



The President's Pen

NCCW's Monthly Newsletter

From the President

As we move through Holy Week, I find myself drawn to the quiet moments—the invitation to pause, to listen, and to trust that God is at work, often in ways we do not immediately see. It feels like a fitting place to begin this month that is filled with activity.

April holds some important events for NCCW. We hold our national elections, and I ask you to keep this process in your prayers as we look to the future of our leadership, and of course, remember to vote. Also in April, registration opens for our 2026 NCCW Convention—and I truly hope you will plan to join us. There is nothing quite like being together in person, sharing our faith, supporting one another, and returning home renewed for the work we are called to do.

An ongoing event that ends this month is a beautiful opportunity to honor the women who have shaped us and create a lasting legacy. Our Mother's Day Remembrance campaign is a meaningful way to celebrate their legacy while supporting the mission we share. I encourage you to take part and remember someone who has made a difference in your life before the April 29 deadline.

In a special way, we also remember past NCCW President Mary "Winkie" LeFils, who passed away on March 18, 2026. Her faithful leadership and generous spirit left a lasting mark on NCCW. I invite you to visit our website to read more about Winkie's life and the legacy she leaves behind.

As we move from Holy Week into the joy of Easter, may we go forward renewed in faith, ready to share the hope of the Resurrection.

Yours in Christ,

Amy Kennedy

From the Chair of Spiritual Advisors

The Empty Tomb

Dear Sisters in Christ,

We are the people of the empty tomb. That simple truth is the heart of Easter—and it is the heart of who we are. We are not people of the grave, or of despair, or of fear. We are a people who have looked into the darkness and discovered that it is not the end. The stone has been rolled away. Christ is risen. And because He lives, everything changes.

In a world that can so often feel heavy—marked by division, uncertainty, and suffering—we carry within us a different story. We carry hope. Not a fragile or passing hope, but the deep and abiding hope that comes from knowing that life is stronger than death, love is stronger than hatred, and God's light can never be overcome. This is the gift entrusted to us, and it is a gift the world so desperately needs.

You live this Easter faith in powerful and quiet ways each day—through your service, your leadership, your compassion, and your unwavering commitment to the Gospel. You are witnesses to the Resurrection in your families, your parishes, and your communities. You are, in a very real way, bearers of the good news.

So this Easter, stand with confidence in who you are. Go forth with joy. Let your lives proclaim what the empty tomb declares: Christ is alive, and because He is alive, there is always reason to hope. May the risen Lord fill your hearts with His peace, renew your spirits with His joy, and strengthen you to continue His work in the world.

JOURNEY TO IRELAND. A reminder that there's still time to join me and Immediate Past President **Beth Mahoney** for *A Journey Through Ireland*—a faith-filled pilgrimage through one of the world's most spiritually rich and breathtakingly beautiful lands. From October 4–15, we will travel together through the rolling green countryside, historic cities, and sacred places that have shaped Ireland's deep Christian heritage. For more information or to register, visit: <https://marianusa.com/destinationIndiv.asp?id=Ireland&tour=7385>

A blessed and joyful Easter to you all,

Fr. Tom Washburn

National Spiritual Advisor

From the President-Elect



“Speak, Lord, Your Servant is Listening”

August 26 – 29, 2026

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Just a reminder to keep checking the convention page on nccw.org. Tour information is posted along with the forms for the Silent Auction, Exhibitor Opportunities, and Convention Program Ads. Please let your Spiritual Advisors know that information regarding the Letter of Suitability is also listed.

The 2026 Convention Speakers

Mary Lenaburg

A respected Catholic speaker celebrated and award-winning author, and media contributor who inspires audiences with honesty, humor, and faith. Author of the bestselling *Be Brave in the Scared* and *Be Bold in the Broken*, with a third book forthcoming from Ascension Press in Summer 2026. She has also written for Our Sunday Visitor and contributed to seven other works. Mary's life and work exemplify the power of faith, hope, and perseverance. Mary will be delivering her keynote address on Thursday morning, August 27th, and directing a Workshop Saturday morning, August 29th.

Kevin Matthews

Broken Mary: The True Story of Kevin Matthews, Radio Fame, and a Miracle of Faith.

Kevin Matthews was once a voice dominating the airwaves, a radio legend with humor, wit, and a loyal audience stretching across the Midwest. But when a Multiple Sclerosis changed his life, Kevin encountered something unexpected, a broken statue of the Virgin Mary, discarded and forgotten. Broken Mary is a testimony of resilience, humility, and the miraculous ways faith can appear when least expected. You will learn of Kevin's journey that transformed not only his life but the lives of thousands who would come to know "Broken Mary." Learn also of his recent visit with Pope Leo XIV. Kevin is speaking at the Welcome Luncheon, Wed., August 26, 2026.

Council Chat: April 2026

Topic: "Legislative Advocacy" - What is Legislative Advocacy? Discover ways the Council of Catholic Women can participate in Legislative Advocacy.

Monday, April 13, 2026, at **5:00 p.m. Central Time**. Please note the time difference to accommodate members wanting to join the **Rosary Call at 6:30 p.m. Central Time**.

