

**JANUARY
2026**

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Connecting Catholic Women!

**A Monthly Newsletter of the Madison Diocesan Council
of Catholic Women (MDCCW)**

Affiliated with the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) and your local parish Council (CCW)

Uniting Catholic Women throughout the Catholic Diocese of Madison, Wisconsin

THE PEN

"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain." Psalm 127:1

Building the Body of Christ

I thank the Lord that Christmas is not just a single day of joy but lasts into January. I am so sad when I see that some Christmas trees are already at the curb on the day after Christmas. Officially, the liturgical Christmas season lasts until the Sunday after Epiphany, the Baptism of Jesus. Let us not only continue to celebrate Christmas for weeks into January, but remember to keep Christmas in our hearts all year long.

JANUARY 2026: Happy New Year! As we continue to enjoy the Christmas season and celebrate the birth of our Divine Savior, Jesus Christ, we also look forward to a new year with all the promise of new growth in holiness for ourselves, our families, our CCWs, our parish, and all our loved ones.

Happy New Year Resolutions for the soul! Is this the year that you will

...set time aside daily for prayer?

...meet Jesus every day in a time of silence?

...say a daily Rosary?

...go to monthly Confession?

...start to attend daily Mass?

...begin the Nine 1st Fridays devotion?

...begin the Five 1st Saturdays devotion?

...pray daily for a soul who has drifted away from the practice of the Catholic Faith?

Every movement toward personal holiness is a movement to increase grace on earth. Just as every sin has a negative effect on the world, every good act increases grace and opens a heart somewhere to accept Christ as Savior. We women have the advantage of our nurturing natures to foster the growth of Faith in those around us. We must all answer the call to Go Make Disciples.

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CAROL ROGERS

President, Madison Diocesan
Council of Catholic Women

CONTACT ME:

PHONE: (608) 391-2564

carrogmdccw@gmail.com

United Across the Diocese

New Diocesan VICARIATE Borders!

The Bishop has established new VICARIATES to replace the former regions. Here we use the bountiful waterways of our Diocese to define the vicariates; each name, a subtle reference to Baptismal waters. See page three of this President's Pen for a description of the Vicariates of

Mississippi River **Wisconsin River**
Green Lake **Rock River**
Lake Monona **Lake Wisconsin**
and **Lake Mendota**

United in Voice with NCCW

NCCW's President Elect!

Wisconsin's own: Jane Schizik

Jane Schizik, NCCW's President Elect shared her humble life story that led her to the Council of Catholic Women. As the third of seven children born into a farming family and raised in central Wisconsin, Jane knows first hand the blessings of church and the Council. In fact, she shares her 'secret'! Through the gift of Council, you too can enrich your spiritual relationship with God, experience joy, and a path to using your own gifts to "infuse love and kindness into our world." See the complete article 'The Secret of Council' in Vol 51, No 2, 2025 of the CATHOLIC WOMAN magazine!



LEADERSHIP

Inspiration for Local Councils by Sue Barker,
MDCCW Leadership Commission Chair

Committees are an important part of any organization. A committee may be needed for every area of your group or just one committee may handle all events. Does your group have a Program Committee to decide what you will do? Suggestions are always welcome and needed. Don't be afraid to offer information about a program you would like to see happen. If you are not on your Program Committee, join it. If you don't have one, start it. A committee with several workers makes things easier for any group. Depending on the size of your program, you may need several members working together. Decide on what your program will be and then choose members accordingly. Each person should know what is expected of them. A good example of a program is a

See LEADERSHIP continued on Page Five



SPIRITUALITY

Faith Finds a Home at Home

A week of Christmas preparation coupled with dealing with a stomach bug running through our household had taken its toll. Although spiritually I was striving to offer it all up for souls in Purgatory, the continual sleepless nights, constant cleaning, and fear of uncertainty triumphed over me physically and emotionally. "I feel like I'm going to die," I said at week's end, exhausted, into my coffee. My son walked by and piped up: "Don't do that, Mom. I'm still hungry." We all laughed, and his humor helped diffuse the tension in my heart. Sometimes we take things too seriously, but even in the thick of things, Our Lord's sense of humor shines through in order to help lift us up out of ourselves. It's important, especially in those dark moments, to recognize His helping hand.

