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**CAROL ROGERS**

President, Madison Diocesan  
Council of Catholic Women

**CONTACT ME:**

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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

We find ourselves in a little lull following the wonders of the Christmas season and resting in the Lord in the couple weeks before Ash Wednesday (Feb. 18) and Lent. In these weeks let us enjoy a daily time of silence in the Lord. The whisper of His voice may be missed if we never, hardly ever put time aside to seek Him. He wants sincerely to enter our lives and share His deep love for us, but often we remain too busy to give Him a chance to speak heart to heart with us. Empty your soul of all except Jesus. He enters in silence; recognize His Presence within and commune with Him alone. You will be so glad you did.

I am issuing a challenge to all of you who do not yet say a daily Rosary. Our Lady asked the three children at Fatima in 1917 during each apparition that they recite a daily Rosary for the world to be at peace. We have not yet experienced that peace, proof positive that we have not yet obeyed her request. Whose fault is it...those "bad guys" who just keep on fighting...or ours because we have not taken our Heavenly Mother's request seriously? Accept this Daily Rosary Challenge that came straight from Heaven. Start by saying a decade a day...surely you can find time for ten Hail Marys. When you have finished that first Rosary or two and are feeling confident, increase to saying two decades each day. Keep on going. Increase the number of decades each day until you are saying a full Rosary every day. You could listen to the Family Rosary Across America on Relevant Radio at 7 p.m. every day. Say the Rosary with your family to gain even more benefit from this prayer practice.

See **THE PEN** continued on Page Three

### MDCCW's 2026 FUNDRAISER!

Ladies of the Madison Diocese:

Just a reminder that all ladies of our diocese are asked to contribute to President Roger's flavored syrup MDCCW fundraiser, whether by purchasing or selling this great, 100% natural product made here in our diocese (Briggsville) by a company who espouses CCW values, such as being against human trafficking. Here are some of the many uses for the syrups (vanilla bean, chai, caramel): - flavor breakfast shakes, oatmeal, milk, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, hot cider, cake mixes, yogurt, french toast batter/pancake batter; drizzle on pancakes, parfaits, ice cream, roasted vegetables; add to sparkling water, root beer and/or Dr. Pepper with cream for a lively drink. There are so many other uses--you have only your imagination to dream them up! \$15 for a two pack of caramel/vanilla bean or chai/vanilla bean \$8 for an individual jar of any of the 3 flavors.

God Bless,  
Suzanne Koch  
[kochspeech@gmail.com](mailto:kochspeech@gmail.com)  
920-229-4150



## LEADERSHIP

### Bylaws are Most Important

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

Each group of CCW members has goals and plans for what they want to do. One thing that has to be done every 2 years, in May, is election of Officers and Board Members. Specific details for all council functions can be found in the NCCW "Guidance and Resource Manual." The process for activities can be found in our Bylaws. They are the most important documents of our organization. Bylaws define the association, protect the rights of all members and ensure the continuity of the organization itself. By following bylaws, officers can be elected. They include President, President-elect, Secretary and Treasurer. A Board of Directors includes elected officers, appointed officers and the Standing Committee/Commission chairs. The rules contained in the Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern in all cases not inconsistent with our bylaws.

## SPIRITUALITY

### The Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.



If your Council would like to host a Leadership Training Day, contact [www.nccw.org](http://www.nccw.org)

## LEADERSHIP

By Coreen S. Marlein of NCCW's LTD Team and NCCW's Bylaws Co-Chair

Are you willing to share your time, talent and treasure with others? This year MDCCW, as well as many of your councils, will be seeking candidates for office. MDCCW will be electing a new President-elect and Secretary this spring. Please consider being a part of our great team and say YES when asked to serve. We have mentors who can assist you on this journey. Your ideas DO matter. It takes all of us to make our organization the best it can be.

