is our love for the Mass and the Sacraments. What unites us is our commitment to serve, through the programs of our Councils, those who are most in need of our help. What we could not do on our own and have a great impact we can do together and truly make a difference.

Why should women belong to the Council of Catholic Women? The answer is simple. Our membership helps us to be inspired together to see the needs of the Church and our nation. Then together we can seek ways to meet these needs and to change what we are able to change. Our membership helps us to share time with others who share our Catholic values thereby being strengthened in our faith.

God bless you for your commitment to the Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.

Msgr. Duane Moellenberndt
Spiritual Advisor

From Our Province Director

Joy Continues as NCCW Theme

Congratulations to all the new officers in your councils. Thank you for saying yes! You will find many ways to put your faith into action while sharing joy and love as well as meeting many wonderful ladies along the way. Have courage to reach out beyond your parish boundaries. Join ladies in your vicariates, the diocese, and beyond to grow in faith and friendship.

“NCCW Reflecting God’s Joy: Missionary Disciples — Mission Possible!” was the theme of our annual convention. There was joy everywhere. Convention is like being on a renewal retreat. You come away on a spiritual high as well as full of ideas, energy, and enthusiasm for CCW.

The opening ceremony was extra special. Sheila Hopkins, immediate past president, carried in a flag of NCCW, and we heard a new hymn to Our Lady of Good Counsel, patroness of the NCCW, based on our mission statement. NCCW President Maribeth Stewart Blogoslawski designed the flag and composed the hymn.

Each year NCCW and its commissions and committees put together programs and resources and make them available on the

nccw.org website for councils to use. To name a few,

- Leadership focuses on human trafficking.
- Spirituality offers a monthly call-in rosary and three mini-retreats.
- Service developed a tracking sheet on human trafficking events and a program to unite our Catholic schools with schools in the Holy Land.

Take advantage of these resources. Be sure to get the new revised Guidance and Resource Manual for your council as it has great information in it.

Two things were different this year for me at the convention.

1. About two weeks before convention, the priest/bishop abuse scandal broke out in Pittsburgh, the convention site. President Maribeth Stewart Blogoslawski sent a memo to say this would not be a topic for discussion, but instead we would be concentrating on our theme of “reflecting God’s Joy...” There was still a concern or dread this would be a dark cloud over convention, and this would be the “elephant in the room.” However, all of our speakers as well as the bishops and cardinal at Masses did bring this up so it was not ignored and yet joy was everywhere.
2. From my position as Milwaukee Province Director this past year, I have been working with ladies from across the nation and have developed great friendships so I know so many people. All of us on the board had certain responsibilities at convention, giving us more ownership of the event. This was another time to get together and grow closer to sisters in faith.

The overall friendliness, joy, and love expressed by everyone really impressed me this year. Jean Kelly, NCCW president-elect, was the convention chair and did an awesome job of organizing everything. As many of you know, Jean is from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and past Milwaukee province director as well as NCCW past secretary. She has certainly devoted much of her time, energy, and herself to CCW. Our deepest

sympathy goes out to her and her family in the recent passing of her husband Jerry.

I will continue to share what I learn from convention and NCCW Board meetings with the diocesan presidents and presidents-elect at our province board meetings as well as through email and this

The theme of joy continues as the theme for this year is "NCCW: Reflecting God's Joy: Caring for His Creation."

Reduce Plastic Use was one of four resolutions passed at convention. All of us can at least use reusable cloth bags for groceries and a reusable drink mug and recycle the plastic that we use.

If your council pays NCCW dues, your president receives the Catholic Woman magazine, monthly newsletter, plus access to much on the website, but these often don't get passed around. You can become an Individual Member for \$50/year to receive and access this same information. That's less than a dollar a week.

NCCW 2019 Convention next year is in Atlanta August 22-24. Have your councils hold some fundraisers so they can send a couple members to convention.

NCCW will celebrate 100 years in 2020. Plan some celebrations.

NCCW is accepting donations for victims of Hurricane Florence. To help victims of flooding in our state, donate to Catholic Charities Madison.

