

## *Our Catholic Voice*

May 2023

*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: [stcloudccw@gmail.com](mailto:stcloudccw@gmail.com)



Website: [stcloudccw.org](http://stcloudccw.org)

Saint Cloud Diocesan Council of Catholic Women

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**Linda Borgerding, 320-281-3775, lborger77@gmail.com**

Well believe it or not spring is on the way! I know it doesn't always feel that way. Spring always brings me joy. In the winter when I am away from my home it seems that I become very detached. I have a tough time trying to keep track of what's going on. When I come home it's like I must start over and find my path. It is difficult to get myself in the proper frame of mind!

The last several years I have missed the Lenten Retreat being out of town. I really wanted to be able to attend this year's Lenten Retreat at St. Paul's Church in St Cloud. When I went to meet with the women there about hosting the event, I fell in love with the Church. It is beautiful. I was so happy that they agreed to host.

Next, we move on to Fun, Food and Fund Day. This year it is the Eastern Deanery hosting. It will be held in Elk River. I can't wait to see what they have planned for us. This will be held on June 15<sup>th</sup>. From there we move on to the Pilgrimage. I am sure Jean Zwilling will have a wonderful day planned for us in August. Last, but surely not least, we have the 69<sup>th</sup> Fall Conference. It is hosted by the NW Deanery, held in Wadena on September 16<sup>th</sup>.

I look forward to passing the reins to Lois Wesbur in September. It is always interesting to see how things change when someone else takes over. I know that I have not been very good at having spiritual content in my articles. But I know that Lois will do better at having some spiritual content.

When I was away for the winter, I missed the ordination of Bishop Patrick Neary. I would have loved to attend. We all need to keep Bishop Neary in our prayers. He has much to learn. This is a very big step for him.

As we move forward, we bid farewell to Bishop Donald Kettler. Let us remember what he said our diocese should do. We should be Christ's "heart of mercy, voice of hope, and hands of justice." Our world needs these gospel values more than ever.

*Linda Borgerding, President*



## CHURCH COMMISSION REPORT

We all know how much our world needs prayer and the Mercy of God to be upon us and our country because of the many absurd laws and the culture of death all around us. Praying is not only a right we have but a privilege, we are being called to be bold and courageous women of faith. We need to support each other and be examples to others also. Here is a great analogy by an unknown author.

A person who starts a new life (such as in Baptism) similar to that of a newborn infant can follow these Seven Rules that promote good health in babies and can be adapted and be applied to a Christian's spiritual growth.

These seven rules are:

BABY:

CHRISTIAN:

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. Daily Food:         | Reading and reflecting on the Word of God and receiving the Eucharist. |
| 2. Fresh Air:          | Prayer is the oxygen of the soul.                                      |
| 3. Regular exercise:   | Put into practice what you learn in God's word.                        |
| 4. Adequate rest:      | Rely on God at all times in simple faith.                              |
| 5. Clean Surroundings: | Avoid evil company and whatever will weaken you spiritually.           |
| 6. Loving Care:        | Sharing with a loving community.                                       |
| 7. Periodic Checkups:  | Regularly examine your spiritual health. (Confession)                  |

Happy Spring!??? Maybe?

I hope by the time you read this spring has sprung in its entirety! So many things are happening in our diocese. We finally have a Bishop! What a rich Faith we have, I watched his installation ceremonies on line, it was so magnificent! The richness and holiness of our faith makes my heart burst!

Our Lenten Retreat was awesome and well done, beautiful talk on adoration and adoration in song was also beautiful!

The Eucharistic Revival has been active and having events around the diocese, "Bread talks, Cor Jesu" nights have been happening in the deaneries and I'm hearing good things about both! Our own Diocesan Eucharistic Congress, "Becoming Eucharist" is happening September 7th - 9th, 2023. Details to come.