By Julianne Nornberg

Contributor to the Catholic Herald and member of Holy Cross Parish (formerly Pastorate 19)

LEADERSHIP

By Coreen S. Marlein of NCCW's LTD Team

Greetings fellow CCW members!

In November's issue of The Pen, this column included a bit of homework. We were challenged to identify the ways in which to be the best kind of leader: we must be positive, constantly improving our leadership skills, cultivating our relationships with our members, and able to share information about our organization. Leaders know that all of these are ongoing. Leaders are always growing and growing means change! Our 'Homework' was:

1. Make a list of your own strengths, faults and opportunities for improvement.
2. Make a list of areas where you have been affected by change. What resulted from the changes? Were they good, poor, or not noticeable? What changes worked or not and why?

Below are just 4 of many attributes of being a good leader:

1) A positive attitude. Are you upbeat and optimistic or are you a "Debbie Downer?"

2) Your leadership skills are part of who you are. Are you constructive and encouraging in your feedback or are you a grouch and "Negative Nellie?"

3) Build relationships with your members. Let your members know more about you. Then show you are interested in each member and get to know them better, i.e. their likes, dislikes, and any special skills they have.

4) Know our organization and its different levels. Use the Rings of Council to show members what the Council of Catholic Women is all about and where they fit in the bigger picture. We need to show how happy we are to be a part of CCW and NCCW. We must be smiling, joy-filled cheerleaders for Council! If we are not, why would anyone want to join as a member? After all, our enthusiasm in council creates enthusiasm for council in others. What can our Leadership, Training & Development do for you to enhance your leadership skills?

by Coreen S. Marklein, NCCW's LTD Team Member

MEMBERSHIP

AFFILIATIONS:

ALL PARISH women are council women if your pastorate CCW pays dues.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS:

Available to individual Catholic women in parishes without MDCCW & NCCW affiliation to receive full benefits and resources.

CONTACT MDCCW:

www.mdccw.com

CONTACT NCCW:

3211 4th St. NE, Suite #338
Washington, DC 20017
www.nccw.org



If your Council would like to host a Leadership Training Day, contact www.nccw.org

**Papal Prayer
Intentions**

for the Month of
January

**'For prayer with
the Word of
God'**

"Let us pray that
praying with the Word
of God be
nourishment for our
lives and a source of
hope in our
communities, helping
us to build a more
fraternal and
missionary Church."

**VOICE of the
SAINTS**

Feasts, Memorials and
Solemnities

SOLEMNITY of MARY 1-1
STS. BASIL THE GREAT &
GREGORY NAZIANZEN
1-2

The Most Holy Name of
Jesus 1-3

EPIPHANY OF THE
LORD 1-4

ST. JOHN NEUMANN 1-5
BAPTISM OF THE LORD
1-11

St. Hillary 1-13

ST. ANTHONY, ABBOT
1-17

St. Fabian & St. Sebastian
1-20

ST. AGNES 1-21
DAY OF PRAYER FOR
THE LEGAL
PROTECTION OF
UNBORN CHILDREN
1-22

St. Vincent, Deacon & St.
Marianne Cope 1-23

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
1-24

STS. TIMOTHY & TITUS
1-26

St. Angela Merici 1-27

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS
1-28

ST. JOHN BOSCO 1-31

THE PEN CONTINUED from Page One

Council of Catholic Women and the New Vicariates: As the winter progresses, I am asking women of the diocese to become familiar with their new vicariate borders. In which vicariate are you located? How many active CCWs are in your vicariate? Do you already have vicariate officers? How will you elect new leadership for the Vicariate CCW when needed? Which parish will step forward to host the spring vicariate meeting? Who will send out a call for nominations for vicariate president, president-elect, secretary, and treasurer? Who will volunteer to accept these offices? When will the election take place? (I hope that it will be in Spring 2026.)