Enjoy this fall. We have had so much rain, and yet there is so much beauty and goodness around us. We need to appreciate it and give thanks. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving, and then Advent will be right around the corner. Time seems to fly by.

Carol Brennan

Milwaukee Province Director

Editor's Message

Memories of Irene Sullivan, a past leader

MDCCW lost another servant and friend with the passing of Irene Sullivan. She was born Oct. 30, 1929, and passed away April 22, 2018.

Irene was actively involved at all levels with the Council of Catholic Women, so much so that another past MDCCW president (1995-96) Dorene Shuda calls her "the poster child for the NCCW." Irene and her husband Ed were founding members of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Cambridge. Irene served as president of her parish, Jefferson Vicariate and Madison Diocesan councils of Catholic Women and finally as Milwaukee Province director.

Irish Angel Sent from Heaven

"When I first met Irene in the early 70's," said Dorene, "I was stricken with the red hair, round cherubic face sprinkled with freckles and eyes that twinkled when she smiled. I thought she was either an Irish angel sent from heaven or Mrs. Claus sent by Santa!"

Active in the same vicariate, Dorene said, "Irene lived her life following Jesus and fulfilling the CCW Mission Statement and, with the help of "Poor Ed" (her greatest supporter), raised seven children. She was an inspiration for hundreds of the Jefferson Vicariate and Madison Diocesan women who had the pleasure of knowing and working with her for so many years."

Another past MDCCW president (1991-92), Jane Bernhardt, Cassville, said of Irene, "One word that comes to mind when thinking of Irene through the years is Happy. Happy, not only in willingness to help in whatever capacity she was serving, but happy as in merry and joyful in the way she faced life."

Jane said when working with Irene on projects, "One couldn't help but be affected and infected by her joy aided, too, by her playful laughter that accompanied every conversation."

Happy Servant of the Church

Irene “put her many talents” to work to benefit CCW as a whole, “but her lasting contribution, perhaps, is the example she left for each one of us in living out her life as a happy servant of the Church and God.”

MDCCW Spiritual Advisor Msgr. Duane Moellenberndt re-members Irene as “a woman of deep faith very committed to the Council of Catholic Women. I found her very warm and personable. Irene was the sort of individual you would want to be in a leadership role for she sincerely cared about people.”

On a personal note, I remember Irene well since she was a good friend of my mother Dorothy Lepeska. My mother and she enjoyed many laughs whether in person or on the telephone. The comments from Jane and Dorene fit my memories of Irene perfectly! After my mother’s passing, Irene and I kept in touch with phone calls and letters, and I was happy to see her at the 2017 MDCCW convention in her home vicariate of Jefferson.

Gratitude

For those of us fortunate to have known Irene, we can be grateful for her service to CCW and for the many leaders she mentored who in turn mentored many more.

One of the many joys of volunteering is getting to know people we never would otherwise have known. I am grateful for having known Irene as well as the many I know and continue to meet through my association with MDCCW. My friend Peggy says it well: “Being involved with other people through church activities has not only given me great examples about how to live my faith, but also has provided me with the strength to be a practicing Catholic in this very secular world.”

Jane Lepeska Grinde

Editor

Service Commission

Report from the NCCW Convention

I attended the Service Commission session at the NCCW convention and learned about the commission’s work and available resources. NCCW Service Chair Diane Tugander conducted the session.

NCCW established the Respite Program in 1982 to spiritually and temporally renew the family caregiver. Respite means a temporary intermission of labor, an interval of rest (renewal: spiritual/temporal). Its purpose is to provide companionship, focusing on spiritual and temporal needs. The Service Commission recently updated the Respite Manual (edition 3) and has it available for \$10 from NCCW. Any reference to medical training and caregiving has been removed from the current edition.

The Respite Manual provides the steps to set up a program in your parish and includes the do’s and don’ts of the program. The first steps include the following.

- Identify a need in the community.
- Select a Respite Project Coordinator. Leadership is key.
- Recruit volunteers with direction from the pastor.
- Have volunteers receive background checks and Virtus or similar training through the diocese. Liability/volunteer insurance is available through NCCW for \$3.00 per person.

Respite volunteers

- Provide confidentiality
- Document for continuity of care
- Serve as companions while primary caregiver is away
- Listen to the client
- Commit two to four hours weekly.

