

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN

catholic woman

VOLUME 36 • NUMBER 6

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2010

CONVENTION REPORT

Celebrating 90 Years Rejoice and Renew



ninety
1920-2010

Renewing Ourselves with Prayer

by Patty Johnson



At the recent NCCW Annual Convention, we experienced God in many ways. We renewed and rejoiced together as we celebrated 90 years of strong heritage in the National Council of Catholic Women. Being present at a gathering with Catholic women from across the United States is an awesome and holy place to be.

As members of the National Council of Catholic Women, we know that God is always present with us. At the recent NCCW Annual Convention, we experienced God in many ways. We renewed and rejoiced together as we celebrated 90 years of strong heritage in the National Council of Catholic Women. Being present at a gathering with Catholic women from across the United States is an awesome and holy place to be. There, we had the opportunity to see the face of Christ in our Council sisters as we listened to each other's stories and heard about many new ways to take our Christian values out into the world. Our purpose is to build a kingdom of love, peace, and justice that will ultimately respect the human dignity of every person God has created.

During convention, much time was devoted to prayer. Maybe it was a one-on-one prayer with a Council sister in need. It could have been a few minutes in the meditation room. You may have asked for a special time with one of the Council moderators to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. We always set the spiritual tone for our meetings and sessions with prayer. And best of all are the celebrations of the holy Mass where we praise God and give thanks for the gift of his son Jesus Christ. This daily awareness of the presence of God truly nourishes our souls for our journey to be "Women of Faith, Women of Action."

At home, our world is filled with normal, everyday activities. This is where we are and where God finds us. Sometimes, however, our everyday endeavors preoccupy us, leaving little or no time to respond to God's invitation.

Time set aside to pray enhances our relationship with our creator. Such a beautiful kinship can only expand our heart, deepen our experience of God and neighbor, and inspire us to action as Council women. Faithful prayer eventually brings us to the point in our lives where we willingly spend time with God and cannot imagine a day where we do not have a time and a place for him. The intention and hope of a prayer life is to grow in love for God and each other.

How can we know if our prayer is authentic? Prayer is genuine when we fulfill God's command to love and serve. As members of the National Council of Catholic Women, our prayer must spill over into compassionate care for our sisters and brothers. Our prayer is truly prayer when it is proportionate to our love for all God's people. We, as Catholic women, witness the Gospel today by providing an environment where all persons feel their worth, dignity, importance, and blessedness in the eyes of God. Prayer is forever inviting us simply to BE who God created us to be, as

women of faith and members of the National Council of Catholic Women. We will come alive in the way we treat and experience each other when we give ourselves to God every day in prayer.

With the season of Advent upon us, let us spend special time in prayer and reflection to appreciate fully the meaning of Christ's coming at Bethlehem. The symbol of this season has become the Advent wreath, with the lighting of four candles on each of four succeeding Sundays—a sign of the approach of the birth of the Light of the World. Perhaps you will want to light a candle during your reflections asking for Christ to be your light.

continued on page 9

Statement of Ownership

(Required under Act of August 12, 1970, Sect. 3685, Title 39, United States Code)

July 1, 2010: *Catholic Woman*—
Bi-Monthly, Published at Arlington, Virginia 22203.
Published by National Council of Catholic Women.
Editor: Andrea Schellman, Arlington, VA. Owner:
National Council of Catholic Women, Arlington, VA.

Average preceding 12 months; Press run: 7,875
Paid mail subscriptions: 7,594. Total paid: 7,594
Office use, etc. 156. Total distribution: 7,750.
Not distributed: 125. Total: 7,875. July –August 2010:
Press run: 7,650. Pail mail subscriptions: 7,250.
Total paid: 7,250. Office use, etc.: 300.
Total distribution: 7,550. Not distributed: 100. Total 7,650.

I certify that the above statements made by me are correct and complete. Andrea Schellman, Editor

www.nccw.org

Catholic Woman (ISSN 0270-3610) is published bimonthly by the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW).

President: Patty Johnson
Interim Executive Director: Joanne E. Dunne, CAE
Editor: Andrea H. Schellman
Design: Jan E. Moffatt

Subscription rate is \$40 per year and available only to institutions and individuals not eligible for NCCW membership. All Catholic women who support the objectives of the organization are eligible for NCCW membership; annual dues are \$30 and include six issues of *Catholic Woman*.

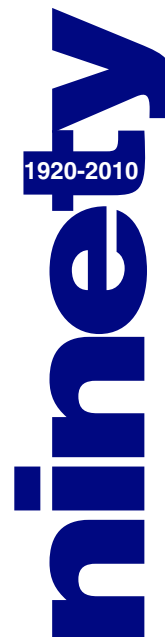
National Council of Catholic Women, 200 N. Glebe Road, Suite 725, Arlington, VA 22203.
Phone: 703-224-0990.
Fax: 703-224-0991. Order line: 800-506-9407.

NCCW e-mail: nccw01@nccw.org
Editor: aschellman@nccw.org

All convention photos by Convention Photography Services, Inc

For reprint permission, contact the editor, 703-224-0990, ext. 104, or aschellman@nccw.org.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Catholic Woman*, 200 N. Glebe Rd., Suite 725, Arlington, VA 22203.





Judy Powers Installed as NCCW President-Elect

Region III Vice President Judy Powers was installed as President-Elect during the 2010 NCCW Annual Convention. Judy is from the Diocese of Palm Beach. Before being elected vice president in 2009, she served as the Miami Province Director.

Pearl Sullens Receives 2010 Our Lady of Good Counsel Award

During the Annual Convention luncheon, NCCW President Patty Johnson honored Pearl Sullens of the Oklahoma City Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women with the 2010 Our Lady of Good Counsel award and presented her with a gold-framed picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel, inscribed to reflect the award. Pearl has actively worked for NCCW for more than 30 years.

“There is no aspect of parish or NCCW life that Pearl has not been involved with in one way or another,” said Ms. Johnson. “Pearl has become a model for NCCW members everywhere.”