On the National level plans are being made for the National procession happening in July 2024. The Procession starts in 4 areas of the U.S. to accompany Jesus from door-to-door lighting hearts on fire along the way. It is a 3-month long pilgrimage that leads to Indianapolis. There are 4 different pilgrimages coming from different ends of the country, (Minnesota, California, Texas and Connecticut), meeting in Indianapolis for the National Eucharistic Congress.

The route is named Marian, for its visit to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, the first and only approved Marian Apparition site in the U.S. Our route is the Northern route, there are 3 others:

- East: Elizabeth Ann Seton Route
- South: Juan Diego Route
- West: Junipero Serra Route

Go to [stcdio.org/eucharistic-revival](http://stcdio.org/eucharistic-revival); in the search bar type in 'pilgrimage'.

The pilgrimage will officially start Pentecost Sunday (May 19, 2024) at Lake Itasca the day prior, May 18<sup>th</sup>. There will be opening ceremony at the Sanford Center in Bemidji.

Fr. Mike Schmitz and Bishop Barron will be in attendance. Please see website above for all the details, it sounds awesome!

I am checking into what our DCCW can do to participate in the Procession. I do know Jericho travel will be offering bussing to the Congress, plans are not finalized; when I find out more, I will pass info on.

Our [DCCW Pilgrimage \(the Source and Summit Tour\)](#) is set for Thursday Aug. 3rd. 2023. I'm finalizing a few stops and waiting to hear back from those places. Once I have it all set, I will get it publicized. It will be an eventful day but a beautiful way to honor Jesus in these Eucharistic Revival years!

As I was pondering experiencing the Eucharist, I started thinking about my 1st communion and what I could remember about it. I recalled having my First Communion candle yet. After some searching, I found it and have it on display as a reminder and a way to start a conversation about the Eucharist: maybe sharing our memories of First Communion Day with family members. Dig out your children's candles, that would be beautiful displayed!

God's Blessings be Upon YOU!



*Jean Zwilling, Church Commission*

## COMMUNITY CONCERNS COMMISSION

Will spring ever come? That is the question we all are asking as the days are longer, some of the birds have come back, & the piles of snow are slowly shrinking. By the time you read this Easter will have come and gone and hopefully the snow.

The St. Cloud DCCW held a Lenten Retreat in St Cloud at St Paul's Parish on March 18. It was a beautiful day to get together with other Christian Women throughout the Diocese and listen to Dana Webskowski, attend Mass, have an enjoyable lunch hosted by the Ladies of St Paul, Reconciliation and

musical adoration. Dana spoke of her journey to enrich her spiritual life. Her attendance at Mass wasn't fulfilling her spiritually. She tried different churches but did her research and decided that the Catholic Church was where she belonged. Her journey continues as a Child of God, Wife, Mother, and Grandmother. The Retreat is a great way to become closer to God during Lent. Thank you, Missy Sakry, for chairing this event.

I read several bulletins throughout the diocese to see how Lent was observed in other parishes. Here is what I found: Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross, Fish Fry with donations going to Youth Groups, Food Shelf donations, gently used clothing drive, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Rice Bowl that funds go to Catholic Relief Services, etc. Reading what each parish does during Lent was a thankful task that showed me how God is working and living throughout the diocese.

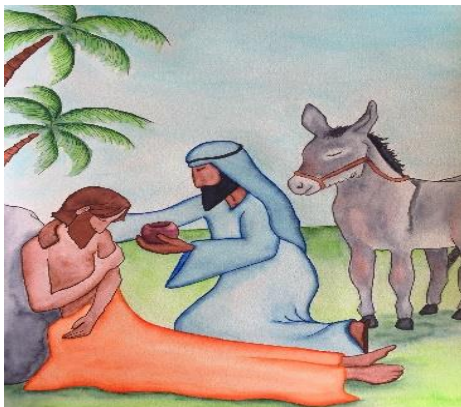
The Eucharistic Revival issued a 40-day Lenten Prayer Journal which has been part of my daily prayers this past Lent and has been a good way to start the day.

