

NCCW
2014 Annual Convention
Be the Voice of Catholic Women
“Catholic Women United in Truth”

Business Meeting:

President Rebecca Woodhull report included:

- We have made progress on all fronts that affect an organization like NCCW.
- The past year we have made communications a priority with increased content in our Catholic Woman magazine and Connect e-newsletter, press releases on some of the critical issues of our times, Catholic radio and television appearances by Executive Officers and publishing letters that she has made on our behalf.
- We have been represented at the March for Life, March for Marriage and attendance at key meetings such as the Morality in the Media Conference in Washington D.C. and on the Coalition Against Pornography – key issues for Catholic women.

Treasurer’s Report:

- Report on file with NCCW (if you would like a copy just let me know and I will send you one)

General Business:

- 4 resolutions were adopted (attached).
- New Logo adopted.
- Installation of Sheila Hopkins as NCCW President-Elect.
- “We are Called to Witness” program from the Leadership Commission – available on the NCCW website – www.nccw.org – (this is a great program PLEASE download and read).

New Items (available on line):

- NCCW book – “The First 75 Years 1920-1995” by Ruth L. O’Halloran
- Religious Freedom – prayer card (pack of 25)
- Our Lady of Good Counsel Ornament – double sided (beautiful – great gift idea)
- Our Lady of Good Counsel Medal

Reports from Speakers and Workshops:

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Ralph Martin, President of Renewal Ministries, Director of Graduate Theology Programs in Evangelization, and associate professor of the theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary.

- Began with a startling quote from 1976 then a cardinal – Pope John Paul II ...We are now standing in the face of the greatest confrontation has ever experienced...The final confrontation between the Church and the anti-Church; the Gospel and the anti-Gospel; the Christ and the anti-Christ. This confrontation lies in the divine plan but it is also a trial that the Church must take up and face courageously.”
- Whether it is **the Final Confrontation** or not: we are facing a very significant confrontation in the western culture – a growing hostility to Christ and the Church.
- There is a world-wide culture trying to choke off the voice of Christ and the Church and our Catholic Life.
- To help us understand a confrontation like this Dr. Martin references: 2nd Thessalonians Chapter 2: Paul says let no one deceive you... (Read quote from Bible), the lawless one will be revealed. End can't come until certain things happen: Rebellion takes place and the Lawlessness One appears who is destined to hell.
- A great Apostasy: the turning away from faith for those who once had it. In Detroit in the last 13 years, there is a 50% drop in baptism and Catholic marriages – a shrinking of our Church.
- Resting on our laurels is not going to work anymore – we must evangelize.
- How do we handle ourselves in a time of apostasy? Come to a knowledge of the truth – the truth is revealed in the Bible. Open ourselves to the truth and be saved. The Catholic Church is about Salvation. Be saved from our sins and the lies of the evil one that is bending us away from God. Culture is heading toward a cliff and does not see the cliff.
- How do we live in a time of conflict and confrontation? Attend to our own relationship with God. Evangelization flows from our relationship with Christ.
- Evangelization: proclamation of the Word of God that has *Christian conversion* as its aim; a complete and sincere adherence to Christ and his gospel through faith. Conversion means accepting by a personal decision – accepting the saving sovereignty of Christ and becoming a disciple.

We are living through the collapse of Catholic culture. Previously we had strong Catholic family life; strong Catholic Parishes and Communities, based on going to church and obeying the 10 commandments now with the weakening of Catholic Culture, the weakening of Catholic life, the prevalence of divorce the mobility of population those nurturing communities are very rare.

- A need for Catholics baptized and confirmed to come back.

NEW EVANGELIZATION: What's new about it?