She is a tireless ambassador for the National Council of Catholic Women and the Oklahoma Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women. She has attended at least 20 NCCW Conventions or Assemblies and returns with reports and information, along with a rejuvenated spirit that she passes along to those members of the Oklahoma ACCW. She has worked with her ACCW president to mentor new NCCW members and to conduct leadership workshops for current members.

Although her volunteer leadership is diverse, Pearl’s work and compassion for the poor and unborn were highlighted during Convention. Attendees learned that her efforts have raised more than \$30,000 in support of the children at our Lady of Faith Catholic Mission in Guatemala and her spirit of generosity towards the poor in Liberia has raised thousands to build dormitories, a school, a chapel, a clinic, and two water pumps.

She has served as International Commission Chair for more than 20 years, both for her Oklahoma ACCW and the Central Region of the ACCW, choosing this leadership role over holding higher office, although asked many times to do so.

A tireless voice for the unborn, Pearl has, for many years, encouraged council members, as well as men and youth of the community, to attend Rose Day at the State Capitol to share the pro-life message by taking a rose to give senators and congressman. Last year, she recruited so many people that she chartered a bus to transport them. She also leads the Oklahoma ACCW Council efforts to support the Rose Home, a support center for pregnant teens and mothers in crisis.

Committed to evangelization of our Catholic faith, Pearl puts prayer into action by supporting vocations to the priesthood. She founded and chairs the St. Francis Seminary Fund, which supports seminarians and encourages young men to answer the call of the Church.



Pearl is known for her talent for identifying and recruiting women to support the mission of NCCW and take on leadership roles as chairs or board members. When NCCW instituted individual memberships, she returned from the National Convention energized and ready to begin recruitment efforts. NCCW Sunday has been celebrated at her parish for countless years, thanks to Pearl. She creates posters and has members standing in the back of the Church with baskets to accept membership forms and donations. She helps plan the liturgy and ensures that all the ministers, from readers to altar servers, to Eucharistic ministers, are young women or members of council.

She has received numerous awards, including the Oklahoma ACCW Woman of Achievement Award. In 2005, Pope John Paul II bestowed upon Pearl, the “Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice” Cross, or “Cross of Christ” in recognition of her distinguished service to the Church and to society. ■



Valerie Day, Washington, DC



Ambassador Thomas Melady and Patty Johnson



Opening panel: Tony Spence, Helen Alvaré, John Carr, Kathleen McChesney, Sr. Carol Keehan, Kerry Robinson



Speaking to a resolution



Sr. Margaret Mary Kimmins



Elizabeth Schiavone, Arlington



National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Celebrating 90 Years—Rejoice & Renew

Washington, DC November 10-13, 2010

More than 600 members and friends of the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) met for a historic celebration of the 90th anniversary of the founding of NCCW, November 10-13, at the Renaissance Washington Hotel. Convention participants renewed their commitment to spirituality, leadership, and service and explored practical ways to bring their faith to bear on problems at home and around the world.

During the opening liturgy of the convention, Msgr. Robert Servatius, Chairman of NCCW Moderators, concluded his homily saying, “God has given us gifts to be the living gospel in the world today which prompts me to offer a challenge. What is the gospel according to you? Put your name in the place of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John.”

From the Opening Panel The opening general session of the convention featured a panel discussion by some of the nation’s key Catholic lay leaders who addressed ways to transform social justice principles into action. Moderated by Tony Spence, Director and Editor-in-Chief of Catholic News Service, the panel offered ideas on the most pressing national and international priorities for Catholic leadership. Sr. Carol Keehan, President of the Catholic Health Association, noted that NCCW members are often on the front lines of addressing the social problems in American communities, “you know where the rubber hits the road” and one of the reasons that it is so important to focus on health care is “the lack of it hurts the ‘uns’—the unborn and the unwanted....In a survey two years ago, only 7 percent of Americans felt secure about their ability to get and keep healthcare....50.7 million [Americans] don’t have healthcare....Abortions are four to five times as frequent among the poor, and it isn’t because they don’t love their children.” Directly addressing the NCCW’s *Campaign for Human Dignity*, Sr. Keehan, added, “We can’t have human dignity if we don’t have healthcare. We need an equitable, just healthcare structure.”

“You have hit all the key issues,” said Dr. Kathleen McChesney, who set up the Office of Child Protection at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, “to raise and sustain human dignity.” McChesney encouraged the audience to remember “the human dignity of those abused and of those who’ve been accused, whether credibly or falsely.” Approximately 10,000 boys and girls were abused by Catholic clergy, consecrated religious, teachers, catechists, and others in positions of authority between 1950 and 1992. “Many of those people are still in pain,” she continued. McChesney also touched on two other issues NCCW



Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Patty Johnson, Joanne Pohland, Karen Painter, and Judy Powers at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

members are working on in their local communities—pornography and human trafficking, and she pointed out that there are links between the sexual abuse of children and the use of pornography. With regard to human trafficking, she noted that “we tend to think of it as happening in southeast Asia, but last week the FBI rescued 69 [people] who had been forced into sex slavery in the U.S.”

“God bless you for being a role model for young Catholic women,” said Kerry Robinson, Executive Director of the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management. She pointed out that “Catholic men and women have risen to unprecedented levels of education and financial resources...” and have the means to help “solve the problems that keep our [Church] leaders up at night.” One reason to be “proud to be Catholic is our commitment to human dignity...What would our country be without the Church?” As lay Catholics, we can help ensure that institutions within the Church are “well-managed and use best practices to achieve the highest levels of accountability.” ■



Quotes and Notes from Convention Speakers

“The meaning of life is to love...Man cannot live without love...without love, life is incomprehensible....The opposite of love is to use a person as a means to an end; anyone who treats a person as a means to an end, does violence to the person. A lot of the problems in society are the result of treating people as a means to an end—pornography, human trafficking, domestic violence.”

—**Anastasia Northrop**, *The Theology of the Body*

“Whose am I?”

“Where am I going?”

“How am I getting there?”

—**Bishop Robert Morneau**, *Prayerfulness*

“The Church has a great opportunity to use new media to evangelize and spread Gospel values, especially among young people....‘We are talking not just about instruments but about a real culture created by a communicative complexity that has never before been seen in history’ (Archbishop Celli).