Respite Care does not provide

- Medication dispensing
- Driving
- Personal care, including restroom

- Assistance with mobility issues
- Care calendar
- Meal preparation
- Household tasks.

Tugander provided examples of respite care situations, some of which are provided at the parish site. In one case, the only daughter of a 91-year-old woman had a full time job and needed “respite” so she could shop and do laundry. Respite helped a young family member who felt “stuck” babysitting for her sister because she didn’t get to be with her friends. Respite in another parish helped a granddaughter who felt neglected when she had to give up her room to her grandmother.

Anti-trafficking program

Another Service Commission project is the anti-trafficking program under the guidance of the U.S. Sisters Against Human Trafficking, the Catholic Daughters of America and the Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary.

NCCW asks for reports on parish and vicariate councils’ efforts against human trafficking, including donations. It offers a tracking sheet to use as well as posters that can be circulated in your area. The Service Commission asks members to recite the Prayer to End Human Trafficking at CCW meetings and at home and to sign up to receive emails from Sisters against trafficking.org.

The final project addressed was the Holy Land project. Begun this year, students from our Catholic schools send pictures of family life to their counterparts in the Holy Land to increase awareness of their realities. Women pray in solidarity with women in the Holy Land.

Tugander concluded her report by saying: “We are women warriors in action making impossible missions possible.” Additional information about the Service Commission and its activities may be found on the NCCW website.

Coreen Marklein

Service Commission Chair

Spirituality Commission Report from the NCCW Convention

Three of us from my Columbia North Vicariate drove to Pittsburgh for the 98th NCCW convention. What a time we had!!! As MDCCW Spirituality chair, I was overwhelmed with each day. So many faith-filled women with SMILES on their faces!

Every woman there was on a mission to learn as much as she could to bring back to her parish and live her life as a missionary disciple. The mood was contagious, and each day I awoke wanting more. How I wish all our women would have the chance to attend a NCCW convention.

On Thursday I attended the Spirituality Commission session led by Mary Rowley, NCCW Spirituality Chair. She was excited to share with us three mini-retreats NCCW has developed, the monthly call-in with the Rosary, and prayer. It was my first time participating in the International Rosary, said in English, German, Spanish, Latin, and Italian.

We were very fortunate to have so many priests, bishops, and cardinals to say Mass and give such inspiring homilies. We were treated to a new movie, Indivisible, based on a true story about marriage, family, and God. It came out in theaters October 26.

We were blessed to have Jean Kelly as our NCCW president-elect from the Milwaukee province and our very own Carol Brennan sworn in as our Milwaukee province director. Wisconsin was very well represented.

We were advised not to bring up the sexual abuses in the church, yet the priests, bishops, and the cardinals all spoke about these serious crimes that were committed. Bishop Frank Caggiano asked us to pray for the abused and abusers in the sexual scandal in the church. He said we need to be accountable for our actions.

I hope we can make our mission possible, and we can be joyful disciples. Hope is universal.

Ellen Bachman talked about joy. She said women are the movers and shakers of the church.

When someone new comes to church, welcome them. Watch people and look for their talents and encourage them to become active.

Mona Matijevich

Spirituality Commission Chair

Membership Committee

CCW is a fantastic way to make new friends while making a difference in the parish, community, and world. We rejoice with fellow members in the good times of life, and support and comfort each other in the bad times. You will grow in your spiritual life and experience the satisfaction of following Jesus while carrying out the corporal works of mercy.

Benefits of Individual Membership

1. Individual Membership in MDCCW unites Catholic women throughout the Madison Diocese.
2. You will experience personal growth and spiritual enrichment while sharing the camaraderie of other Catholic women.
3. You will expand the influence of Catholic women, creating positive, spiritual change.
4. You will have a voice on a diocesan scale, speaking on behalf of women and children in need.
5. You will be eligible to vote in MDCCW elections and at the Annual Business meeting.

When you do become an individual member you will receive a welcome packet from MDCCW.

NCCW membership committee has added a new category, High School and Collegiate Membership. More information regarding this can be found at nccw.org.

