

Our Catholic Voice

May 2020

We are the Voice of Catholic Women everywhere: from the Women in the Pews of the local parishes to the Deanery Councils, Diocesan Council, the Province of Saint Paul/Minneapolis, the National Council (nccw.org) and WUCWO (World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations wucwo.org) our International parent organization. This is one of the ways we share information up and down the lines of communication.

MISSION STATEMENT

The St. Cloud Diocesan Council of Catholic Women acts through its affiliate organizations to support empower and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service. DCCW programs respond with Gospel values to the needs of the Church and society in the modern world.

Contact us: stclouddiocesanccw@gmail.com

Website: stclouddccw.org



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Saint Cloud Diocesan Council of Catholic Women

President's Report

Linda Scepurek

lindascepurek@hotmail.com

Hello to everyone, hope everyone is doing great.

It is a very hard time to see our churches closed, especially during this most holy time of the year. It was hard to see our Annual Lenten Retreat cancelled at the last minute, after so much work was put into it by the ladies. Thank you, ladies. Now we have to cancel our Board meeting set for April 15th and also Food, Fun and Fund Day, which was to be held in June.

Cheryl Weller, Linda Borgerding, Arleen Roelike and I attended the Province meeting of the St. Paul/Minneapolis Council of Catholic Women on February 17th at Assisi Heights (home of the Franciscan Sisters) in Rochester, MN. Each Province gave a run-down on what is happening in their area. Although, most of the events have been cancelled due to coronavirus since then.

I feel very lucky because I can watch daily Mass from our church in Little Falls, MN on the internet each morning.

We each have to do our part in the fight against this virus. I continue to do Meals-on-Wheels, but now it is putting the meal outside the house, knocking and leaving. No contact with the people. We can all call neighbors and family to check on them. But most of all keep the faith. I know that Christ will prevail in this all and we will be stronger in our faith because of this.

President Linda Scepurek

A PANDEMIC PRAYER TO OUR LADY:

O clement, O loving, O sweet Mother Mary,
We, your children of every nation, Turn to you in this pandemic.
Our troubles are numerous; our fears are great.
Grant that we might deposit them at your feet,
Take refuge in your Immaculate Heart,
And obtain peace, healing, rescue,
And timely help in all our needs.
You are our Mother.
Pray for us to your Son.
Amen.

CHURCH COMMISSION

Hello every one!

Here is a Novena for Coronavirus that I received as I belong to praymorenovenas.com

While we face the coronavirus pandemic, let us turn to the face of God in prayer and ask for His healing, His help and His protection. We started praying on Friday March 20th.

We prayed for all who are affected, for all who are sick and suffering, for all those who work in the medical profession, and for those who have died as well as for their grieving family members.

During this 9-day novena asked the intercession of these saints:

- The Fourteen Holy Helpers, those who lived during the time of the plague,
- St. Anthony the Great, patron of those affected by infectious diseases,
- St. Edmund, patron for victims of pandemics,
- St. Damien of Molokai, who put himself at risk to minister to lepers,
- St. Rocco, who is venerated for his prayers for those suffering from infectious diseases,
- St. Joseph, patron of the dying,
- St. Jude and St. Rita, patrons of impossible causes,
- St. Francis Xavier Cabrini, who founded hospitals dedicated to caring for the sick,
- Mary, Undoer of Knots.

I added a few more Saints to the list though.

- St Luke, the Beloved Physician,
- St Dymphna, Patron Saint of Stress, Anxiety, and Mental Health,

Thank you,

Jean Zwilling,

Melrose/Sauk Centre Deanery Church Commission

Editor's Note: Though this Novena was started on March 20, 2020, you can still go to the website, praymorenovenas.com to pray it on your own. Just click on the search button and enter corona virus.

INTERNATIONAL REPORT

The Coronavirus (COVID 19) has had Worldwide devastating effects including over 135,000 deaths as of April 16, 2020. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has been active in humanitarian efforts to decrease the spread of this disease. They have been in the most vulnerable countries for over 75 years and have built networks of volunteers and healthcare advocates. They have been providing education and training on hand washing, social distancing, and methods to prevent the transfer of the virus. CRS has had an extensive background of working with Ebola, tuberculosis, malaria, and other diseases. They have been using their success in these areas and can utilize these efforts with COVID 19.

