

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
CATHOLIC WOMEN



The President's Pen

NCCW's Monthly Newsletter

February 2026

From the President

Once I am settled in on an airplane, I look forward to reading a book or magazine I have brought with me. I enjoy the opportunity to unplug and relax while I am in the air. My trip to Washington, DC, for the March for Life and our Board of Directors meeting was anything but unplugged. As the weather forecast quickly worsened, it became apparent we would need to cancel the in-person meeting. Logged in to wi-fi in the sky, flurries of emails with the hotel, our event planner, and the Executive Committee preceded the snow flurries. The difficult but necessary decision to cancel our in-person events was made. The few of us who were already in Washington or en route were still able to attend the Opening Mass for

the National Prayer Vigil for Life. We went our separate ways on the rescheduled flights the next day, and I finally got to my book.

Our board meeting took place on January 24 via Zoom. While we missed opportunities for in-person connections and for attending Mass together, our virtual meeting was productive and informative. I am thankful all of our board members made it safely home, and that those who would be most affected by the storm were able to stay home and prepare themselves for the snow, ice, and frigid temperatures heading their way.

My dear friend Linda Clark, former lead trainer of our LTD team, likes to remind people that “blessed are the flexible for they never get bent out of shape.” As women of council, we are indeed flexible, always finding ways to adapt to changes and challenges and live our mission in new ways. NCCW adapts and responds to challenges with faith and purpose—this is why we are still here after 106 (almost!) years.

Yours in Christ,

Amy.Kennedy

From the Chair of Spiritual Advisors

JOIN.US.FOR.A.JOURNEY.THROUGH.IRELAND

Dear Sisters in Christ,

This October, the National Council of Catholic Women warmly invites you to join us 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.

Our journey will take us to beloved destinations, including Knock, Galway, Belfast, Derry, Donegal, and Dublin—each offering its own story of faith, resilience, and hope. Along the way, we will pray together, celebrate Mass, and reflect on God’s presence in history and in our own lives. This pilgrimage is designed not simply as a tour, but as an opportunity for spiritual renewal, friendship, and joy.

We are blessed to have Immediate Past President Beth Mahoney as our Group Leader, and I will serve as Spiritual Director, guiding us with prayer, reflection, and pastoral care throughout the journey. Whether Ireland has always been on your heart or this is your first time considering such a pilgrimage, this is an invitation to step away from the busyness of life and allow God to meet you in new and meaningful ways.

I hope you will prayerfully consider joining us for this unforgettable journey of faith, beauty, and sisterhood. Come walk the ancient paths, pray in sacred spaces, (enjoy a pint or two!), and experience Ireland not just as a destination—but as a pilgrimage of the heart.

For more information or to register,

visit: <https://marianusa.com/destinationIndiv.asp?id=Ireland&tour=7385>

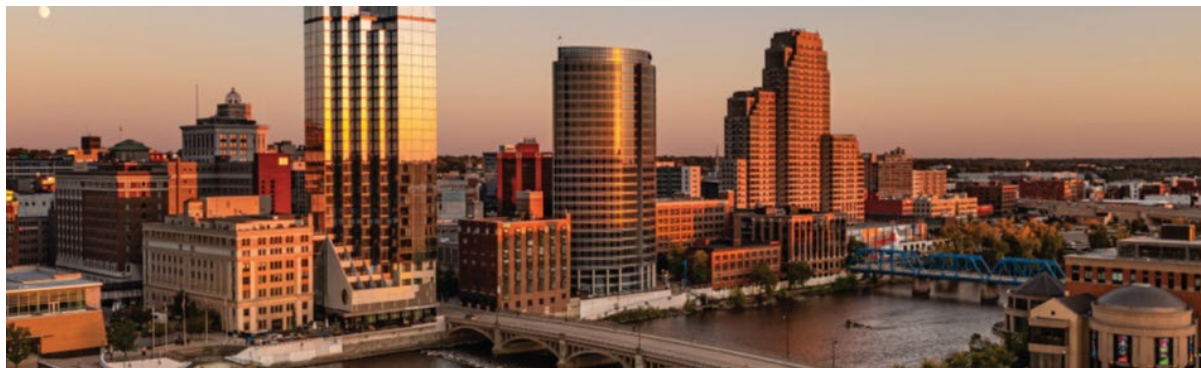
Peace, love, and prayers,

Fr. Tom Washburn

National.Spiritual.Advisor

From the President-Elect

By Jane Schiszik, NCCW President-elect



»Speak?Lord?Your.Servant.is.Listening«

Please check the Convention page on the NCCW website as convention details are updated.