1. **It's who it's directed to.** Primary evangelization (traditional); continuing pastoral care- help people grow; the new situation – entire groups of baptized have lost the living sense of the faith or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church and live a life far removed from Christ's Gospel.
2. **Who does it?** We used to think that priests, nuns and missionaries were the people to evangelize. *Now every single baptized Catholic is baptized into the mission of Christ. Our fundamental mission is to be a witness of Christ.* The decree on the apostolate of lay people from Vatican II. – Don't wait for Bishop or priest to ask you to do something Jesus already asked us – in baptism.
 - *First element:* the witness of our lives. The witness! Matthew Ch. 6 (seek God 1st)
 - *Second Element:* Works of Charity and Mercy (people that need help - individual, group, giving)
 - *Third Element:* Renewing the Temporal Order (being good citizens in entities we participate social issues)
 - **Most Important Fourth Element:** We need to be willing to talk to people about Jesus. *The bottom line, the fundamental mission of the Church is to help them to get into a relationship with Christ that could save their souls.* Invite them.... It may change their life or save their life. Is there anyone I know that needs to learn or hear more? I.e. retreats, mass, adult ed., share a good book on spiritual life.
 - New Evangelization: Why Bother
 - **There's a growing confusion on whether evangelization is actually necessary?** Most Catholics think broad and wide is the way that leads to heaven and most are going to heaven; narrow is the road that leads to hell and hardly anyone is going there? Scary, it's the opposite of what Jesus says it is. Matthew 7: 13, 14. Broad and wide is the road to destruction many are traveling on narrow is the road to heaven and few are traveling on it. Satan has taken away the Catholic's confidence on sacred scripture.
 - Lots of talk about the mercy of God: very popular now. Divine Mercy Devotion: most people have only taken part of the message: that God is so merciful that they don't have to worry about salvation. The rest of the story: Mercy is being offered but we need to accept the mercy and repent.
 - God loves you and how you respond to his love will ultimately result in your salvation or not. **Why evangelize? Because souls are at stake** and it really matters to speak a word when you only have a minute to speak a word.

Keynote Speaker: Teresa Tomeo, author, syndicated Catholic talk show host and motivational speaker.

Families and the Media: Helping Families Navigate Today's Cultural Challenges

- Matthew Kelly: "The way people view the world is the way they live their lives."
- Don't let Satan steal your joy. The world wants you to think you are alone, but you're not.
- Look at everything through scripture and the lens of the Catholic Church. The Pope has the largest twitter account in the world. The church has teaching on the media.
- Even church goers are not getting their information from Christian sources. Getting more information from secular media only.
- We need to know how the media works so they don't work on us.
- There is no such thing as gay marriage in the church.
- People are being influenced and desensitized by the media.
- All good influences with the family trumps everything else. Even if you don't think they're listening plant the seeds.
- Parental technology: people have no idea how savvy kids are today. Leaving them alone with the media is like leaving them downtown by themselves at night. The media is trying to get to their souls
- Cultural landscapes: Sexual content, violent content, objectification of women and girls. In the news when we were at convention -16 year old girl texted herself in a sex act at homecoming. Kids being told that this type of behavior is expected.
- 50 Shades of Gray: Story about a recent college graduate and Christian Gray (do you think his name is a co-incidence) in an abusive relationship according to the center for disease control. Women are just an object. There is a movie coming out – **Normalizes** this type of conduct.
- Choose our sources of information carefully.
- Contraception is not good for women. "A lie is still a lie even if everyone believes it and the truth is the truth even if no one believes it." – St. Francis
- What do we do? **Important to remember that God is not done with us yet.**
- Conduct a media reality check. How much time is my family consuming media?
- Go to a Catholic source - EWTN, Podcasts, Magnificent. Support Catholic media, it's a sacrificial mission.
- Provide sources to the media i.e. Pro-life, Marriage Classes, we're never going to be able to change the culture if we don't put our message out there - Small kernels of truth.
- Encouraging signs: Catholic media and evangelization are exploding. People are hungry for the truth.
- A mystic's Marching Orders St. Teresa of Avila " Christ has no body but yours"

Speaker: Sheri Wohlfert

Living as a Daughter of God

– “Sheri’s approach to spreading the Gospel message is very down to earth, practical and easy to understand. She weaves God’s word and truth in with the challenges and celebrations of everyday life, tosses it up with a great scoop of humor and rounds out the message with a careful look at our sinfulness and sends the crowd off with some practical things to do that will bring about a closer relationship with our Loving Father.”

She talks about the chore list and getting things done and not everything so she asks for help and brings a basket of laundry and hands out clothes to the audience to help her fold. How many of you prayed while you folded the laundry? How many of you prayed thanksgiving that you didn’t get any laundry to fold. He is waiting for us at the laundry. He can never get enough of us and to connect with him.