Many of the most vulnerable are those in refugee camps and poor living conditions. They are not able to practice social distancing. They are not able to use antiseptic cleaners as they do not have access to these

preventative measures. Many of these people have lost their jobs and are now out of their meager income. With more time in their homes, domestic abuse becomes another family threat. Many clinics, both for physical needs and psychological needs, have closed. Many volunteers with Peace Corps and other humanitarian organizations have brought their volunteers to their homeland.

What can we do? We can pray for protection and to stop the disease worldwide. We can pray for caregivers, researchers, scientists, business owners, and politicians. We can support humanitarian services such as Catholic Relief Services, as all are brothers and sisters.

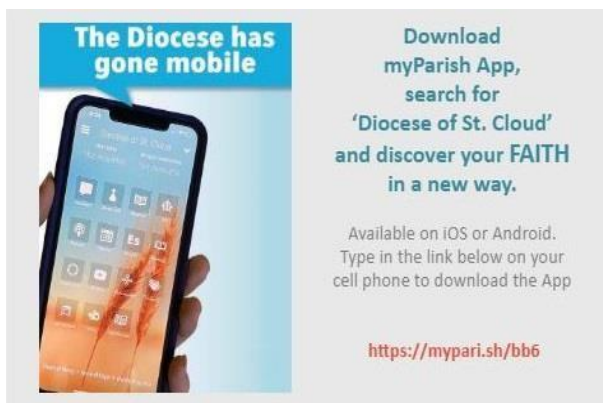
Joyce Simones, Chair

INFORMATION TECHNICIAN

Since most of us are at home these days, we're finished with spring cleaning, watching TV is boring or depressing, we are turning to other sources to use our time wisely. Our parishes are doing their best to bring us the Mass on Saturday or Sunday. Pastors and Deacons are sending out messages of Faith.

I thought I might help you find some other good sources. Many local parishes are on Facebook: use the search icon on the top of your page. Using the search, you may be surprised the friends you can make. I have befriended many CCW pages: NCCW, ACCW, Miami, Atlanta, Kalamazoo, Military CCW and others. It's interesting to see their sites. I've also befriended Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict; they publish a short prayer each day.

Through the internet, newsletters can be found from various councils, I get the local ones, but I also get one from Ontario, Canada.



The Diocese has gone mobile

Download myParish App, search for 'Diocese of St. Cloud' and discover your FAITH in a new way.

Available on iOS or Android. Type in the link below on your cell phone to download the App

<https://mypari.sh/bb6>

Have you seen this phone app from the Diocese? This ad was in the Central Minnesota Catholic. Give it a try.

Try Saint John's Abbey, <https://saintjohnsabbey.org/live> They broadcast a Mass at 10:30 AM Sundays and 5 PM daily.

Use the Conference of Catholic Bishops website USCCB.org for Catholic information, everything you need is there.

NCCW.org is also a great website for information. Have you ever checked it out? If you are an individual member, you will get

notifications of a monthly Rosary call. Miss it? Go to the website.

Here's one I've not tried. Free Conference Call www.freeconferencecall.com. If you have the app, you can conference.

If you need a new email account, try Gmail, I use it and like it. Through gmail, I signed up for Google photos. I can now access my photos from my phone, my e-reader and my computer. My phone doesn't fill up, even if I delete some photos from the phone, Google keeps them.

Prayer for the Souls in Purgatory

O gentle Heart of Jesus, ever present in the Blessed Sacrament, ever consumed with burning love for the poor captive souls in Purgatory, have mercy on them. Be not severe in Your judgments, but let some drops of Your Precious Blood fall upon the devouring flames.
And, Merciful Saviour, send Your **angels** to conduct them to a place of refreshment, light and peace.
Amen.

When I went to Catholic grade school, one of my teachers told us always to pray for the soul nearest Heaven. God gained another saint.