What does Gen X look like? “They not only watch movies and TV, they can produce their own....they are continually connected...they speak their own language, are skeptical of authority, easily bored, expressive, digitally creative....How do we reach them? It’s all about discipleship; we have to be where they are. Where are they? Online....If Facebook were a country, it would be the third largest in the world; it has 500 million users; 700,000 new users a day...630 million by 2011....with social media, everyone is a publisher....It is the great equalizer; it treats everyone the same....The Catholic Church has excelled in traditional media. The traditional media is not going away, and social media is here to stay.”

—**Jeff Young**, *Gex X and Gen Y: Reaching the Next Generation*

“God help me to see, stay, speak...God meets us where we are, but we have to pay attention. We need to soak it in; don’t let this moment pass you by. Then speak or give voice to those moments that move us....We need a spirituality that is personal—God knit me in my mother’s womb—and a spirituality that is communal. Spirituality is not just a private affair; it’s not just about me and Jesus. How is it that your community affects your relationship with God?...Where are you today in the Paschal Mystery (life, suffering, death, resurrection)? How are you living? What in your life is dying? Where is new life rising? —**Beth Knobbe**, *Called to Holiness: A New Perspective*

“Don’t be afraid to be unique.” —**Helen Alvaré**, during the Opening Panel

Hunger and poverty in the U.S: “13 percent of the population lives in poverty; 14 percent of households are hungry or at risk of hunger; 14 million children live in poverty; and more than half of all Americans will live in poverty before age 65...rural poverty is higher than urban because of lack of jobs and lack of transportation.”

Sr. Margaret Mary Kimmins, *Mapping Your Response to Hunger and Poverty*

“No family is ever really prepared for the birth of a child with a disability...I began to see the ways my disability wounded my parents...people with disabilities are disproportionately poor and vulnerable....70 percent of women with disabilities will be sexually assaulted....70 percent of disabled persons who want to work are unemployed or underemployed....”

Karen Murray, *In God’s Image: Considering the Life, Dignity and Gifts of People with Disabilities*



NCCW members were represented at the following meetings in September and October by President Patty Johnson (PJ), Director of Issues and Information Cathy Jarboe (CJ), and Director of Publications and Communications Andrea Schellman (AS):
 St. Francis of Assisi Council of Catholic Women (PJ)
 40 Days for Life Public Vigil (PJ)
 Cumberland Mountain Deanery (PJ)
 Knoxville Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Board (PJ)
 WUCWO General Assembly, Jerusalem (PJ)
 Florida Council of Catholic Women Province Conference (PJ)
 St. Francis of Cabrini, Florida Junior CCW (PJ)
 NCCW Office Staff Meeting (PJ)
 Justice for Immigrants, Core Members (CJ)
 Justice for Immigrants, National Grassroots (CJ)
 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, Partner Planning (CJ)
 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, Strategy Session (CJ)
 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, Capitol Hill (CJ)
 Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, Partners (CJ)
 American Kidney Foundation Working Group (CJ)
 USCCB Human Trafficking Coalition (CJ)
 Steering Committee for Catholic Response to Domestic Abuse (CJ)
 Senator Kay Hagan – DREAM Act Meeting (CJ)
 National Catholic Partnership on Disability, pilot program training (CJ)
 Religious Alliance Against Pornography conference calls (AS)

New Province Directors were installed at the 2010 NCCW Annual Convention.

Province of Atlanta	Patricia Langston
Province of Baltimore	Barbara Belldina
Province of Chicago	Joan Weber
Province of Cincinnati	Mona Barrett
Province of Denver	Marcella Redmond
Province of Hartford	Concettina Gillies
Province of Louisville	Anne Wharton
Province of Newark	Theresa Boscia
Province of Omaha	Katherine Broz
Province of San Antonio	Teresa Sarzynski
Province of San Francisco	Jacqueline Brandon
Province of Seattle	Sue Bregel
Province of Washington, DC	Olga Baeza



40 Days for Life was observed in the Diocese of Knoxville. NCCW President Patty Johnson participated as a witness for life.

Dues Reminder

Individual dues are now \$30 per year.

Affiliation dues are:

Arch/diocesan council	\$250
Sub-division & parish	\$90

The deadline for paying affiliation dues is January 1, 2011. There is a grace period until January 31, 2011. After that affiliates will not receive benefits until their dues are paid. If you have questions about dues, please contact Colleen Flood, Director of Member Services, cflood@nccw.org or 703-224-0990, ext. 105.

Catholic Charities Celebrates Centennial

Catholic Charities USA was founded in 1910 to “bring about a sense of solidarity” in charitable ministries. The network has served approximately 100 million individuals and families since then. According to the 2009 calendar year survey, Catholic Charities’ 175 member agencies and affiliates provided 14,975,726 client services, an increase of 8 percent over 2008. Food services clients increased by 10 percent in 2009. Agencies reported providing employment services to 66,794 people in 2009 (similar to 2008), an increase of 34 percent over 2007. (from *The Cara Report*, Fall 2010) ■



LTD Program Rocks Winona The October Leadership Training Development program enrolled 104 from the Winona Diocese and 20 from the Dubuque Diocese, for a total of 124 women.

NCCW History

Resolutions offer insight into the signs of the times, the prevailing cultural influences, and the commitment of NCCW members to create a just and life-affirming world. Our final anniversary celebration article highlights NCCW Resolutions in the 1990s that remain timely guidelines for education, action, and advocacy today.

1991 Interreligious Relations *Be it further resolved:* That NCCW educate members to understand and respect other religions and begin interreligious dialogue in accordance with the Vatican II's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions for mutual understanding in promoting peace, liberty, and social justice.

Today, NCCW is an active partner in the Religious Alliance Against Pornography which brings together leaders from Jewish and Islamic faith communities as well as Catholics and Protestants to address the social and moral costs of the proliferation and normalization of pornography, especially its accessibility through mobile devices and its role in driving the sex trade and human trafficking.

1991 Environment *Be it further resolved:* That NCCW initiate a national stewardship program providing guidelines for environmental awareness and action.

Today, NCCW is a key partner in the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change.