The Eucharistic Revival also sponsored "Bread Talks" throughout the diocese at local breweries. There has been a featured speaker and a sharing of eucharistic faith stories. The response has been amazing with over 100 people attending. This is a sign that people really are seeking spiritual guidance. The next Bread Talk is April 16 at 1000 Lakes Brewing in Parkers Prairie at 2pm, and the last is May 21 in St Joseph at Bad Habit Brewing at 2pm. On September 9<sup>th</sup> there will be another gathering at Lake George in St Cloud

I hope your Easter was joyful and closer to God through prayers, fasting, and almsgiving.

"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40 NIV)

*Polly Rabideau, Chair*



**FAMILY COMMISSION**  
**Remembering a magical time.**  
**It's special anytime of the year.**

A time of quiet, levels of burlap and a small bulb setting the scene. Our St. James Church is waiting for the Magi. The small figures representing the Holy Family, the shepherds, the animals and the angel guarding the manger are present. The small sturdy structure crafted by a parishioner made from narrow slices of wood and banister columns that had been stained a dark color many years ago.

Surrounding the space are Norfolk pines, small artificial lighted Christmas trees and Poinsettias. And an empty plateau where the remaining three figures will soon be placed. Familiar, isn't it? So, when we approach the assembly at the front of the worship space, we know what we are expecting to see: a representation of what we believe. A mother, a father and a newborn baby, who receives a welcome ....

**WELCOME TO OUR WORLD**, sung by Michael W. Smith

Tears are falling, hearts are breaking  
How we need to hear from God  
You've been promised, we've been waiting  
Welcome Holy Child  
Welcome Holy Child  
Hope that you don't mind our manger  
How I wish we would have known  
But long-awaited Holy Stranger  
Make Yourself at home  
Please make Yourself at home  
Bring your peace into our violence  
Bid our hungry souls be filled  
World now breaking Heaven's silence  
Welcome to our world  
Welcome to our world  
Fragile finger sent to heal us  
Tender brow prepared for thorn  
Tiny heart whose blood will save us  
Unto us is born  
Unto us is born  
So, wrap our injured flesh around You  
Breathe our air and walk our sod  
Rob our sin and make us holy  
Perfect Son of God  
Perfect Son of God  
Welcome to our world  
*Songwriter: Chris Rice. \*For non-commercial use only.*



*Mary Jane Hay, Chair*

## LEGISLATION CONCERNS

### MINNESOTA'S BISHOPS MEET WITH LAWMAKERS TO ADVOCATE FOR POLICIES THAT PUT FAMILIES FIRST

It is no question that the family plays an irreplaceable role as the first economic unit, the first classroom, and the first community that each of us experiences. And parents perform the irreplaceable work of nurturing the next generation of thinkers, artisans, and caregivers. So, as the Minnesota legislature is now crafting the next biennial state budget and deciding what to do with a 17-billion-dollar surplus, Minnesota's bishops are urging our lawmakers to place families first in their considerations.

On Thursday, March 23, the bishops in Minnesota came together to advocate at the state capitol – a yearly tradition for the Minnesota bishops. While Minnesota Catholic Conference staff are typically deployed to be their voice on legislative issues, the bishops make it a priority to advocate in person on key issues and to get to know legislators.

The bishops also met with Catholic legislators from their individual dioceses, which was a new feature of the day this year.

**Things DCCW members can do to reinforce the Minnesota Bishops message to our legislators:**

#### Urge Your Legislators to Pass a Robust Child Tax Credit

Far too many women choose abortion because they fear they cannot afford the child. This should never be the case!

As pro-lifers, we can help ensure no woman ever feels she must choose abortion because of financial fears by urging our lawmakers to pass a robust child tax credit.

By urging our legislators to pass a robust child tax credit, we are truly showing that the pro-life movement cares for children - born and unborn - and the families that these children are born into. Families should be the first recipients of economic relief because they are doing the hard work of raising the next generation amid immense economic pressures.