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



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## SPIRITUALITY

### Faith Finds a Home at Home

"Try to *smile lovingly* at every manifestation of God's will." It's a quote from Blessed Columba Marmion which has been surfacing in my mind these past few weeks. It's easy to "smile lovingly" when things are going well and my will seems to align with Our Lord's. But smiling lovingly definitely does not come naturally when life -- physically or spiritually -- goes awry. How can I transform this quote in my mind into a reality in my heart? The answer is threefold: truly love Our Lord, ask for the grace needed, and then practice "smiling lovingly" -- not just in your mind, but from your heart -- at every opportunity.

By **Julianne Nornberg**

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

**Papal Prayer  
Intentions**

for the Month of  
February

**'For children  
with incurable  
diseases'**

"Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope."

**VOICE of the  
SAINTS**

Feasts, Memorials and  
Solemnities

- Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 2-1
- The Presentation of the Lord, 2-2
- St. Blaise, 2-3
- St. Agatha, 2-5
- St. Paul Miki & Companions, 2-6
- Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 2-8
- St. Scholastica, 2-10
- Our Lady of Lourdes, 2-11
- Sts. Cyril, Monk & Methodius, 2-14
- St. Valentine's Day, 2-14
- Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 2-15
- Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order, 2-17
- ASH WEDNESDAY, 2-18
- St. Peter Damian, 2-21
- First Sunday of Lent, 2-22
- St. Polycarp, 2-23
- St. Gregory of Narek, 2-27

**THE PEN** CONTINUED from Page One

Below are the first three promises (15 total) that Our Lady made to people who pray the Rosary:

1. Those who faithfully serve me by the recitation of the Rosary shall receive signal graces.
2. I promise my special protection and the greatest graces to all those who shall recite the Rosary.
3. The Rosary shall be a powerful armor against hell. It will destroy vice, decrease sin, and defeat heresies.

**Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Officers:** In even numbered years the MDCCW elects a new President-elect and a new Secretary. The elections will be held on June 2, 2026, at the MDCCW Conference and Day of Spirituality in Green Lake. One candidate has accepted the nomination for President-elect, Marie Fleisner. The term of office for President-elect is two years after which she succeeds to the Presidency for two years. Following those years, she will assume the office of Immediate Past President and will remain on the Board for another two years. Yes, this is a real commitment. Marie is eminently qualified to serve as President-elect because she recently held that same office for the diocese of LaCrosse. Just before she assumed the presidency there, she moved to Watertown, a great loss to LaCrosse and a great gain for MDCCW. Marie will complete her two-year term as MDCCW Secretary at the June 2 Annual Meeting.

MDCCW is also seeking nominees for Secretary. Please consider nominating yourself or someone else for this position. See the sidebar for my contact information on page 1.

The MDCCW Board meets four times a year, the final meeting takes place at the annual Conference, this year June 2. The other meetings traditionally take place in August, November, and March. The Secretary is responsible for taking the minutes and sending them by email to the President who sends them to the Board. The Secretary also keeps a record of all who attend the meetings and receives/sends correspondence as needed (Most correspondence is now done by email, but an occasional letter is sent by USPS.)

See **THE PEN** continued on Page Five

**SERVICE:**

**WORKS of MERCY**

**Corporal Works of Mercy**

- \* Feed the Hungry
- \* Give Drink to the Thirsty
- \* Clothe the Naked
- \* Shelter the Homeless
- \* Visit the Sick
- \* Visit the Imprisoned
- \* Bury the Dead

**Spiritual Works of Mercy**

- \* Instruct the Ignorant
- \* Counsel the Doubtful
- \* Admonish the Sinner
- \* Forgive Injuries
- \* Comfort the Sorrowful
- \* Bear Wrongs Patiently
- \* Pray for the Living and the Dead

**SERVICE:**

**Pick-A-THEME**

**THEME for a PASTORAL CALENDAR:**

Write a THANK YOU note to your pastor(s)  
Sponsor a Child through Unbound (formerly CFCA)

**THEME for FEBRUARY:**

Attend MARCH for LIFE in Washington, DC

**THEME Based on 'BE-ATTITUDES:**

Visit a nursing home bearing VALENTINES!  
Provide a care package for a new mom/family  
Visit the elderly in your neighborhood or give a care-taker some time off.