868📞NCCW.Convention.Charities

Both charities selected support the USCCB's project "Walking with Moms in Need."

THE BABY PANTRY: Lowell, MI. This group of dedicated volunteers helps moms on the journey through parenthood by offering basic items, advice, and a caring ear. A group committed to establishing a close personal relationship with each individual family with children birth to five years by providing baby and young childcare necessities, referrals to other agencies, and more.

HELP PREGNANCY AID: Grand Rapids, MI, has been a trusted source of support since 1973. Specializing in abortion alternatives, providing compassionate assistance to individuals facing unplanned pregnancies. Our experienced team is dedicated to offering comprehensive resources, education, emotional support, counseling, and options to help their clients make informed decisions during this challenging time.

Donation suggestions include newborn.6- 2 month.pacifiers?onesies?sleepers?socks? sizes.newborn.to.size.9?78?74?and.80.months?receiving.blankets?infant.towels.and. washcloths?boys?or.girls".pajamas.8T- 1T?and.soft_cover.books;

Council.Chat

February.8682

Topic: Our.members;The.Heart.and.Lifeblood.of.the.National.Council.of.Catholic.Women;

Monday. February 9th at 6 p.m. CT

The focus is on members, NCCW's most valuable resource! Please join our presenters as they discuss ways to grow Council membership. A Zoom link will be sent prior to the Feb. 9th Council.Chat;

MEMBERSHIP SECTION

The answer to the January 2026 Membership question: the number of prayer opportunities on the nccw.org website? There are more than 118 prayer resources!

New Membership Question:

In celebration of Valentine's Day, name two things you can share with your Council Sisters?
_____ and _____.

From the Commissions and Committees



Spirituality Commission

L-O-V-E

February's designation as the month of love is rooted in the feast day of St. Valentine, whose story varies and even challenges the fact that there was just one St. Valentine. As Christians, we are called to exercise a greater, more altruistic love. Try to identify which books in Holy Scripture contain the verses listed below.

Amelia Sweeney

Spirituality Commission Chair

LEADERSHIP

Leadership Commission

By Susan A. Fox, Leadership Commission Member

Congress has designated each February as Teen Violence Awareness Month, another cause we need to become involved with. As this violence problem increases, we as family members need to be on the lookout for the signs of abuse, such as drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and suicide tendencies, etc. I feel the NCCW Leadership, Spirituality and Service Commissions, and all our Parishes need to address this problem and share the NCCW information with our families and others.

Information on Teen Violence Awareness can be found in the NCCW Domestic Violence resource manual, on the website under Members' Only, Section 2, pages 15-21, www.nccw.org. Also, refer to the NCCW 2024 Resolution titled fMental.Health.Illness.and.Challenges.Awarenessf Be informed and, as leaders, promote the NCCW resources!



Resolutions Committee

By Kathy Wilmes, Committee Member

In my home state of Minnesota, many of our dioceses have convened synods to address the major issues of our time. I was pleased to find in this month's copy of our diocesan newsletter the letter from our Bishop Robert Barron concerning the highlights of the 2025 conference.

As you know, Bishop Barron is not only our diocesan leader but also the founder of Word on Fire Ministries. Many of you read and use his ministerial outreach in your personal journeys. His emphasis at both the diocesan and national levels, as well as internationally, has always been Evangelization. In his Post-Synodal Exhortation, he reminds us of Pope Paul VI's statement that "the Church doesn't so much have a mission to evangelize; rather, it is a mission to evangelize" (paragraph 4).

This mission continues today in our own National Council of Catholic Women. Our continuous mission to share the Good News of Jesus Christ includes concrete statements of where we stand on the important issues of our time.

We are excited to state that we have three of these statements to currently consider. We ask for your assistance in this work of evangelization. Please consider writing and submitting a resolution by sending it to Laurie Ulseth or Tammy Farr. We can move mountains, but only if together we state our beliefs. Let us begin!