Sue Koch & Ellen Martin

Membership Co-Chairs and
MDCCW Past Co-Presidents

2018 National Council of Catholic Women Convention Review and Highlights

PITTSBURGH — Five hundred women and 42 priests gathered together for the 98th convention of the National Council of Catholic Women August 29 to September 1. The theme was “NCCW Reflecting God’s Joy: Missionary Disciples — Mission Possible!” Below are reflections from the NCCW president and four of the 11 who attended from the Madison diocese. The following attended from MDCCW.

- Milwaukee Province Director Carol Brennan*, All Saints parish, Berlin
- MDCCW President Bernadette Schaefer, St. Clement parish, Lancaster
- MDCCW President-Elect and Jefferson Vicariate President Judy Lyons, St. Joseph parish, Fort Atkinson
- MDCCW Spiritual Commission Chair and Columbia North Vicariate President Mona Matijevich, St. John the Baptist parish, Montello
- MDCCW Service Commission Chair Coreen Marklein*, St. Joseph parish, Baraboo
- West Dane Vicariate President Rosa Ropers*, St. John the Baptist parish, Waunakee
- Mary Stasek and Elaine Riebl, Our Lady of the Lake parish, Green Lake
- Lucy Kippley and Bev Breunig, St. Norbert’s parish, Roxbury
- Susan (Barker) Hurley, St. Christopher’s parish, Verona

**Past MDCCW President*

Convention Overview

**By Maribeth Stewart Blogoslawski,
NCCW President**

We enjoyed our speakers throughout the Convention. Our keynote speaker, Bishop Frank Caggiano, diocese of Bridgeport, CT, spoke on "Disciples Called to be Joyful Signs of Contradiction in the World." Attendees agreed that he was riveting. We also heard from Holly Joy McIlwain who spoke on "A Mission of Joy"; Gina Loehr who titled her presentation "Blessed Is She Who Believed: Embracing the Impossible Mission"; and Bob Rice who spoke and sang engagingly on "Owed to Joy: Sharing the Gifts of Love."

We also learned a great deal from our commission presentations. Leadership focused on our work against human trafficking. Spirituality highlighted the prayers, monthly call-in Rosary, and three mini-retreats (4 hours each) they developed this year. Service provided information on its monthly spotlight on member good works and on our program uniting our Catholic school students with their counterparts in the Holy Land to increase awareness of their realities.

We also heard from the executive director of the National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations who thanked us for our Vocation Purse Club. Our nationally acclaimed Leadership Training Development Team (LTDT) provided an informative and entertaining summary of what they can present to help councils transform seemingly impossible missions to the possible. Ellen Bachman, past president and member of our Education Team skillfully demonstrated how to use the NCCW Guide through Evangelii Gaudium (Pope Francis' Joy of the Gospel) for parishes and CCW meetings.

We prayed two Rosaries. One was for healing and peace in our Church and for all affected by the clergy abuse scandal, and another was an International Rosary offered in English, German, Spanish, Italian, and Latin. Beautiful Masses were held each day where we prayed for our deceased members and for many other intentions. We recognized our past NCCW presidents. We were blessed to have Bishop David Zubik, diocese of Pittsburgh;

Bishop Gregory Parkes, St. Petersburg, FL, USCCB liaison to the NCCW; Bishop Frank Caggiano, diocese of Bridgeport, CT; and Bishop Edward Malesic, diocese of Greensburg, PA, with us for various Masses and Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, president of the USCCB, preside at our closing Mass. We are most grateful to them and to our Spiritual Advisors, chaired by the Reverend Richard Dawson.

We were treated to a great introduction to the location of our next convention, Atlanta, GA, that will be held from August 22-24, 2019.

Joy Part of Every Session

By Bernadette Schaefer, MDCCW president

What a blessing to spend four days at the National Council of Catholic Women Convention in Pittsburgh! I felt privileged to be there with women from across the U.S. and Canada and 10 wonderful representatives of the Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.

The theme, "NCCW Reflecting God's Joy," was incorporated into every presentation. In his keynote address Bishop Frank Caggiano, Bridgeport, CT, helped us see how joy is related to the virtue of hope. Given to us in baptism, the virtue of hope is the "mother of joy." Hope is tied to our basic desire to be fulfilled. "Hope is a gift that allows us to trust God's word that we will one day see Him in glory."