**THEME Based on NCCW Projects:**

Fundraise for awareness of the Living Stones,  
Christians in the Holy Land or Catholic Near East  
Welfare Association.



## EVENTS IN THE DIOCESE

**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.biba63@gmail.com](mailto:julie.biba63@gmail.com) or Janet Mindham at [mindhamjanet1@gmail.com](mailto:mindhamjanet1@gmail.com) or call 608-391-1030.

**Spring Craft/Bake Sale.** Saturday Feb. 21 and Sunday Feb. 22 before and after all Masses at St. Andrew Church (Divine Mercy Parish), Verona, WI

**Fish Fries at St. Peter in Ashton.** Friday, February 13th and 27th an All-You-Can-Eat Fish Fry is held at St. Peter Church, school building (Divine Mercy Academy) at 7129 County Highway K, Middleton. Family-Style Serving is from 4:30-7:30pm. Carry-Outs are available. More info is online at [www.holycrosswi.org](http://www.holycrosswi.org)

**MDCCW Conference & Spiritual Day.** Tuesday, June 2, 2026. Mark your calendars to attend MDCCW's Annual Conference, this year at the beautiful Green Lake Convention Center with lodging available on site. See page 6 for Registration Form! Ellen Martin is the Chair for this event, feel free to contact her with your ideas! [ellenmarymartin@gmail.com](mailto:ellenmarymartin@gmail.com).



### MDCCW's NEW CHARITABLE FOCUS

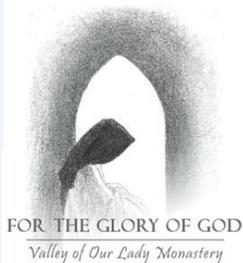
Through June 2026, MDCCW will focus on building the body of Christ by donating to the new church (construction to begin soon) at St. Augustine University Parish in Platteville, WI. This Newman parish prepares college students to become active members while there and wherever they go following graduation.

### 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.

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](mailto:carrogmdccw@gmail.com) with subject line: 'Newsletter Event'.

### United Across the Diocese



### The Cistercian Order in Southwest Wisconsin invite you to pray a Novena for Vocations

We invite you to join us for a Novena of prayer for Vocations to our community and our Cistercian Order. This will begin on the eve of the Solemnity of the Founders of our Order (January 25) and conclude on the Solemnity of the Presentation of Our Lord (February 2), the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life. We join our prayers to the Blessed Mother as we pray a *Memorare* each day. See page 2 to join them in prayer in the comfort of your own home or chapel!

### United in Voice with NCCW from NCCW's National Spiritual Advisor Fr. Tom Washburn

### STANDING AT THE DOOR OF THE NEW YEAR

Dear Sisters in Christ,

As a new year opens before us, I find myself thinking less about resolutions and more about thresholds. A threshold is not a finish line—it's a place of choosing, of attentiveness, of trust. You, the women of the National Council of Catholic Women, know something about thresholds. You live there every day: between prayer and action, tradition and renewal, quiet faithfulness and courageous witness. The Church and the world are constantly changing, but what has always sustained them is what you practice

See **THE DOOR** continued on Page Seven!

## THE PEN CONTINUED from Page Three

### NCCW RESOURCES!

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.

FIND ALL OF THESE RESOURCES online at [www.nccw.org](http://www.nccw.org)

This position lasts for two years (June 2026-June 2028). The Secretary will be serving with our soon to be installed Co-Presidents Carolyn Zentner and Jane Lepeska Grinde, 2026-2028. Patty Spragg is serving as Treasurer and was just elected to her 2nd term of office, 2025-2027. I will serve as Immediate Past President for two years, 2026- 2028.

Serving on the Board of MDCCW has been a wonderful experience for me. Taking a leadership role started for me as Secretary. I enjoyed it so much that I wanted to become part of the Board again after several years away. I am praying for you to step forward and nominate yourself or offer name/s of others you know who might take the position of Secretary.

The Board needs a new Secretary...possibly it is you. I am praying that the Holy Spirit will touch your heart.