Anleen Roelike

Organization Commission Report

This has been a very different spring. Our lives are changing. My son and daughter-in-law just had their first baby. His name is Leo, after his great-grandfather. He was born 2 weeks ago yesterday; I still have not been able to visit to hold and love the little guy. It is called social distancing. I don't like it. Instead of holding grandkids I have to video conference them!

Now something I learned this week. I have been calling around talking to women about meetings and whether we should go ahead with our Spring General meeting we had planned in Melrose. Well I decided to cancel. The Covid19 virus and all the concerns about spreading it just make holding our meeting too much of a risk currently.

When I called to talk to some members without email, I learned that there are women out there that really do care about our meetings, and feel they are important. I also learned that there were people with family members that had signed up for the Spring Retreat that were really looking forward to the retreat! That was great to hear!

So, yes what we do is important! There are women who truly look forward to coming out to join us. We need to just keep trying, and our membership will grow!

Linda Borgarding, Chair

MELROSE SAUK/ CENTRE DEANERY

It was Sunday afternoon March 22nd, there was no Mass that morning because with the Coronavirus Bishop Kettler stated we could not have our Masses as normal; no groups larger than 10.

So, at St. Benedicts Church in Avon we had Adoration. My husband and I went to Adoration from 8 to 9 AM. When we got home, we listened to Mass on our laptop, streamed from the St. Joseph Parish with Fr. Jerome Tupa.

Then I sat on my sofa and looked out the picture window at the frozen lake. My mind started to think what is happening in our world right now is making me feel frozen just like the lake. I know it's not just because of the virus but also because for the last year I have spent so much time and effort trying to find officers for our deanery. There just doesn't seem to be anyone willing to stand up and share their talents.

Today, March 29th, I sat on the same sofa reading the book The Tomb: A Novel of Martha by Stephanie Landsem, which I borrowed from Cheryl Weller. I realized that what I was reading very closely resembled what was in the readings and Gospel this morning. This made me stop to think, really think, about what is going on in our world. Did we need this big shake-up in our lives to make us take stock of what we hold on to... what's important? That all the things we have and all the places we visit are taking time that would be better spent with family and friends.

Maybe we should be more willing to help keep our CCW groups growing stronger. The women in these groups give us strength, share their wisdom, share their faith. We need to continue to build this organization to create strength, not let it fall apart.

This year we should also be revising our Deanery bylaws which haven't been updated since 2009.

We also are still in need of officers for the Deanery. We will need a President, Vice President and a Secretary. How do we continue without officers?

Yes, this is one last plea ... we need your help. Please talk to friends and neighbors, let's stand together to build a strong union in our communities. Let's help each other. Help us find individuals who can help us do this to keep our Catholic Deanery group growing and strong for those who come after us.

Please take some time and really think about whether maybe you could volunteer and be one of those people who can help us. If we've learned nothing else during this trying time it's how important our faith is to help us through the rough spots in life. We hear about people volunteering to help make masks to protect Covid 19 health care workers and others.

Our deanery needs that same volunteer spirit for our faith, so we'll be able to help our family, friends and neighbors survive the next great challenge. Please help us now! Volunteer for the Deanery!

Linda Borgerding, President

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Fall Board Meeting will be Thursday, Sept 24th at 6:00 PM at Meire Grove

Fall General Meeting will be Oct. 15, 2020; 5:30 Mass, Dinner and Silent Auction in New Munich

Fun, Food and Fund Day 2021 will be held in June at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Long Prairie; more info later.

RURAL LIFE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

The Rural Life Leadership Development Initiative strives to support leaders as they identify and address the needs particular to rural communities in the St. Cloud Diocese.

RURAL LIFE FUND

The Rural Life Fund was established to help individuals in rural areas who experience a sudden short-term financial set-back. Grants up to \$2,000 can be available through the Social Concerns department to qualifying individuals. All grants are coordinated through the local Catholic parish, though individuals do not need to be Catholic to qualify. To learn more or to donate to the Rural Life Fund please contact a Social Concerns staff member for more information.

RURAL LIFE CELEBRATION

The Annual Rural Life Celebration is sponsored by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud and The Catholic Foundation each year during the month of August to Celebrate and honor God's creation. The event consists of an outdoor mass followed by a meal, music, and fellowship. All are welcome to attend this annual event.