Education Committee

By Carol Brennan and Diane Oakland

The Education Committee continues to work in our areas of the Golden Rose Award and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) programs: Madonna Plan and Water for Life. Several of us planned to travel to D.C. to participate in the March for Life and a Board meeting. Not only did we intend to gather to do the important work of NCCW, but we were well aware of the responsibility we carried representing all of NCCW who could not be with us during the "respect for all life activities." We carried all in spirit as we prayed together along the march. It was inspiring and encouraging to see so many youth participate.



Nominating Committee

We are pleased to announce the following slate for the office of NCCW Treasurer: Venessa Lopatka of the Diocese of Joliet. Information about our candidate can be found on the NCCW website later this month. Thank you to all the women who prayerfully discerned running for this office.

Lent and the Call to Servant Leadership

By Members of the Nominating Committee

Lent invites us to follow Christ more closely through humility, prayer, and service. Jesus reminds us that true leadership is found not in authority, but in love and self-giving: »For.the.Son.of.Man.did.not.come.to.be.served.but.to.serve« (Mark 10:45). The Nominating Committee prayerfully reflects on this season and the theme of servant leadership. Servant Leadership asks us to listen, to accompany others, and to place the needs of the Church before our own. This Lent, we invite you to discern how God may be calling you to serve. A simple “yes” can become a powerful witness of faith.



Legislative Advocacy Committee

By Ingrid Delgado, Co-Chair

Many priests, religious sisters and brothers, and others serving the Church throughout the U.S. are having to abandon their ministries in parishes, schools, and other Catholic institutions due to significant visa backlogs.

The bipartisan Religious Workforce Protection Act would provide relief for religious workers in this situation by authorizing an extension of nonimmigrant religious worker visas for religious workers who have applied for adjustment of status until they can receive their green card.

Using USCCB's [action alert](#), please encourage your member of Congress to support this much-needed source of relief for people of faith and communities nationwide.



Leadership, Development & Training (LTD)

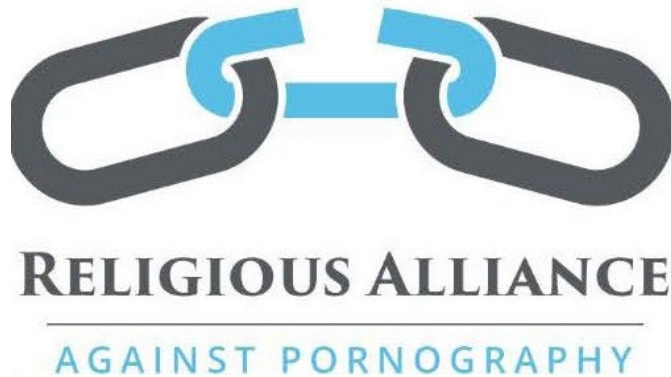
By Susie Harting, LTD Trainer

February 2026 is the month of many observations and National Holidays. Such as: Valentine's Day, American Heart Month, Black History Month, Celebration of Chocolate Month, Lent (Feb. 18-Apr 2). Let's add a new observation – Leadership, Training, and Development Month. Contact the LTD team today to arrange a day of reflection, mentoring, learning, and sisterhood.

The LTD trainers are eager to help your Council to grow, address leadership gaps, and encourage new members to step up. Let us support you in serving with purpose by being servants of God.

This is an election year for some areas. Your nominating committee should be in full swing to have a slate of officers this spring. Please contact us at nccwltdcontact@gmail.com.

News from our Associated Organizations



Religious Alliance Against Pornography (RAAP)

By Karen Painter, RAAP Representative

NCOSE urges Investigation of X for AI Sexual Exploitation

The National Center on Sexual Exploitation is calling on the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to investigate X after its Grok AI chatbot reportedly created child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and has been allowing users to create nonconsensual sexualized images of women (image-based sexual abuse) that have been widely shared on the platform.

U.S. federal laws prohibit the creation and distribution of child sexual abuse material, even virtually created CSAM in certain circumstances, such as when it depicts an identifiable child or depicts a child engaged in sexually explicit conduct. X may also have violated the Take It Down Act for failing to remove and or continuing to generate nonconsensual sexualized images of people without their consent.