- Women of God are women of Perspective, Surrender, Joy, Service and Prayer. How do we grow in these areas? We are his evangelization. How do we share our love with others?
 - Perspective – For perspective we need to see things through the perspective of Christ. The tool to help sharpen our perspective is scripture. It will open up our narrow vision. Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible.
 - Surrender – Jeremiah 29:11 “For I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for.” As we are growing up we have plans of what we want to be and do with our life. Then life happens... God’s plan is so much better! Ask Him to write you plan... and surrender to His plan not yours.
 - Joy – “Joy is prayer, Joy is strength, Joy is love – Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls.” Mother Teresa. Joy is a Choice. **I am going to act the way I wish I felt.**
 - Service – Mark 9:35 “Jesus sat down, called the twelve disciples, and said to them, “whoever wants to be first must place himself last of all and be the servant to all.” Jesus washing the feet...Need to be humble to serve someone else. A hard one to learn and a hard one to teach....
 - Prayer – Pray without ceasing 1 Thesalonians 5:17 “Be joyful always, pray at all times, and be thankful in all circumstances”. How do we pray without ceasing? The communion of Saints their job is to pray for you without ceasing. Pray for a saint to claim you.

Speaker: Joyce Coronel

Religious Freedom & Spirituality: Motherhood, Martyrdom and Faith Reignited.

Joyce is a journalist for the Catholic Sun in Phoenix. In 2007 as a journalist she saw a news story about a Chaldean Catholic priest gunned down in Mosul after he refused to close his parish. Then in 2010 she wrote about a massacre at a Catholic cathedral in Baghdad that took the lives of two priests and dozens of men, women and children. It was a life-changing story that caused her to re-evaluate her own commitment to the Catholic faith.

- **How far am I willing to go for my faith?**
- She now attends mass with her family and then attends the local Chaldean Catholic Community
- She enjoys praying the Hail Mary in Aramaic, the language of their liturgy and the language that Jesus spoke.
- A quote from Joyce“...I have a feeling that the priest who was regularly seen praying the rosary outside abortion clinics and who showed such empathy for the Chaldeans would tell us to remain steadfast in faith, to forgive our persecutors and to pray the rosary for peace. Perhaps if more of us responded in this way to injustice, we would know peace here in this valley of tears.”
- Brought with her a relic of St. Lucy-opportunity for participants to venerate one of the treasures of the Catholic Church. (Prayer to St. Lucy attached.)
- “A Martyr’s Crown” – her new book – novel.

Sack Lunch Talk and Sharing – Leadership Committee – Jane Carter presenter

“We Are Called to Witness” – free program on NCCW web site – From the Introduction page of the program -“These nine topics were designed especially for Councils of Catholic Women to provide an explanation and overview of the New Evangelization, with specific suggestions to implement the program in CCW Affiliations.” (See attached sheet.)

- Chapters in the Program
 - Finding the Joy of Jesus in Yourself
 - Sharing your Faith with Other Catholics
 - Hospitality and Welcome
 - Hearts to Love and Hands to Serve
 - Holy Days
 - Reaching Out to Young Women in College and Beyond
 - Faith Sharing in Everyday Life
 - Social Justice Shows God’s Love
 - Learning Never Ends

- Some suggestions on evangelization:
 - Listen, welcome, heal and share
 - Smile, be helpful
 - Talk to parents at sporting events
 - Traveling – first question – where can I go to Mass
 - The post office – talk about your faith
 - Evangelize in the bulletin
 - See attached sheets

Educational Session – *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall...Reflecting Council Image and Success for All*

Speaker: LTD Ellen Bachman and Suzanne Erpenbach

- If you are not managing your image – someone else will
- “Behavior is the mirror in which everyone shows their image”
Is the image you want people to have the actual image people have of you?
- Attached sheet on Image development, Image Climate Survey and Key Components to Image – they are good tools that your council can use.
- Membership involvement: focused planning discussion, surveys, brainstorming, and invitations, sign-up.
- **No one can do everything, but everyone can do something!**

The above notes are my understanding of what the Speakers presented.

Cynthia Lacour

DCCW President

2014