#### Urge Your Legislators to Vote NO to Legalizing Recreational Marijuana

Creating a commercial marijuana industry in our state will negatively impact families, especially those who bear the cross of addiction, and will put children at greater risk of accidental overdose and drug abuse.

We do not need another industry like Big Tobacco that profits off those who bear the heavy cross of addiction, while callously disregarding the impact its products have on innocent children. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that calls to poison control centers increased 1375 percent (this is not a typo!) from 2017 to 2021 due to children under age six eating marijuana edibles. The average age was three years old!

As faithful citizens, we must do our part to ensure that a public policy change of this magnitude gets the scrutiny that it deserves. In states that have legalized marijuana for recreational use, reported impacts have included increased traffic accidents and fatalities, public health impacts on children and adults, an expansion of the illegal marketplace, compromised safety in the workplace, and challenges in recruiting and retaining workers.



*Mary Griffith, Chair*



## OFFICERS NEEDED

DCCW OFFICERS: VICE PRESIDENT and SECRETARY 2023-2025!

**Nominations are now open!** The Nominating Committee is seeking women to serve on the DCCW Executive Committee: the offices Vice-President for the 2023-2025 term and Secretary for the 2023-2025 term.

In his address to the general audience assembled at St. Peter's Square on November 6, 2013, Pope Francis said, "The Holy Spirit distributes to the faithful a multitude of spiritual gifts and graces.... The charisms...are gifts that the Holy Spirit gives us: talents, possibilities.... Gifts given not to be hidden but to be shared with others. They are not given for the benefit of the one who receives them, but for the use of the People of God."

As the nominating committee for the women of the Diocese of St Cloud, we need your gifts, your talents, and your leadership skills. As we move forward, your willingness to step up and serve, our vision for the future is bright.

Offices to be filled for 2023-2025 are Secretary and Vice-President. Deadline for application: July 1, 2023. To be considered, a nominee should have previously served as an officer on the deanery level and have the approval of her pastor or Spiritual Advisor. No nominations will be accepted from the floor at the Fall Conference. Contact us for more information. [stcloudccw@gmail.com](mailto:stcloudccw@gmail.com) or [aroelike8@gmail.com](mailto:aroelike8@gmail.com)

Prayerfully consider helping to fill these positions. If you can't, do you know some who would be willing and able? Don't wait to be contacted, but take the first step and contact a member of the nominating committee.

May the Holy Spirit be your/our guide,

*Eva Koep, Chair, 763-218-2057*

Arleen Roelike, 320-282-9941

Polly Rabideau, 320-492-4958



*Yesterday is gone, tomorrow has not yet come, we have only today. Let us begin.  
Saint Mother Theresa*



## RURAL LIFE COMMISSION

With all the snow on the ground, here in central MN, at the beginning of April, it will be a while before farmers will be able to get in their fields to seed and plant their crops. But when they do start fieldwork, modern technology will help them save time and be more precise.

Modern farms are very different than those from a few decades ago. Like other industries, agriculture is using technology to be more efficient, productive, and profitable.

If you take a look inside the cab of a newer tractor, not only will you see the steering wheel, throttle, and ignition key, you will see monitors and computer screens as well.

There is a tractor monitor that displays the tractor functions. It monitors all the functions and performance of the tractor and whatever implement is being used. It also calculates fuel economy. This monitor allows you to make adjustments that maximize efficiency.

Most likely there will be a GPS (Global Positioning System) in the tractor cab. The GPS reads the location in the field, by using satellites, then determines where the tractor should be at all times. It keeps track of where the tractor has been and marks it on the screen. The driver steers the tractor to follow the line marked on the screen. The GPS also controls different functions for the implement that is on the back of the tractor. More advanced technology, than GPS alone, is auto-steer. If a tractor is equipped with auto-steer, the driver does not have to manually steer the tractor to follow the line. The tractor automatically steers itself, following a guide line that the farmer selected.