**MDCCW 2026 Conference and Day of Spirituality:** Put this date on your calendar, Tuesday, June 2, the Green Lake Convention Center with overnight lodging available on site. Ellen Martin, Chair of the Planning Committee, and her volunteer members are busy planning a day of spiritual uplift and learning for participants. Please feel free to contact Ellen with comments and questions at [ellenmarymartin@gmail.com](mailto:ellenmarymartin@gmail.com) (see the Registration Form on page 6 for more details.)

Once again by popular request, we will have a function on the night preceding the conference. Sue Koch has graciously invited us into her home for light refreshments starting at 6:30. This evening will afford guests with a chance for informal conversation and fun. Note the early April I registration deadline for persons wishing to stay onsite at the Conference Center.

The Conference Theme is "Speak, Lord, Your Servant Is Listening." Our speaker, Melanie Frei, from LaCrosse has practiced this listening attitude and took the step from being a Protestant to entering the Catholic Church. She will speak on this journey in the morning. In the afternoon she will serve on a panel with Carol Brennan and Marie Fleisner both of whom are also converts to the Catholic Faith. We can grow our own Faith by listening to the Faith experiences of others.

A Silent Auction and Bucket Raffle will both be part of the Conference. As your CCW decides on how to support these efforts, think big. Does anyone have Packer tickets that they would like to donate? Or Badger tickets? Or Bucks or Brewers tickets? Could your CCW sponsor a dinner with a special person? Could your seamstresses or knitters create a quilt or sweater? Could you offer dinner theater tickets? Smaller items and theme baskets are also very welcome as donations.

**Ad Hoc Committees:** Please offer input as you think about these issues.

**MDCCW Board Representation.** Contact Coreen Marklein at [ccwcoreen@gmail.com](mailto:ccwcoreen@gmail.com) to add your ideas about Board representatives, how many, from where, how selected?

**MDCCW Dues Structure.** Contact Patty Spragg, at [pattyspragg@gmail.com](mailto:pattyspragg@gmail.com) to provide ideas and ask questions about the dues amount and how it might be shared among the churches, parishes/pastorates, and vicariates.

**Ways and Means Committee:** Flavored Syrups are on sale now as the MDCCW Fundraiser for this year. Purchase these yummy syrups for yourselves, as gifts for loved ones, as supplies for local food pantries, etc. One-third of the money will support the normal operations of MDCCW. The rest will assist the program in the Far East where the syrup is

Continue 'THE PEN' on Page 7



**Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women (MDCCW)  
71<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention**

**A DAY OF SPIRITUALITY, Tuesday, June 2, 2026  
SPEAK LORD, YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING**

Green Lake Conference Center  
W2511 Hwy 23, Green Lake, WI 54941 (handicap accessible)

MDCCW is an affiliate of the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW).

Complete registration online at [www.mdccw.com](http://www.mdccw.com) or send paper registration and payment to Coreen Marklein, 1307 Crawford St, Baraboo WI 53913. **Make checks payable to MDCCW.** Questions answered at [ccwcoreen@gmail.com](mailto:ccwcoreen@gmail.com) or 608-393-0880. Fee/s must accompany registration form. Registrations are transferable but **not refundable**. Be sure to invite, register, and pay for your church priests and religious.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_  
For example: St. Joseph Church Baraboo

Please check all that apply:

CCW Member       Guest       1<sup>st</sup> Time Convention Attendee  
 MDCCW Board Member       Church CCW President       Past MDCCW President

1. A block of rooms has been reserved onsite in Bauer Lodge. Reservations need to be made by each individual. Contact Guest Services at **920-294-3323**. **Registration Deadline is April 1, 2026**. Two standard beds in each room. Price for room is \$128/night for one or two people. Add \$15 for each additional person. High speed internet available in all rooms, **no TV, alcohol is not allowed on conference grounds**.
2. On arrival, turn off Hwy 23, and follow the balloon path leading to Morehouse Hall. Signs will be visible.
3. If you are staying in the area on **Monday, June 1**, you are invited to an evening of fellowship at the home of Sue Koch, 209 E Park St, Berlin (10 miles from the Conference Center). Light refreshments will be served beginning at **6:30 pm**. **Check if you plan to attend.** \_\_\_\_\_
4. Continental breakfast available in the morning. Buffet lunch provided by the Conference Center. Please contact **Ellen at 608-369-0148** if you have any special dietary needs.