1991 Accessibility Whereas every person has the right to develop his or her potential to the fullest...

Be it further resolved: That active participation in the liturgy and religious education by persons with physical and developmental disabilities be facilitated and fully supported.

In 2010, NCCW's first webinar was "Poor Prenatal Diagnosis of Lethal of Non-lethal Conditions" presented by the National Catholic Partnership on Disability.

1993 Domestic Violence *Be it resolved:* That the National Council of Catholic Women, in collaboration with other diocesan offices and ministries, will continue to educate both men and women on the issue of domestic violence.

Today, NCCW continues to publish articles in *Catholic Woman* to educate members about domestic violence and a brochure, *Women Healing the Wounds*, to help others recognize and find assistance for leaving dangerous relationships.

1995 Pope John Paul II and the U.N. 50th Observance *Be it resolved:* That NCCW hereby recognizes the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and celebrates

the hopes and efforts of all peoples committed to the establishment of peace among nations...

Today, on behalf of NCCW, Augusta Van Duzen, Diocese of Brooklyn, serves as a non-governmental organization (NGO) representative to the United Nations.

1995 Respect for Life *Be it resolved:* That the National Council of Catholic Women reaffirms past resolutions of the Council which seek protection for the span of human life from conception to natural death, in particular as adopted at the 1979 Convention which states We therefore resolve, 1) to renew our resolution to seek protection of the law for the span of human life without exception. We will especially cooperate with the National Committee for Human Life Amendment, Inc.; 2) to recommend that our Archdiocesan and Diocesan Councils of Catholic Women implement the annual Respect Life Program and Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities of the Pro-Life Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops; 3) to continue loving service to mothers of unborn children; 4) to request that Archdiocesan and Diocesan Councils of Catholic Women support hospices and other services that give compassionate aid and care to the dying and support to their families; 5) to support the establishment of policies relating to aging that will allow the aged to live meaningfully as a part of families and communities and that will also require adequate and dignified institutional care and services; 6) to encourage facilities and opportunities for all handicapped persons which will allow them to function to their maximum potential; 7) to recognize that adequate health care is essential to support life and to assist in encouraging feasible programs for health care delivery to all..."

In 2009, NCCW committed to organize its educational and service activities around the theme, "Building a Campaign for Human Dignity," with the aim of promoting, supporting, and sustaining a culture of life.

1995 Immigrant Rights

Whereas proposed and current laws endanger the rights of immigrants and alien residents in America; threaten the rights of citizens born in this country of immigrant parents and can be injurious to the health and welfare of children....

Be it resolved: That NCCW strongly oppose all proposed and current laws which use the health and welfare of innocent children to punish illegal immigrant parents, as well as all forms of discrimination against legal immigrants and the citizen children of illegal immigrants....

Today, NCCW supports the U.S. Catholic bishops' Justice for Immigrants

campaign and the bishops' call for immigration reform, is a co-sponsor of the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, and continues to educate members about immigration issues through *Catholic Woman*, *Bulletin Board*, and the *NCCW Connect* e-newsletter.

1999 Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

Be it resolved: That the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) pledges to work with such organizations as The Campaign to End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT-USA) to stop the sexual exploitation of children through education and the advocacy for stronger international laws eradicating commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Today, NCCW uses articles in *Catholic Woman* magazine and convention workshops to educate members on steps they can take in their local communities to identify and assist women and children who are victims of sexual trafficking as well as advocate for the enforcement of laws designed to help victims and punish perpetrators. ■

1920-2010
ninety

Domestic Violence—Why Does She Stay?

by Karen Painter, Service Commission Chair

We routinely scrutinize and evaluate the survivor. How can she change her situation? What **should** she be doing? We avoid looking at the behavior and intentions of the perpetrator of the violence. By our misplaced focus on survivor behavior, we also miss the ways our culture condones, supports, and gives permission for battering.

People believe that if a battered woman **really, truly, honest to goodness** wanted to leave she could just get up and go. (If we can “get” her into shelter or convince her to leave we’ve done good. Our job is over). Many people are unaware that most survivors who leave do so without ever entering a shelter. We overlook the environmental barriers that prevent women from leaving, ignore how the batterer is trapping her, and too often focus on psychological “characteristics” of survivors instead.

These barriers include lack of access to safe and affordable housing, quality affordable child care, transportation, effective police protection, legal representation, medical insurance/medications, credit repair, money, education, and employment opportunities.

Batterers often escalate their violence when a woman tries to leave, shows signs of independence, or has left. Assaultants are most likely to kill their victims when they believe that she is actually going to leave them.

Some battered women stay because they believe that counseling or therapy will help their batterers stop being violent, but research is not conclusive regarding the effectiveness of specially tailored batterers intervention programs. All survivors want the violence to end; many do not want the relationship to end because they love their spouse and because of the children. The assailant usually tells his partner that he will change, that the violence was a one-time event, and this bolsters her hope.

Some battered women stay because they believe what many others believe:

- battered women provoke or cause the violence;
- battered women come from poor, uneducated, or minority backgrounds;
- their partner just has a problem controlling his anger, or stress; alcohol or unemployment problems have caused the battering.

The media does an abysmal job of covering domestic violence. Language such as “love triangle,” “domestic squabble,” and “estranged” husband reinforces the idea that battering is trivial, uncommon, or a byproduct of a messy relationship.

When batterers murder their partners, these crimes may be reported as unintentional “crimes of passion” caused by the man’s intense love for the woman and his inability to live without her, rather than his ultimate expression of vengeance, power, and control over her, and his absolute belief that she is not entitled to live apart from him.

Should battered women stay? No. The community, professionals, family, employers, friends, and other individuals must help battered women leave safely. But, only a survivor can know if leaving is the best decision. She may have information others do not have—it may be safer for her to stay. Or she may have exhausted every possible option—legal and extra legal—to protect her children only to see them returned to the batterer. Only she can decide if by staying she will be able to protect or mitigate an assailant’s physical or sexual abuse or neglect of her children.