Using GPS guidance and auto-steer technology has tremendous advantages. GPS allows for incredible accuracy. It allows for variable application rates of fertilizer or pesticides being applied to the soil, this is more economical and eco-friendlier. Before GPS, when a tractor driver tilled the ground, it could be hard to see where he had driven. So, he would overlap, or till the ground twice, to make sure nothing was missed. By using the GPS guidance system, the driver knows exactly where to drive, eliminating the overlap. This saves time and reduces the amount of fuel used. Which also saves money and is more eco-friendly.

Another advantage of using GPS is it controls traffic. Which means the tractor can drive on the same track each time it is in the specific field because it was recorded where the tractor drove. This way the whole field does not get compacted.

A big advantage of GPS is it reduces fatigue. The farmer can do a better job of monitoring the corn planter or other implement that the tractor is pulling. Most importantly, reducing fatigue means it is much safer for the farmer.

Precision planting technology controls seeding rate. Different rate of seed is used based on soil type and fertility. This means less seed is used. Another way to save money. Precision planting also controls the planting depth of the seed. All of this information is recorded, and can be referenced later.

Drones are another technology method used on farms. Farmers efficiently monitor their crops by getting an aerial view using a drone, they can spot issues affecting their crops which need addressing.

These, and other, various technologies that modern farmers are using, help them to produce crops more efficiently and safely than ever before.



*Toni Borgerding, Chair*

**The Rural Life Celebration will be August 20, 2023**

**Saint Nicholas Parish, Belle River, MN**

**Mass begins at 10:30 AM.**

**More information later**

## INTERNATIONAL REPORT

- Continue to remember and support efforts to assist the devastation of the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. It is not in the News Headlines anymore, yet people are stranded outside in the freezing weather because the buildings are unsafe. Food, shelter, hygiene kits, cold weather supplies, and cash are needed.
- The War goes on and on in Ukraine. Schools have been interrupted. Families have been displaced. Daily life is not the same. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) continues to provide assistance with your dollars.
- Suggestions from the [DCCW website](#) to address international concerns:
  - Plan an International Dinner. Have table hostesses decorate each table for different countries. Offer a coffee and chocolate sale with products from CRS
  - Offer a day of fasting and prayer for migrants and refugees
  - Request groups in your community to speak about their cultures and experiences in the US to share their heritage
  - Use the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops – Together on the Journey, the Migrant’s Way of the Cross
  - Inform and promote support in NCCW Partnership’s Projects with CRS – Madonna Plan, Water for Life, Help a Child, and Refugee Women Emergency Fund
  - Support Fair Trade – ask your local merchants to make Fair Trade available and promote use of Fair-Trade products in your parish
  - Educate about global poverty, the plight of farmers, hunger in the US and world
  - Practice performing the Corporal Works of Mercy
  - Volunteer to drive, tutor, or befriend a newcomer to our land

*Joyce Simones, Chair*



**Watch for these when doing your next purchase!**

## INFORMATION TECH-WEBMASTER-NEWSLETTER-ETC.

This sounds like 3 reports, doesn't it? But not really. I wear more than one hat, but they all fit together.

As Info Tech, I keep track of lots of women in the diocese, especially if you are active in Catholic women's groups of any kind. That includes CCW, Christian Mothers/Women, Altar Societies, mission groups, and others. The job includes forwarding information between all those groups and giving them a place to share ideas and find more inspiration.

In 1920, The United Council of Catholic Bishops formed the Council of Catholic Women to bring ideas and resources to a central organization. In 1957, Bishop Peter W Bartholome promulgated that all Baptized Catholic women 19 and older are members of Council of Catholic Women. See [USCCB.org](http://USCCB.org) and [NCCW.org](http://NCCW.org). Anyone can access these websites, but as a paying member of the National CCW, I have access to many more programs; including awareness of domestic violence, human trafficking, etc. There are also Retreats, Prayers, and other Spiritual and service projects. Think of CCW as a resource center.