Bishop Caggiano encouraged us to go to the cross to see "the wild, reckless, awesome love of God." He stated that we cannot move the church forward until we sit in front of the cross. "At the cross we are given the power of hope." Mary at the cross shows that hope is born in suffering and hope gives birth to joy.

The world confuses joy with happiness, a temporary sense of contentment. Jesus did not promise us happiness; he promised us joy, "the assurance that God cares for us and all will be well eventually, even in eternity."

Bob Rice, a professor at Franciscan University of Steubenville, spoke of the connection

between suffering and joy. "Joy in the face of suffering is the charism of Jesus Christ." As his disciples, we are to be rooted in that joy.

The joy of Jesus Christ is countercultural. Suffering is seen as an enemy of joy. A disciple has hope that suffering will lead to joy as the cross led to the resurrection. The witness of joyful disciples offers hope to a world that suffers from hatred, abuse, division, and war.

In the early centuries the church was built by the heroic, joyful witness of the martyrs who sang as they went to their death. Today we need that kind of heroic witness. We need joy born of our hope in Jesus Christ to build communities of love and mercy and rebuild our church.

Reflections on Masses and Homilies

By Carol Brennan,
Milwaukee Province Director

The very first convention I attended Matthew Kelly was the keynote speaker. His topic was "The-Best-Version-of-Yourself." I have heard him speak several times since then, and he talks of keeping a Mass journal. He says when he goes to Mass he prays, "God, show me one way in this Mass I can become the-best-version-of-myself this week!!" I have been keeping a Mass Journal five years now, and it certainly makes me listen more carefully at Mass. This "one thing" may jump out at me from the homily or even readings, prayers, or songs.

Every convention I always love how the homilies at Mass reflect our theme. This year we were very honored and humbled to have Bishop Parks, Episcopal Liaison from USCCB to NCCW; Bishop Zubik, Pittsburgh diocese, formerly from the Green Bay diocese; and Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, USCCB president, as celebrants for our Masses. At the risk of offending them I am going to summarize their homilies in a few sentences.

As you probably know, about two weeks before convention, the priest/bishop scandal in Pittsburgh made the news.

Our president, Maribeth, sent a memo that this was not going to be the topic or center of discussion, and we were going to focus on our theme of God's Joy and Missionary Disciples. So was this going to be a black cloud over convention and be "the elephant in the room"? Instead, each keynote speaker as well as the bishops and cardinal at Mass acknowledged and referred to this issue.

Bishop Parks said in spite of deep suffering, pain, confusion, and anger in the world we can move forward. There is power in hope. He said, "We are called to be Missionary Disciples of Joy and Hope. We are to go places where God is not and fill that with God's love, mercy, and hope...It is a mission which is possible with God's goodness and grace."

Bishop Zubik reminded us our faith is a gift we have been given. "God wants us to be the presence of Christ, and we show this by our words and deeds...We need to do something with our gift of faith...We need to be evangelizers and Missionary Disciples determined to pass on the Good News...go, tell, and live the good news!"

Cardinal DiNardo spoke of reflecting on the Joy of Witness — like when we come together and donate to disasters such as last year within two weeks NCCW had collected and donated \$18,000 to disaster relief in Huston from Hurricane Harvey. We have reflected this joy through our work, prayer and action over many decades to help God's people. He said we are firm, effective, faithful and energetic people of God and we need to pray for the whole church, especially for those who have been hurt. He reminds us, "Be doers of the Word — not only hearers!"

With this latest Church scandal many of us are disappointed, confused, and angry. Many are hurt, especially the victims and their families, but also innocent priests and bishops as well as all of us because this reflects on all of us as Church. We are in the business of forgiveness but there also has to be accountability. Some may say, "Why stay Catholic?" This is not the time

to jump ship. This is not the Church Jesus wants. This is the time to stay strong and help the Church get back to what Jesus wants it to be.

“The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.”