During the holidays, domestic violence seems to increase, and with our struggling economy, and large unemployment rate many victims will need not only our prayers but our time, talent, and treasure. Please help in your local community this year. ■



During the holidays, domestic violence seems to increase and many victims will need not only our prayers but our time, talent, and treasure.

Parts of information used with permission from an article written by Susan G. S. McGee, “20 Reasons Why She Stays.”

President’s Message *continued from page 2*

The Joyful Mysteries of the rosary are particularly appropriate during Advent since they are taken from five episodes in the Infancy Narrative of the Gospel of St. Luke. Read Chapter 1 and 2 of St. Luke and you will find the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Presentation in the Temple, and the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple. Reading scripture is not simply information; it is formation—God is shaping our thoughts and feelings. That is the beautiful benefit of prayer: We become holy women.

During Advent, we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12 when we pray to our lady as the Protectress of the Unborn. We celebrate her as the Patroness of the Americas, praying for a conversion to a culture of life in

America. Much can be learned about the appearance of the Blessed Mother to St. Juan Diego and also the strength and power of her intercession. A prayerful activity would be to Google Our Lady of Guadalupe on the Internet.

For the past two years, I have been participating in the RENEW International program, “Why Catholic? Journey through the Catholic Catechism.” Currently our study is on Christian prayer. My Christmas prayer for you is adapted from “Why Catholic?” Book 4.

Gracious God, you have invited us into a relationship that continues to be fed through the gift of prayer. Let the fruits of our prayer touch a world that seeks your love and peace. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen ■



“...not a creature was stirring...” Wait a minute, someone is stirring. In fact, she is rushing furiously around her home. She is a hectic-looking woman with wild hair who is baking, wrapping, decorating. Oh no! She just hot-glued her finger to her red Santa Claus sweater!

If this scenario sounds familiar, you are not alone. Women find the weeks before Christmas to be some of the most demanding and frantic throughout the whole year. Just when the Church invites us into silent reflection and time apart to encounter the Incarnation, all hell breaks loose on earth. Our workload doubles as we try to make Christmas for family and friends. We find ourselves

baking twelve different kinds of cookies, cleaning and decorating like Martha Stewart, fitting in shopping trips, wrapping presents, and sending personal cards to everyone who sent us one last year. We load our day planners and calendars with required social obligations, and then find our stamina and peace of mind wilting in the face of spending and doing too much.

I would like to suggest to you a new way of keeping Advent that allows God to keep you and love you as surely as he kept his Mary in her waiting days. I offer you ten suggestions to lead you this Advent into an “all is calm” space that is far from the world’s idea

of what this liturgical time is all about.

1. Make, buy, or borrow an Advent wreath.

The wreath of evergreen branches symbolizes God’s eternal love. Each of the three purple candles and one pink is lit to mark the Sundays of Advent. The pink candle is lit on the third Sunday, called Gaudete Sunday (Latin for “rejoice”).

As the ancient symbol of life, your Advent wreath will become a perfect focus for your daily prayer. Place the wreath in your prayer space. If you don’t have a place for prayer, create one. You will need this sanctuary when the demands of Christmas come down on you. Pledge to go to this spot every day.

If you are not now praying every day, Advent is a wonderful time to begin. Start with your first cup of coffee or tea in the morning, or take five minutes in your bedroom during the late-night quiet. Wherever and whenever you come to prayer, let the Advent prayer set the mood. Just as you schedule your exercise time, your email time, put “wreath time” on your Blackberry and show up. The Divine One waits for you. You will be amazed at the unexpected calm that comes from allowing God into your thoughts and your needs.

2. Add a daily Advent reflection book (I recommend *Preparing for Christmas: Daily Meditations for Advent* by Franciscan Father Richard Rohr, St. Anthony Messenger Press) to your prayer spot. Each day read a short, inspiring meditation that will keep you on the right track and help you better understand and appreciate the Scriptures of Advent. Often these daily books will suggest a simple task for the soul.

3. Place a small bowl of wood, ceramic, or glass in your prayer spot. Put a pen and a few small pieces of paper next to the bowl. Whenever you think of someone in need of God’s help or a situation that makes your heart ache, write the name or situation on a slip of paper and add it to the bowl. This prayer bowl now becomes a place to put your heart’s desires as the weeks of Advent yield to Christmas Day.

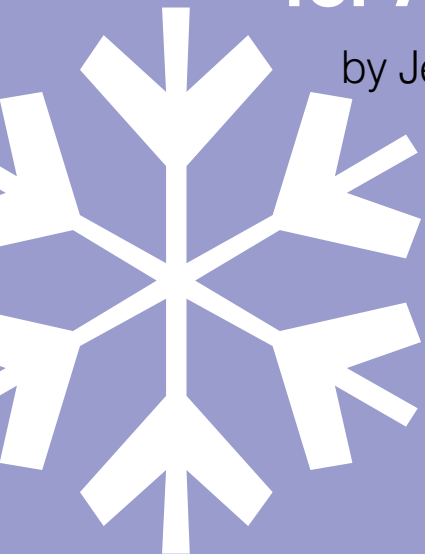
So many times we think of someone who needs our prayers or we say that we will pray for someone or a certain intention, and then it slips our mind. The prayer bowl is a concrete way to see our prayer thoughts. Every evening, pick up the bowl and lift it above your head and ask God to hear your prayers. On Christmas Eve, lift the bowl one last time, then read the papers and allow yourself to be surprised by a few Christmas miracles. It is surprising how many prayers are answered, and we don’t even realize it. If one of the intentions has come to a happy ending, you might say a prayer of gratitude. God likes to be thanked! A prayer bowl also makes a great gift for other women and men and families who know the power of intercessory prayer. My prayer bowl was a gift from my dear friend, Lisa, who created this simple ritual.

4. Make a spa basket and fill it with lavender soap, lotion, bubble bath, and other fragrant oils that remind you that your worn body is precious in God’s sight.

A friend went to confession and told the confessor of her raw nerves. Overwhelmed with work, worry for her teenage sons, and concern about finances, she con-

Ten Things Every Woman Needs for Advent

by Jeanne Hunt



fessed sorrow for her harsh words to her children, her nasty attitude toward her spouse, and an episode of road rage that almost caused an accident. The wise priest offered absolution and counsel: for her penance, he assigned her a weekly bubble bath for three weeks. That soothing ritual endured beyond the mandatory three weeks; my friend continues to allow “spa night” to calm her raw nerves.