See the outline of the seven new Vicariates (names and member parishes) below:

Mississippi River St. Joseph the Worker, St. Dominic, St. Isidore the Farmer, Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, St. Pius of Pietrelcina, St. Augustine University Parish

Wisconsin River Sts. Joachim and Anne; St. John Paul II; Mary, Mother of Mercy
Green Lake St. John Henry Newman, Mater Dei, Nativity of the Lord

Rock River Christ the King, Queen of Martyrs, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, St. Cletus

Lake Monona St. Teresa of Calcutta, St. Therese of Lisieux, Epiphany of the Lord, Stella Maris

Lake Wisconsin St. Francis of Assisi, St. Maximilian Kolbe, Holy Cross, Divine Mercy

Lake Mendota Our Lady Queen of Peace, St. Thomas Aquinas, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Queen of Apostles, Blessed Sacrament, St. Paul University Catholic Center, St. Bernard of Clairvaux

Madison Catholic Woman's Club, an affiliate member of MDCCW, has already elected officers for 2026. This organization draws its members from several vicariates.

See **THE PEN** continued on Page Five

SERVICE:

A call to lead with love, serve with faith, and walk prophetically

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) responds to emergencies around the world as it also inspires and mobilizes families to become prophetic witnesses through advocacy and action. This is love in motion. This is faith alive.

Our sacraments send us out as disciples. They call on us to see Christ in the poor, the marginalized, and the suffering - and to respond with justice and mercy. Families are not spectators in the Church's mission; they are its heartbeat.

An excerpt from the recent CATHOLICWOMAN Magazine article 'I Am' by Vivi Iglesias on Catholic Relief Services.

SERVICE:

Pick-A-THEME

THEME for a PASTORAL CALENDAR:

for Jan. 22nd's Day of Legal Protection for the Unborn, hold a writing session to US representatives with resources from pro-life organizations.

THEME for JANUARY:

Winter WHITES: Stock up on sheets & blankets on sale this month for your local housewares drives.

THEME Based on 'BE-ATTITUDES:

Clothe the Naked - hold a clothing drive for socks & undergarments using clever titles: Socks & Sacks, Under It All, Seen the Least.

THEME Based on NCCW Projects:

Refugees around the world seek the bare essentials. Visit CRS's Help-A-Child program for inspiration.

EVENTS IN THE DIOCESE



Mater Dei Celebration, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, Thursday, January 1, 2026 11am-1pm at St. John the Baptist Church, Princeton, WI. The CCW is displaying over 800 Marian statues which are available for a good-will offering. Bring a dish to pass. Ham, hot dogs and beverages will be provided.

SAVE THE DATE: MDCCW Conference & Spiritual Day. Tuesday, June 2, 2026. Plan to attend now at the beautiful Green Lake Convention Center with lodging available on site. Ellen Martin is the Chair for this event, feel free to contact her with your ideas! ellenmarymartin@gmail.com. See page 5.

Catholic Women's Spiritual Day. February 7, 2026 at Immaculate Conception in Boscobel. This event is hosted by Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament Church and begins with Holy Rosary at 7:45am followed by Mass at 8:15 and a light breakfast. Our theme is: Spiritual Discernment. Guest speakers include Rachel Hessling, Director of Campus Ministry, St. Augustine's Parish, Platteville and keynote speaker Ana Munley, St. Cloud, FL creator of AfterMass, a podcast for Catholics who want to live their faith beyond Sunday. A Holy Hour of Adoration with the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be offered before lunch at 1pm. There is a \$30 event fee. Please forward questions or interest to Julie Biba at julie.biba@gmail.com or Janet Mindham at mindhamjanet1@gmail.com.

MDCCW's NEW CHARITABLE FOCUS

Through June 2026, MDCCW will focus on building the body of Christ by donating to the new church (construction to begin soon) at St. Augustine University Parish in Platteville, WI. This Newman parish prepares college students to become active members while there and wherever they go following graduation.

Dollar for Dollar MATCH CHALLENGE!

Be enthusiastic in your planning to give to this cause. A dollar-for-dollar match up to \$10,000 has been promised in the name of the women of the Diocese. Fr. Eric Nielsen, as new pastor, is prepared to receive the benefits of your generosity.

MDCCW's 2026 FUNDRAISER!