The focus: Learn about the importance of Legislative Advocacy and ways the Council of Catholic Women can use their voice to advocate for others and change government policy.

Please join Legislative Advocacy Co-Chairs Sheila Hopkins and Ingrid Delgado for this informative session.

A Zoom link will be sent before the April 13th *Council Chat*.

MEMBERSHIP

The answer to the March 2026 Membership question: Name one resource you can use to grow NCCW membership: Retain, Regain, and Grow Membership

*This resource is found on the members only resources page on the nccw.org website.

New Membership Question:

Spring has arrived! For some, that means – spring housecleaning! What are two ways an Affiliate, Deanery, Vicariate, Diocesan CCW President, or Province Director can add some freshness / new life to their organizations?

1. _____

2. _____

Have a blessed and joyous Easter!

Jane Schiszik

From the Commissions and Committees



Spirituality Commission

By Amelia Sweeney, Chair

America is marking its 250th birthday this year with planned celebrations and events, such as the National Day of Prayer and Fasting on May 17. In a written message to the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast, Pope Leo XIV urged Americans to deepen their prayer lives and

renew evangelization as our nation approaches its 250th Anniversary. The NCCW Spirituality Commission proposes that one way to mark our nation's 250th would be with a "250 Pledge." Each day, for 250 days, let us pray to the Lord for peace in our lives, our communities, our country, and our world. It is a simple, yet profoundly meaningful way to lift up our nation in prayer and turn to God with the same faith and hope of our founding fathers.

Service Commission

Service Commission

By Sharon O'Brien, Chair

Several plans for *Faith Enrichment Boxes for Families to Strengthen the Domestic Church – Nurturing Faith in the Family* include: New Moms, First Communion/Reconciliation, OCIA participants, Confirmandi, New Deacons, and for Ministry to the Sick. We welcome your suggestions on what you would find helpful.

Our brochure, Catholic Resources for Children and Families, is now available on our website. Go to nccw.org, click Explore, Commissions, Service Commission, Catholic Resources- Books – Children - Families. Our Resource Guide is there! Here's the link: <https://www.nccw.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/CatholicResources-Books-Children-FamiliesNCCW-ServComm-with-Color-Text-Boxes.pdf> This resource is especially helpful when looking for gifts for family or friends and Councils may want to donate books to their parish or school libraries.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership Commission

By Nancy Bachicha, NCCW Leadership Commission Member

Sowing Seeds for the Future of NCCW

April is dedicated to Environmental awareness and action. Just as seeds planted in the earth grow into strong trees, the efforts of NCCW women plant seeds of leadership, faith, and service within the Church and community. Each act of volunteerism, mentorship, and outreach helps nurture new members and strengthen existing councils. Inspired by the call to care for our world and one another in *Laudato Si'* by Pope Francis, NCCW women cultivate growth by encouraging participation, sharing faith, and supporting future leaders. Through these seeds of service and unity, NCCW continues to flourish and extend its mission for generations to come. Join us in bringing women to the National Council of Catholic Women!



Resolutions Committee

By Laurie Ulseth – Co-Chair

Our Resolution Committee is working on the submitted items, and we are pleased with the time and effort of the commissions and ladies who submitted them.

Unfortunately, the deadline has passed, so we cannot submit these resolutions to the Board of Directors for inclusion in the Convention booklet.

We look forward to the adoption of these resolutions at the 2026 Convention.



Bylaws Committee

Who Can Vote in NCCW?

Submitted by Alba Hernandez, past PD of Houston Province, and member of the NCCW Bylaws Committee.

Current bylaws Article III (Membership) Section 4. Voting Rights Defines who is eligible to vote in NCCW: *Individual members and affiliated organizations must be current in their payment of dues to NCCW in order to exercise their right to vote (or individuals to serve on the board). Individual members shall each have one vote. Affiliate organizations shall each have two (2) votes.*

While the bylaws do not list a cut-off for payment of dues by either individuals or affiliates, it is best practice to ensure that your dues are paid before elections or voting events are started. NCCW has online voting usually for officers and in-person voting for bylaws or resolutions.

Online voting instructions are outlined at nccw.org under the tab About Us – Protocols/Bylaws/Resolutions, with special instructions for Presidents of an affiliate organization who are also individual members.

For in-person voting, individuals will receive a voting voucher in their convention packet. For Affiliate in-person voting, you must submit your designated delegate form by the stated due date to receive the voting vouchers.



Education Committee

By Diane Oakland, Education Committee Member

In carrying on NCCW's mission, following the theme "Servant Leadership: We are Women of Faith and Action," with an emphasis on the well-being of those being served, we are focusing on a renewed spirit of enthusiasm for the *Madonna Plan* and *Water for Life*. Since 1946, CRS and NCCW have worked together to support and empower women to improve their health and education, enabling them to build better lives for their families and children. Our goal is to provide a plan beginning with prayer to invigorate these fundraising actions to address global poverty, maternal/child healthcare, clean water, and sanitation, following the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.