When we take time out to soak in a hot bubbly tub, listen to some music, and follow up with lots of body lotion, our body feels renewed and replenished. These spa nights offer time to rest both body and mind. During Advent, allow yourself four, once-a-week evenings in the tub.

5. No good woman should be without a cup of comfort during Advent. The English have it right when it comes to afternoon tea. At 4:00 p.m. the tea cups come out, cucumber sandwiches are served, and English households, businesses, and even pubs pause for hot tea and a little bite.

Get a seasonal cup and your favorite tea and plan to sit down in silence and just “be” for a few moments. Tell God your laments and joys of the day. The steamy cup is like incense rising to heaven. A few moments with God and a good tea will give you the energy to keep on keeping on through the rest of the day.

6. Little bites go a long way. Find a cookie tin or pretty storage box and fill it with something you love to eat at Christmas (and that doesn’t harm your health). Each Advent I make a family recipe for butter cookies and store the cookies in a beautiful, old tin that belonged to my mother. As I sip that cup of comfort, I allow myself one cookie to remind me that God’s sweet grace is all around.

7. Another little Advent gift to yourself from the kitchen is a simmering pot of cinnamon, oranges, and cloves—a domestic version of holy incense. Simply fill a sauce pan with water, add a cinnamon stick, a few slices of an orange, and three cloves. Gently simmer the pot and allow the aroma to fill your home. Check the pot occasionally and add more water when necessary. As the fragrant steam fills the home, it gives new meaning to “our prayers rise like incense.” Let the pot be a way to adore and praise God without words.

8. Celebrate the child within and buy yourself a Christmas toy. This might seem a bit strange, but every woman who has done this loves it, and the toy gift soon becomes a favorite Advent tradition.

For me, this tradition started a few years ago when an elderly friend grew tired of receiving “grandma” gifts each year. She always graciously accepted the slippers, hankies, and fruitcakes. Secretly she longed for a Christmas tree that boasted wonderful toys under its limbs, so she went on her first Advent trip to the toy store and bought herself a toy. Each year she adds one toy to her collection. The toys reign under her tree.

Friends and family love to come to visit and play with them. Everyone waits in anticipation of this year’s addition. She stores her toys after the Feast of Epiphany until next Christmas Eve when she brings them out again. Jesus warns us to “be like a little child” so here is your chance to engage your inner child. What would make your child-heart sing: a doll, a train, a book of children’s poetry, a yoyo, a puzzle?

9. Return to the grace of another time and create a note basket as a permanent fixture on your desk. Find a small container (a basket or box) and fill it with inspirational Christmas cards, thank-you notes, a pen, address labels, and stamps. Throughout Advent, write a card to someone who you miss, someone who is suffering, and someone you want to thank. The womanly art of letter writing is being forgotten as we send electronic messages in this technical age. A handwritten note is special, something to hold and revisit, something by which we are remembered.

10. On the last day of Advent, give yourself the music of the nativity. Although Christmas carols play on the radio and at malls from Thanksgiving (or even Halloween!) and stop on December 26, it is important that we save these songs and hymns for Christmas. With so much pre-Christmas playing of Christmas music, the world is tired of these beautiful ancient carols by Christmas Day!

Advent is a season of anticipation, when we delight in waiting and preparing for something very special. This year make it your personal challenge to keep these beautiful hymns for the days of Christmas and listen to the first Christmas hymn on Christmas Eve. Darken the room and light the Christmas tree. Then play one favorite sacred carol. Listen with your heart as if the lyrics are your prayer. Listen as if you are hearing this music and the lyrics as one who has never heard it before. Let this solemn, sacred moment be the moment when Jesus comes anew to your soul. Sit in his presence and listen to him. He will speak in your heart with a Christmas message just for you, his beloved daughter, whom he has called by name and who is precious in his sight. ■

Jeanne Hunt is a Director for Product Development at St. Anthony Messenger Press. She is a well known speaker and author on topics of women’s spirituality, marriage, and family life. Her latest book is *Celebrating Saints and Seasons*.

Advent is a season of anticipation,
when we delight in waiting and preparing for
something very special.



Rediscovering Scripture

by Joanne Pohland, Spirituality Commission Chair

“Ignorance of scripture is ignorance of Christ”—St. Jerome

Lectio Divina is a way of breathing in deeply the Sacred Scripture and have Scripture truly be an encounter with the Living God who speaks to us often.

Just as we need food to sustain our bodies, we need prayer to sustain our spiritual lives. Just as many people enjoy a varied diet when it comes to food, so too do we need a varied “diet” when it comes to prayer.

As we start a new Liturgical Year with the beginning of Advent, this may be a good time to consider taking on a new practice for the coming year (or the rest of your life). We know that the greatest source of “Good News” is the Gospel of Jesus. The Gospels are found in the Bible. What better new habit than to begin reading the Gospels, every day.

This can be accomplished in many ways. We can immerse ourselves in the Gospels by attending daily Mass. If we cannot attend Mass, we can read the Gospel of the day. References to these can be found in many parish bulletins as well as at a number of Catholic websites. At the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (<http://www.usccb.org/nab>) or the link from the NCCW website <http://home.catholicweb.com/NCCW/index.cfm/bookmarks>), not only will you find the reference, you will find the readings. In addition, materials from *Magnificat*, *The Word Among Us*, and *Living Faith* are available in print and online. I would encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities.

One way of reading scripture that can truly help

“pray” the scriptures is a method known as *lectio divina* or “holy reading.” There are four parts to *lectio divina*: reading, reflecting, responding, and resting.

Begin by slowly and prayerfully reading a scripture passage. Pay particular attention to a word or phrase that speaks to you in a special way. You may wish to re-read the passage several times in order to “know” how God is speaking to you.

After you have read the scripture, you can reflect or meditate on it. You may want to ask yourself what this passage means to you. This is the time to allow the passage to interact with your own thoughts in an effort to “hear” and “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Col. 3:16).