Reflections from a Veteran Convention Attendee

By Lucy Kipley, Sauk Vicariate

When attending an NCCW Convention, we always are reminded of all the critical issues these ladies are involved in. I should say “we ladies” since we are all members. Whether it be physical, spiritual, or social, the ladies give it their all. We find them working so beautifully with each other to accomplish the many tasks facing the Council, our church, our nation, and world.

We were told before the convention we would not be discussing the scandal of the priests, but each speaker — Bishops, priests and others — seemed to insert a little into the talk.

If asked which speaker was most inspiring, I would have to answer that is a very tough question, but, Bishop Frank Caggiano, Bridgeport, CT, was so very interesting. As he spoke, it was like, I want to hear more! He told us we are living in the twilight— there is light, but so much profound darkness. It is everyone’s responsibility to give our lives to our bride the church. Leaders and all need to be accountable before we can move forward. Never be a bad shepherd, recognize evil, and mean what we say. We will then find joy and know the mission is possible! So, reach into your hearts and give joy and hope. Faith, hope, and love is joy, and because of our work and giving, we will have that joy! Bishop Caggiano’s talk was so inspiring, but I have only touched on a tiny bit of it here,

We got to watch two movies, *Indivisible*, which deals with the terrible hardships of a married couple. When the husband goes off to war, the wife deals with all the decisions at home; and after going through all the horrors of war,

he returns. The after-effects to the whole family are unbelievable. It tells us what marriage is all about! We also saw a film on sex trafficking. The film is so real and hard to imagine this horrible treatment of human beings is really going on all over the world. Trafficking, and trying to stop it, is one of the top priorities of the Council.

The convention days flew by. I so admire those who make it all come together. I have been attending since the 1980s, and I thought no more! A few months before the convention, my sister-in-law said, “Let’s go to Pittsburgh; I’ve never been to a Convention.” Now, I thank her for twisting my arm. We absolutely enjoyed it all, the Convention, the view from our hotel room (the PNC sport stadium, the rivers, and the beautiful parks and bridges), and all the good food.

It would be so nice to attend the Convention in 2020 in Washington, DC, for the 100th!

Reflections from a First-time Attendee

By Sue Hurley,
St. Christopher Parish CCW, Verona

For a long time I wanted to attend the national convention, but circumstances had prevented this. Finally, this year I asked myself, “What are you waiting for?” and booked the flight. Traveling with me were Rosa Ropers, Bernadette Schaefer, and Judy Lyons. After checking into our rooms at the Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown, we picked up our convention bags and attended our first session, “First Timers Orientation.” Even though I was the only first-timer in our group, all four of us attended and learned a few things.

Thursday’s Opening General Session introduced us to NCCW President Mary Elizabeth Stewart Blogoslawski, who seems to be involved in everything. In addition to her leading our national group, she is a representative to international groups, which means being a representative at the United Nations. After the convention, she was off to Europe to represent us.

Bishop Frank Caggiano, Bridgeport, CT, gave an inspiring presentation on being joyful in a contradictory world. Other speakers included Gina Loehr, a young mother of six from Fond du Lac who was a college anti-Catholic church feminist; and Bob Rice who spoke and sang on "Sharing the Gift of Love." National officers discussed pertinent issues and gave inspiring presentations.

Thursday's Mass was officiated by five bishops and 42 priests along with a Knights of Columbus honor guard — quite impressive. Little was said about the issue of priest abuse although a Rosary dedicated to those affected by the scandal was said Friday morning before sessions started.

I felt welcomed throughout the whole session. The women I met were very nice and willing to help with any questions we asked. All ages were represented. One woman was 91 years old!

Did you know the Council of Catholic Women also includes Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Catholic Women's League of Canada, Knights of Peter Claver, Young Ladies' Grand Institute, Catholic Women's Guild and The Daughters of Isabella.

We had some free time and got to walk across the street to a park with a replica of Fort Pitt. This park was in front of our hotel where the Ohio, Monongahela, and Allegheny rivers meet. We also visited a farmers market. If we had arrived a day earlier or left a day later, we could have seen some of the city as many others did.