Our Lady of Good Counsel Award Committee

By Jeanne Audiss, Chair

Have you submitted your 2026 Our Lady of Good Council (OLGC) Award application yet? The OLGC Committee is anxious to read about the amazing candidates' applications for the OLGC Award for 2026. The deadline of April 27th is quickly approaching. There are

many giving and dedicated ladies, both young and old, in our Councils who deserve recognition.

You will find the OLGC Applications Packet 2026 on the NCCW website under Members Only Resources at the bottom of the page, listed under “Award Programs.”



Leadership, Development & Training (LTD)

By Coreen Marklein, LTD Team Member

Spring signals new beginnings. And what better way to say thank you to your newly elected officers than to schedule them to attend a Leadership, Training, and Development session. The LTD Team would be happy to come to your location and hold a training session. The trainers determine the programs based on the pre-assessments completed. It is a win/win situation for your councils and the new officers. Programs include how to conduct a meeting, what CCW is all about, and our commissions.

Email NCCWltdcontact@gmail.com for information on holding a training session.

News from our Associated Organizations

Friends of NCCW for WUCWO

Submitted by: Debbie Keller, President of Friends of NCCW for WUCWO

Thank you, Madame President, for this opportunity to share the story of who the **Friends of NCCW for WUCWO** are!

Part 1 – The Friends of NCCW for WUCWO (World Union of Catholic Women’s Organisations) was founded in 2002, in response to heightening awareness of the needs of women around the world and to have a practical means via NCCW to address them. Our BYLAW Objectives, ARTICLE II, Section 1 & 2 state “To educate all interested Catholic people regarding WUCWO” and “To provide opportunities to support the programs and projects of WUCWO, the WUCWO North American Region and the NCCW representative to WUCWO.” Stay tuned next month for **Part 2!**



Religious Alliance Against Pornography (RAAP)

By Karen Painter, RAAP Representative

Flip the Switch for Child Safety Online

Today’s technology is powerful, but the default settings on digital devices, apps, and platforms too often prioritize engagement over protection. That leaves families responsible for finding and turning on safety tools that should have been built in from the start.

Flip the Switch is about shifting that responsibility back where it belongs. Devices, apps, and platforms should come with meaningful child safety protections already in place, not hidden in complicated menus or left for parents to discover after harm occurs.

Enough is Enough is leading the call for common-sense standards such as age-appropriate access, visible parental controls, and safety settings that are activated by default.

NCCW United Nations Representative

By Maribeth Stewart Blogoslawski



NOTES FROM THE 64TH COMMISSION ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Commission for Social Development, held annually, is a committee within the [United Nations Economic and Social Council](#). The 64th Commission for Social Development (CSocD64) Session provided the ideal forum in which the commitments made at the 2025 Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha began to solidify as policy pathways and collaborative national strategies. The 2026 CSocD priority theme was Advancing Social Development and Social Justice through Coordinated, Equitable, and Inclusive Policies.

The Session consisted of Side events, High Level panel discussions, and an Informal briefing.

Main takeaways from CSocD64 include:

- Translating decisions to policy: CSocD64 was not a “conceptual exercise,” but rather a crucial moment to turn the Doha commitments into measurable improvements in people’s lives.
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- Social Justice: A major theme was that social development, particularly in the wake of crises and pandemics, must be treated as an investment in stability and human dignity.
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- Prioritizing Care and Inclusivity: The discussion highlighted the importance of strengthening care and support systems to reduce poverty and promote gender equality.
- Rebuilding Trust through Governance: Leaders emphasized that increasing inequalities are eroding trust in public institutions and governments in both developed countries and in developing nations. They argued for a shift in governance that integrates social protection with economic growth. This requires a change in what was termed “mental architecture” to ensure action that encompasses all persons on our Earth.

-Focus on Local Implementation: Discussions highlighted that global commitments must be translated into local implementation, with calls for reforming the global financial system to support equitable, inclusive development.

The Chair of NGO CSocD64 stated that social justice must be the core of international policy, moving beyond charity to ensure adequate social standards as a global obligation. A strong consensus emerged that social development must address the needs of the most vulnerable to ensure no one is left behind.

HOMELESSNESS WORKING GROUP

I continue to participate in the monthly meetings of the UN's Working Group on Homelessness. We are presently working on offering an event during the Commission on the Status of Women session.

MEETING WITH THE PERMANENT OBSERVER FROM THE HOLY SEE TO THE UN

On February 28th, I again met with Archbishop Gabriele Caccia and Monsignor Marco Formica at the Mission in New York. We discussed the Archbishop's very favorable impression of the Assembly of the International Forum for Catholic NGO's held in Rome in November. He noted my role in the organization of the Assembly and said that he very much enjoyed the meetings and actively participated in the discussions. We reviewed our plans for the New York Forum for 2026 and then enjoyed a birthday party for the Archbishop.

On March 7, 2026, Pope Leo XIV named Archbishop Caccia to the post of Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America. May God bless him and NCCW members, please pray for him as he assumes his new post.