In the third step of the process, after “listening” to what God has said to you, it is time to dialogue with God, speaking to Him as you would speak to your best friend.

Finally, it is time to rest in the embrace of God. This time of contemplation allows the word of God to speak to our hearts, in silence.

Lectio Divina is a way of breathing in deeply the Sacred Scripture and have Scripture truly be an encounter with the Living God who speaks to us often.

As we begin this new year, what better way can we draw closer to the Lord than to read the Scriptures every day. ■

NCCW: A History of Faith in Action

by Judy Powers, Leadership Commission Chair



Since March 1920, the National Council of Catholic Women has been a “powerhouse of women” putting their faith into action. During 2010, the year-long celebration of NCCW’s 90th anniversary has given us many opportunities to review our history, to remember our purpose and to celebrate our faith in action.

The first chapter of the *National Council of Catholic Women: The First Seventy-five Years*, states “Though lacking the political excitement of suffrage, NCCW’s founding deserves recognition as a significant breakthrough because it gave U.S. Catholic women a unified voice and service program.” NCCW’s strength is in the unity of its members; it is a representation of who we are as Catholic women. We are united in our faith, mission, and service.

Bishop Joseph Schrembs of Toledo, who was appointed chairman of the Department of Lay Activities, addressed that first gathering in Washington, D.C.

“The only thing we desire...is...to unify, to coordinate, all these various splendid efforts...and bring them together...for the purpose of giving national scope to the works which now often languish because

they are restricted to this or to that particular quarter.”

Schrembs’ special concern is to unify “our great social works, or moral problems...[t]ake the girl problem; take the child welfare problem; take the problem of public health, of public morality—this so-called sexology...the thousands and thousands [who seek] the protection of the Stars and Stripes.” (*The First Seventy-five Years*)

Unfortunately many of the issues cited by Bishop Schrembs still exist. The resource packet for “Building a Campaign for Human Dignity,” clearly addressed many of these issues. It is evident that our national organization must continue to bring together millions of women to be a loud, strong voice for those with no voice and to be leaders in the Catholic Church. This leadership on the national level provides an effective way to raise awareness about the issues we and all Catholics need to address and not allow them to “languish because they are restricted to this or to that particular quarter.” Consider this: If one parish is raising awareness about human trafficking, how many hear that message? If through education, programs, *Catholic Woman*, NCCW

Connect, and *Bulletin Board*, the message is sent out across the nation to all parishes, to all members, we increase our ability to raise awareness about things that are an attack on the dignity of human persons.

During its history, NCCW has had to face many challenges. We are all aware of our current financial situation. Yes, membership does generate revenue. Dues do allow us to do our work and serve members. Your voice and your participation are as important as the dues. How many women does NCCW represent? The only way to determine that is to count the women who join. Do the enemies of Christ hesitate to raise money and invite people to join them to work against all that we believe as Catholic women? No, if they feel strongly for a cause—abortion or redefinition of marriage—they pour all their resources into it. People will put their time, money, and energy into those things in which they believe. Membership in NCCW is not about dues—it is about what we do. The questions we should be asking, is how do we accomplish all that we need to do? How do we reach more women to join us? How do we convey to the public that we are leaders in the Catholic Church? We do this by developing a critical mass of members that the public and the media can't ignore.

We do this by tapping into existing and emerging means of communication as NCCW is doing with the development of a Facebook page, a Twitter account,

and development of an interactive webpage. NCCW is also engaging members with webinars in partnership with organizations such as the National Catholic Partnership on Disability. As we improve our visibility and educate more Catholic women, they will seek out participation in their local affiliated organizations. Most women want to serve, but they want to use their time wisely. As the Catholic leaders in your local parishes and communities—and your council should be leaders—you need to be aware of what you are offering the women in your community. Are you advertising bake sales or promoting your mission? Women will want to join you if they understand your mission. Bake sales and other fundraisers are ways to accomplish your mission. So let everyone understand the reason for your fundraisers. Establish yourself as leaders—as women of faith and women of action.

This year NCCW is celebrating its 90th anniversary. Much has changed since our inception in 1920. In important ways, however, we are still the same. Our values and our faith have not changed; our mission to serve Christ and to serve for Christ has not changed. We are still working to end evil and suffering. We are the National Council of Catholic Women; we have made a difference and we will continue to make a difference. Happy 90th Birthday, NCCW, and may there be many, many more. ■

Membership in NCCW is not about dues—it is about what we do. The questions we should be asking, is how do we accomplish all that we need to continue doing? How do we reach more women?

Make Every Year a Year of the Priest by Msgr. Robert Servatius



The church, at the instigation of Pope Benedict XVI, conducted a “Year of the Priest” that concluded with a wonderful celebration at the Vatican this summer, attended by thousands of priests from around the world. I unfortunately was unable to take part in that, although some priests from our diocese did.

A number of parishes in our diocese conducted special observances over the year to emphasize priesthood and honor their parish priests. The Salt Lake City DCCW highlighted the Year of the Priest at our April convention by having a panel of priests talk about their vocations.

At my parish, Blessed Sacrament, frequent holy hours were held focusing on the priesthood. Special cards and flyers encouraging prayers for priests were available to parishioners. To mark the conclusion of the year, a special reception was held for me on a particular Sunday; it also marked my 46th anniversary of ordination. A collage of photos from that reception was placed in the church gathering space. All of this meant a great deal to me as a parish priest.

Now that the Year of the Priest is concluded, I know that we priests hope that the attention given to the priesthood won't “fade away.” The priesthood is an ongoing essential role in the life of the church. Without it, there could be no celebration of Mass, no Sacrament of Reconciliation, no Anointing of the Sick, no Sacrament of Confirmation (ordinarily reserved to the Bishop, who possesses the fullness of the priesthood), just to mention a few of the priestly ministries.