Who knew a purse auction could raise \$7,770 for the NCCW? Name brand purses were donated by many of the councils attending. Most purses had more surprises inside so the bidding was intense with a high bid of \$800 for one! There were also many displays and a silent auction which were open to everyone.

It was a wonderful experience for me, and I am so glad I got to attend the convention. I have learned a lot more about the group I love and am so involved in. I have already put some of these ideas into action in Verona and hopefully that will encourage more participation and new members!

2018 NCCW Convention Business

NCCW 2018 Resolutions

**By Rosa Ropers, West Dane Vicariate
President, Convention Attendee**

At every convention, delegates approve resolutions to serve as a guide for councils on which to focus their attention. Resolutions are not mandatory for the councils to act on; however, if we implement them by creating programs and activities, we will help make our world a better place. Yes, prayer comes first, then you plan, and then you act!

Please access the website at nccw.org for more information for resources for your council to promote social and spiritual programs.

Delegates adopted four resolutions .

1. Mentoring At Risk Youth

Purpose: To encourage and provide mentoring to educate and protect vulnerable youth who may be at risk for Human Trafficking.

RESOLVED, THAT NCCW members encourage and participate in youth mentoring programs that build trust and establish relationships that reflect our Gospel values.

RESOLVED: That NCCW members become familiar with the Anti Human Trafficking Project of the NCCW and become informed about the potential risk of the human trafficking in their local areas.

2. Treatment Of The Mentally Ill

PURPOSE: To bring public awareness to the difficulties faced by the mentally ill and their families as they maneuver the legal, medical and social systems seeking help.

RESOLVED: That NCCW members encourage law enforcement agencies to participate in a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program, to improve responses to people in crisis.

3. Building Our Future

PURPOSE: To build the future of the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) by promoting high school and college membership around the country.

RESOLVED: That our local councils establish and maintain a link between current members and newly formed high school and college affiliates offering the new affiliates encouragement and mentoring;

RESOLVED: That NCCW will support, empower and educate high school and college women to grow their spirituality and service and become active leaders in our councils and will encourage member participation in the established NCCW high school and college program and using the established protocols.

4. The Environment

PURPOSE: Reduce the use of plastic and increase recycling of plastic.

RESOLVED: That the members advocate for reduction in the use of disposable plastic items to include drinks bottles and that the members of the NCCW themselves eliminate or reduce their use of disposable drinks bottles:

RESOLVED: That the members of NCCW advocate continue to advocate and work for the provision of safe, clean drinking water that is freely available to all persons in all areas of the world.

NCCW 2018 Bylaw Changes

**By Coreen Marklein,
Service Commission Chair**

The Bylaws Committee presented four proposed amendments to the bylaws, and all four passed as proposed.

1. Amend Article V, Board of Directors, Section 3, Province Directors, c, Term:
 - Amend by adding: "A province director may serve no more than two (2) terms (for a maximum total of four (4) years.

- Amend by adding: "However, if there is no other woman who according to the bylaws of her province is eligible and willing to serve as province director and therefore the province would not have a director, upon approval by the NCCW Executive Committee, a province director may serve more than 4 years to ensure her province is represented on the NCCW Board of Directors.

The first amendment allows other leaders the opportunity to serve as province director. The second amendment allows a province the ability to retain control of their province if no other woman is eligible and willing to serve.

2. Composition of Executive Committee, Article IX, Section 1, Composition:

- Amend by striking: "and the Spiritual Advisor who is ex officio and has no vote".

This amendment would match current language in Article IX, Section 4 that confidential matters ... shall not be reported to the ex officio Directors. The Spiritual Advisor would still be an ex officio member of the Board of Directors. Amendment passed.

3. Proposed Amendment – Article IX, Section 3, Vacancies.

- Amend by striking entire Section 3 of Article IX.

This section conflicts with other articles that already describe the process for filling vacancies.

4. Proposed Amendment — Article VI, Officers, Section 7, President-Elect.

Amend by adding: "or by voting by electronic or mail media, at the discretion of the Executive Committee."

The addition to the amendment would read "A vacancy in the position of president-elect for any reason shall be filled by members during the next election cycle "or by voting by electronic or mail media, at the discretion of the executive committee. This change allows the executive board to fill the position the most expedient means.