Announcing MDCCW's fundraiser: Bella Goose flavored syrups!! Until the 2026 MDCCW convention, we will sell a two pack of either vanilla bean-chai or vanilla bean-caramel for \$15. Separate jars (chai, vanilla bean, caramel) can be purchased for \$8.00. Bella Goose is a company based out of Wisconsin Dells who produces coffee and syrups. They share the same values as MDCCW such as being against human trafficking. They have set up shops in Thailand to help poor women, and those on the streets, to have a job to improve their lives. They have a coffee shop in Wisconsin Dells and one in Briggsville and they have been wonderful to work with. Other fundraising organizations have been FFA, sports groups and missionaries. They have helped to make the selling of the syrup as easy as possible for us. The syrup is 100% natural and crafted without preservatives, corn syrup or dyes. It can be used in hot/iced coffee, hot/cold milk, hot chocolate, apple cider, caramel sauce on ice cream, caramel dip for apple slices, and so much more.

If you are interested in purchasing some of this product to support your Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women and their numerous expenses (dues, convention, office supplies, mileage, etc.) please contact Ways and Means Chairperson Sue Koch (kochspeech@gmail.com; 920-229-4150). Please remember that the MDCCW works on behalf of all women of the diocese "to support, empower, and educate all Catholic Women in spirituality, leadership and service".



Have an EVENT or ACTIVITY that you wish to see in The Pen?
Forward request 3 weeks before the first of the month you wish to see your listing to:
Carol Rogers carrogmdccw@gmail.com with subject line: 'Newsletter Event'.

THE PEN CONTINUED from Page Three

Resources announced at the NCCW CONVENTION!

The Spirituality Commission in keeping with Beth Mahoney's theme as NCCW President for the past two years, "Women on a Journey - Sharing Our Stories," published a book that includes life stories of 19 American women who are on the path to canonization.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Resolutions published a book that includes all the resolutions passed by NCCW since 2000. Resolutions might have addressed an issue that has since been resolved; others are timeless in nature. We need to revisit them and renew our commitment to them. With this book, now we can do that.

The Leadership Commission published an updated Strategic Plan for NCCW that can be used to guide diocesan and local CCWs.

A Handbook for Spiritual Advisors was published to inform the priests who guide our councils of what are their duties and responsibilities. As Spiritual Advisors change or retire, this booklet will provide information to the newly appointed priests.

MDCCW 2026 Conference and Day of Spirituality: This annual event will be held on Tuesday, June 2, at the Green Lake Convention Center with overnight lodging available on site. Ellen Martin, Chair of the Planning Committee, and her volunteer members are in the midst of planning a wonderful day for all of us to meet and share a spiritually uplifting time.

Once again by popular request, we will have a function on the night preceding the conference. Please feel free to contact Ellen with your ideas for the day at ellenmarymartin@gmail.com

Elections for MDCCW President-elect and Secretary will take place at the Conference. Send names of nominees (yourself or others) for these offices by contacting me at carrogmdccw@gmail.com or 608-391-2564.

Keep in mind the two Ad Hoc Committees that were appointed in November to study and bring recommendations to the next Board meeting in March. MDCCW Board Representation has been complicated by the changes in the diocese over the past few years. This committee chaired by Coreen Marklein will recommend a new strategy. Contact her with your ideas about this issue at [cwcwcoreen@gmail.com](mailto:cwcoreen@gmail.com)

The 2nd committee was formed to study the MDCCW Dues Structure. Changes in parishes, pastorates, and vicariates has led to uncertainty about how to support MDCCW in its operations. Patty Spragg, MDCCW Treasurer, is chairing this committee. Please contact her with your ideas and input at pattyspragg@gmail.com

See the Ways & Means Committee article about flavored syrups, the MDCCW Fundraiser for this year. When buying the syrups, you will be helping MDCCW as well as assisting the program in the Far East where the syrup is manufactured and packaged by women who have been rescued from human trafficking and prostitution. Your purchase gives them a job and a chaste way to support themselves and their families. All this from a locally owned company.



Wishing all of you a Holy and Blessed New Year!
All for Jesus Through Mary!

Our Lady of Good Counsel, Pray for us.
In His Mercy and Her Love,
Carol Rogers

Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women President

LEADERSHIP CONTINUED from Page Two

Inspiration for Local Councils by Sue Barker,
MDCCW Leadership Commission Chair

Baby Jesus Shower: baby items will be collected at a sit down dinner with cocktail hour and entertainment. All women of the parish are invited. For this event you will need a program chair, someone to order the meal, someone to find entertainment and a bartender if alcohol is included. Also, baby items will need to be collected and delivered to a site decided by your group. Determine who will do what, follow through, and your event will be a success!

Have a Blessed New Year!