Memorial or Honorarium in program to honor a special someone or group. Complete information below. Request/payment must be submitted **BY May 11** to be included in conference program (25 word maximum).

Memorial       Honoree       # of Memorials or Honorees @ \$25 each = Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Example of a memorial or honoree: In honor of M. Rita Marklein, from Your Family

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Convention Fee: \$40  
Memorial or Honoree @ \$25 each

Registrations Due by **May 18, 2026**.  
Memorial/Honoree Due by **May 11, 2026**.

Send cash or checks payable to MDCCW.

**TOTAL ENCLOSED:** \_\_\_\_\_

Gift Basket Silent Auction and Bucket Raffle will be held (pay with cash or check only).

Offerory Collection will go to the St. Augustine University Parish Newman Center Building Project in Platteville with 1:1 match up to \$10,000.



Charity - Green Lake Food Pantry – PLEASE BRING CEREAL OR CANNED GOOD.

**Guest Speaker: Melanie Frei.** From the Diocese of La Crosse, author of *Bridges & Treasure, Walking My Protestant Friends Through the Joys of the Catholic Faith*.

Not a MEMBER of a CCW or Madison Diocesan Council of Catholic Women?

**Become an INDIVIDUAL MEMBER!**

**Benefits:**

- \* Monthly Newsletter
- \* Website access to MDCCW resources
- \* Invitation to annual convention
- \* Alerts and invitations to events across the Diocese and state in spiritual gatherings, learning and training workshops, and more!
- \* Experience the power of prayer with sisters in faith from across the region, state and nation!

Join your Catholic voice with other Catholic women.

Individual Membership is \$20/year payable to MDCCW. Send check and information to:  
Carol Rogers  
1440 Wilson Street  
Fennimore, WI 53809

contact:  
[carrocmdccw@gmail.com](mailto:carrocmdccw@gmail.com)

## THE PEN CONTINUED from Page Five

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 Wisconsin company.

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

## THE DOOR CONTINUED from Page Four

from NCCW's National Spiritual Advisor Fr. Tom Washburn

so well—showing up with faith, compassion, and resolve, even when the way forward is not entirely clear.

This year will ask many things of us, but above all it will ask for presence: the steady, grace-filled presence of women who believe that God is still at work in ordinary lives and unlikely places. Your leadership, service, and prayer are not small things; they are leaven in the dough of the Church. As you step into this new year, may you do so with confidence—not in yourselves alone, but in the God who has already gone before you, who stands beside you now, and who will meet you in all that is yet to come.

We begin this new year not with noise or fireworks in the Church, but with a feast—the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. At the very start of the calendar year, the Church places before us a woman who pondered, trusted, and carried hope into the world. Mary does not begin the story with certainty about how everything will unfold; she begins with faith. She reminds us that God's greatest work so often begins quietly, within willing hearts, and unfolds one faithful step at a time.

As women of the NCCW, this Marian posture—listening, courage, and trust—shapes the way you serve the Church and the world.

As we step into this new year, may we do so with Mary's attentiveness and with hope renewed. In that spirit, I leave you with these words from Maya Angelou, which feel especially fitting at the dawn of a new beginning:

*"Lift up your eyes upon  
this day breaking for you.*

*Give birth again  
to the dream."*

— Maya Angelou, *"On the Pulse of Morning"*

Wishing you all a happy and blessed New Year!

Peace, love, and prayers,

*Fr. Tom Washburn*

*National Spiritual Advisor*

*This address to the National Council of Catholic Women was shared to members via their January President's Pen email. As an individual member, you too will receive treasures such as this. Join now at [www.nccw.org](http://www.nccw.org)*

*" MDCCW is an affiliate of the National Council of Catholic Women which acts through its membership to respond with Gospel values to the needs of the church and society in the modern world"*