You, the laity of the church, can continue to express support and encouragement to priests in a number of ways:

- Show your appreciation for the many spiritual blessings your priests bring to you.
- Willingly support your parishes by giving of your time, talent, and treasure as good stewards.
- Pray for your priests that God will give them the graces needed to be the good shepherds that he wants them to be.
- Pray for vocations to the priesthood and encourage young men to consider a life in service as a priest.
- Find ways to support and encourage our seminarians as they pursue their studies and formation programs.
- Try not to be critical of priests, realizing that they are human and not perfect.
- Pray for priests who have died, that they will be in eternal peace.

The priesthood is a wonderful, beautiful gift to the Church from God. Through priests, Christ the High Priest continues his saving ministry to his people. For this, all of us, both priests and laity, should be deeply grateful. ■

Msgr. Servatius is Chairman of the NCCW Moderators



national council of
catholic women

Partners Supporting Mothers



CRS and NCCW support impoverished women caring for their vulnerable children all over the world.

Support their nurturing work through four vital, humanitarian relief programs: the Madonna Plan, Help-a-Child, Water for Life, and the Refugee Women Emergency Fund.

See how you can touch the world.

Visit us at crs.org

A Mountaintop of Madonnas

by Mike Gesker and Robyn Fieser, Catholic Relief Services



High atop the rugged mountains of Guatemala, in the rural community of Tacaná in the San Marcos region, sits a vital lifeline for the impoverished families in the surrounding area. Here, Catholic Relief Services works very closely with our partner, Caritas, at a remote facility that monitors the health and nutritional needs of pregnant women and mothers of children, from birth to 3 years old. It's not hard to imagine the scene as a queue of courageous madonnas. The young mothers lovingly clutch their infants in search of ample portions of help and hope.

Sister Bernarda of Caritas oversees the operation of this open-air center, which is attached to a small chapel. Mothers, who often can only feed their children sugar and water, line up to have their babies weighed. The parents receive counseling about nutrition, and the hungry toddlers receive a nutritious meal. Children who are identified as underweight or sick are referred to community health clinics if there are any, and where often they don't even have cough syrup. The air is filled with the cries of babies and the soothing lullabies of mothers' calming words and tender caresses.

The program also teaches mother and children the importance of preventing common childhood illnesses, such as diarrhea and respiratory infections. Basic hygiene—like hand washing, healthful food preparation techniques, utilization of what's available in their own community, water purification through exposure to sunlight, and proper waste disposal are central to the project.

Actually, the project aims to reduce health problems before they start. Health care promoters and community leaders counsel pregnant women on how to improve their diets and recognize the signs of complications throughout their pregnancy, during birth, and the first three years of the child's life.

Changing behaviors is key to the success of projects like this one in Guatemala. Rather than giving families a monthly food ration, CRS provides them with seeds for them to plant vegetables and chicks that will grow into egg-laying hens, productive projects that will supplement their nutrition, such as sheep and goats. They give people the tools to recognize and address malnutrition before it takes its toll. CRS partners in Guatemala also teach farmers methods designed to prevent soil runoff which robs nutrients from an already degraded land.

Sister Bernarda understands the extreme poverty that grips the people of San Marcos. She knows that many people are very hungry and they face many hardships, including discrimination and virtually no access to other health programs. She worries about the young children who turn three and are no longer eligible to be helped by this important project because the funds are not there, and about the pregnant mothers who are mal-

nourished in the absence of proper nutrition and its negative impact on their babies.

Guatemala is just one of the countries that is home to a CRS maternal-child health project. We provide oases of care for pregnant women, safe havens for orphans and vulnerable children, clinics for the sick, shelters amid disasters, protections against exploitation and classrooms ready to inspire young minds.

CRS works in more than 100 countries and maternal-child health projects can be found in many of those nations.

Sister Bernarda is very grateful for the vital support this program receives on behalf of the precious children and their mothers who often are without hope and are powerless in this situation. The generosity that flows from compassionate women in the United States is not lost on her. It is abundantly clear in the faces of the poor Guatemalans and their hungry children.

With a smile as broad and beautiful as the grand landscape, she readily offers warm and heartfelt thanks to all the people of the United States who help with their support and their prayers for the poor people of Guatemala. Sr. Bernarda communicates to her sisters in the United States, "At every moment of my life there is a woman who leads me by the hand through the dark reality known to women better than to men, and through which women find their way better and with less light. And you are those women who with little or much help minimize this daunting problem, with the light of Mary our Mother. There is always tomorrow and life gives us another opportunity to make things better. But if I am wrong and today is all we have left, I would like to express my deep gratitude, appreciation and admiration." ■



Mothers, who often can only feed their children sugar and water, line up to have their babies weighed. The parents receive counseling about nutrition, and the hungry toddlers receive a nutritious meal.

Photo:
CRS/Rita Villanueva

CRS History in Guatemala

Catholic Relief Services has been working in Guatemala since 1963 serving the poorest and most marginalized communities in the country. Initially CRS programs focused on humanitarian and relief assistance to meet the basic needs of the poor. After the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996 which ended Guatemala's 36-year internal conflict, CRS in Guatemala began incorporating programs to transform social and economic inequality.

Today CRS remains committed to our vision of supporting communities as they build a culture of peace, solidarity and justice. Working to increase incomes, improve health and education and protect and promote human rights, CRS programs also address many of the root causes of migration. Collaborating with church institutions and local partners, CRS in Guatemala focuses on agriculture and the environment, health, education, emergency preparedness and management, civil peacebuilding, civil society and advocacy and water and sanitation.

Guatemala at a glance

Guatemala is in Central America and is slightly smaller than the state of Tennessee. More than 13 million people live there, making Guatemala the most populous nation in Central America. More than half the people (56%) live below the poverty line and half the workforce is involved in agriculture. The infant mortality rate is 27.84 deaths/per 1,000 live births, ranking 79th in comparison to the rest of the world.

Source: CIA World Factbook

The National Council of Catholic Women 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.

1920-2010

Plan for Success Pre-order your new, updated NCCW Guidance and Resource Manual today!

The manual is packed with invaluable information covering a comprehensive range of topics vital to the maintenance and growth of your affiliate.

From evaluating and building systems, to operational guidelines, setting goals and increasing membership, this guide is the **go-to tool** to **ensure success** for your organization.

Only \$60.00.

For ordering information, contact the NCCW office, toll-free: 800-506-9407