CATHOLIC CENTURY FARM AWARD

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud would like to honor Catholic families who have farmed and nurtured the same land for 100 years or more. These families, meeting a certain set of criteria (found below), will be honored at the annual Rural Life Celebration, with a certificate and award for their home. Registration deadline is March 31st for presentation at that year's Rural Life Celebration. If you, or someone you know, has a Catholic Century Farm, please view the requirements and application form below, to be honored for your century or more of farming with faith!

Catholic Century Farm Award **Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud** *Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud would like to honor Catholic families who have farmed and nurtured the same land for 100 years or more.*

A registrant must be:



- Catholic family within the St. Cloud Diocese that has owned a farm for at least 100 years (current calendar year of application) according to abstract of title, land patent, original deed, county land records, court file in registration proceedings, or other authentic land records.
- Farm must be at least 50 acres and currently be involved in agricultural production.
- Family must be currently involved in farming. "Family" is

defined as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, first cousins and direct in-laws (father, mother, brother, sister, daughter, son-in-law).

- Continuous residence on farm is not required, but ownership must be continuous.
- At least one family member must be a practicing Catholic.

PROVINCE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Irene Schmidt and I, after consultation with Bishop Kettler, have all agreed that it would be best to cancel the upcoming Province Conference scheduled for June 19th and 20th in St. Augusta due to the uncertainty of the Covid 19 situation. Please notify your respective diocesan leadership.

We do so with the hope that we can include much of what we had planned to do, which relates to our 100th birthday, into an upcoming event. It may have to be a future Province Conference, or next year's NCCW Convention in Minneapolis. Stay tuned.

If you have registered for the conference, your payment will be refunded. If you have made hotel reservations, please be sure to cancel them in time to receive your full reimbursement from the hotel.

Please keep praying for a safe and speedy end to the pandemic. Stay safe until we can gather together again in God's presence.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.... I'm home!

In His Love,
Connie Andrews, Province Director

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Grand Rapids, MN 55744
218-259-8615-c
218-327-2177-h

PROVINCE OF ST PAUL/MINNEAPOLIS

Sisters and Brothers, I survived my first NCCW Board of Directors meeting in January and I thought that was going to be the toughest thing I do as your 'new' Province Director, but NOOOO!

Who knew that just two months later, life and reality as we have known them would have all four of the wheels come off at the same time!? I don't even want to say "What next?"

The surreal feeling that I am no longer in control of most of my waking hours, has set me back on my heels and left me to ponder one question. "Now what?" I have learned that I am spoiled and privileged and I did nothing to deserve it, but be born when and where I was. I've never felt God's hand in my life more than these past few weeks. Take away all my distractions and I am left with me and God. I am spending my 'alone' time with Him as much as I can, hoping that He doesn't get tired of me whining, singing, reading, praying, listening, and finding out that I have so much for which I should be thankful.

When I do bump into a friend – at the correct social distance, of course – we compare notes on how we have been doing, I find that, for all the cancellations lately, I haven't 'missed' very much!

Maybe the good old days of our youth felt better because we couldn't do all the things we can in this day and age. Now that we can't do them anymore, either, we have our good old days back. Let's not waste them by whining, and griping about what we can't do. Let's enjoy what we can do. Watch the clouds go by, smell the roses, spread His joy.

In His Love, Connie

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
CATHOLIC  WOMEN



August 26— August 29, 2020

Arlington, VA

Fragrance Free

Early Bird Registration
must be received in the NCCW office
on or before **June 10, 2020.**

Registration Closes July 31, 2020

Mail to:

National Council of Catholic Women

200 N. Glebe Rd. Suite 725

Arlington, VA 22203

www.nccw.org / 703-224-0990 / nccw01@nccw.org

Registration is Nonrefundable

Registrations can be transferred in full for the current event, or the registration amount only (excluding tours, fundraisers and meals) can be transferred to the following year's event.

Note: Optional events (meals, tours, etc.) can only be purchased with a full/one day registration OR spouse registration. They cannot be purchased separately.

Please go to NCCW.org to register

We are continuing to carefully monitor the Covid19 virus and the regulations that are currently in place for all our protection. This is still a very tenuous situation which we take seriously. We have no intention of creating any undue risk for any of our members/attendees and will continue to evaluate the feasibility of holding our convention in August. While it is still too early to make a final decision on whether or not to hold the convention, we are discussing alternate plans in case it becomes impossible for us to meet in August. Please know that if you do register now (which we suggest), your fee would be fully refundable should we have to cancel or postpone the convention. Thank you and we ask for your faith and prayers to help show us the way through these difficult times together

MAYBE IT'S TIME TO HAVE BRUNCH WITH JESUS

Like the rest of my week, my Sunday mornings have been transformed.

A little over a month ago, I wrote about how I was treating each Eucharist as if it was my last for the time being, and how I felt that [God was closer to us than ever](#) during this difficult time of being separated from our Eucharistic Lord.

Well, after Easter, the grace — or maybe just the newness — of the situation wore off. For many weeks, I had been content to continue my weekly habits: daily and Sunday Mass (now from my bedroom) and zoom chats with my young adult community (again, from my bedroom). The ability to tune in with my parish or other faith communities whenever I wanted was a gift for which I kept thanking God.

But, like many people I've talked to or seen posting on social media, it has been difficult to persevere after Easter Sunday came and went. While we knew this new normal would continue after Easter, many of us harbored a hope — maybe even unconsciously — that something would change or lighten up during the season of resurrection. But the pandemic was not suddenly gone, and we still had to continue worshipping and working and socializing from our homes.

So, while the first few weeks of following the stay-at-home order included participating in a livestreamed Mass via my computer placed atop my home altar decorated with flowers and candles, the current reality is a bit less dignified. Instead of sitting upright in a chair and kneeling when appropriate, I am often sitting on the floor throughout the Mass. The candles are unlit, and the flowers are dead. When my parish livestreamed adoration one evening, I found myself lying on the floor, my head propped up by pillows as I gazed on the monstrance displayed on my screen.

It may seem irreverent, but some days that is all my soul can take. The energy and grace that originally propelled me to continue my daily habits are now drained to the bottom. And I've had to accept that this is OK. Because as we all know — especially those of you who are married and/or have kids — choosing to love takes energy. It can drain you until all you can do is lie there on the floor, vulnerable.

That is how I feel right now with God. I have tried to love well by choosing to spend time with him in this new normal. I have tried to love well by hopping on zoom chat after zoom chat with other young adults who are even more isolated than I am. And while I don't have kids demanding my attention every second, I'm exhausted. But once I realized it was OK to feel that way, a few things changed.

I received a bit of energy back by realizing there is no shame in worshipping from my floor. There is no shame in just gazing upon Jesus. There is no shame in just sitting there — even if I'm once again distracted by the numerous unread books on my shelf/home altar. There is no shame in not being “productive” in prayer. In fact, we often confuse piety with productivity, a pit I have definitely fallen into with my busy schedule.

So now, I've started another practice. In my own way, I've taken Jesus' invitation to “Come, have breakfast” seriously (Jn 21:12). After livestreamed Mass on Sunday, I have a brunch date with Jesus. I make some food and a big cup of tea, set it on a tray on my bedroom floor, curl up with a blanket and some pillows, and livestream adoration from a chapel somewhere in the world. And I just sit with him. Sometimes I read or journal; other times I just rest. But compared to most things experienced during this new normal, this time fills me up. There is no timeline of how long or little I need to pray.

I don't know what your situation is, but we could all use some quality time with Jesus. If you have kids, this may be a bit more difficult, but why not invite them in? [Cater it to meet your needs](#) and the needs of your family. Maybe this means livestreaming adoration with your morning cup of coffee, even with a kid resting in your lap. Maybe this means putting aside music and saying the Rosary on your walk.

Nothing looks or feels normal right now, so neither should your prayer life. But God is still here, waiting for you to turn to him — even if that means praising from your floor.

Ava Lalor is assistant editor for Our Sunday Visitor.

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