In 2008, Julie Moorhead (Miller) began the first website, [stcloudccw.org](http://stcloudccw.org). I became webmaster when she became the diocesan president in 2015. The website contains local happenings and information along with shared information from others. Newest pages contain information for deaneries that are reorganizing now. Some parish information is included. Also accessible are previous newsletters, just give it a click and download the file. Any questions for us: go to the Contact Us page and send a message. If I can't answer, I will forward it to someone who can give a better answer. Or contact me directly at [aroelike8@gmail.com](mailto:aroelike8@gmail.com) or [stcloudccw@gmail.com](mailto:stcloudccw@gmail.com)

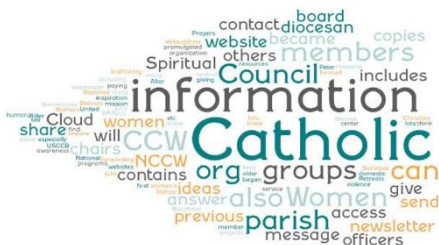
The newsletter "Our Catholic Voice" has been published for quite some time. I found some previous issues called "Cloud Whispers". Sometime I will scan them, so I can share. The newsletter contains reports written by the commission chairs that serve on the SCDCCW board, posters of upcoming events and the calendar. We mail copies current mailing lists of the Saint Cloud DCCW board members, diocesan curia, past Presidents, Commission chairs, Deanery officers and Spiritual Advisors, parish priests, parish officers/contact persons, all Province Board members and the NCCW office. Some receive hard copies, but hundreds are also emailed. If you'd like a copy, send a message.

So please help me keep updated. Send your officer information; name, address, phone number, and email. Enclosed is the short form. A complete form can be downloaded from the website.

Anytime there is an event in your parish, send the information and it can be put on the calendar.

Thank you for all you do for Catholic Women. Keep up the good work. Share with everyone; this is a way to do it.

*Arleen Roelike, Jill of all trades, master of some!*



# OFFICER UPDATE FORM

## Names of Deanery or Parish Officers For Saint Cloud Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Directory and Newsletter

*Please print or type information.*

Deanery: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritual Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

When are meetings held? \_\_\_\_\_

How often? \_\_\_\_\_

When are elections held? \_\_\_\_\_

When do officers begin their terms? \_\_\_\_\_

How long do the officers serve? \_\_\_\_\_

President: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Vice President: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please forward to the Treasurer or the Information Technician:**

- Treasurer: Lora Knafla 11719 16<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW, Rice, MN 56367  
[loraknaoi@hotmail.com](mailto:loraknaoi@hotmail.com) 320-393-2701
- Info Tech: Arleen Roelike, 26483 350th Street, Freeport, MN  
56331



## ORGANIZATION REPORT

February has gone by quickly. In spite of the cold weather there has been a very Warm spot - The welcome of Bishop Patrick Neary as the new leader of the faithful in the Diocese of St Cloud. (There is a wonderful explanation of happenings of the ordination in the February Central MN Catholic Magazine). For me this honor was passed on to me when our president Linda Borgerding could



not attend and passed the invite on to me. I then received a call to invite me to represent the DCCW in welcoming the new bishop at the ordination Mass. This was such an honor to represent the women of the Diocese of St Cloud, as I shook the hand

of the Bishop. Thank You to all DCCW members for allowing me such an honor. Our new Bishop is a very warm and friendly leader. He will do well in Shepherding our diocese.

My message to all is that February is often the time of year in which we pass along feelings of love for each other - Thanks to the celebration of Valentines Day. Love is not meant to be for one Day only. God invites us to Love one another always. The ways to demonstrate His love are many. Greet one another, not just those you know well, but strangers who might need to feel recognized, Perhaps, you are the voice they really need today. Send a note to show you care or remind them they are special. Perhaps there is someone that is never a part of any group in your area and need to be included or need you to invite them to share a beverage, a conversation, a reminder that they are special or just that special feeling of having a friend.

I invite all of you to spread God's love and purpose by greeting someone today.

In God's Love,  
*Lois Wesbur, Vice President*

## SOUTHWEST DEANERY

The South Western Deanery is planning a spring meeting May 8, 2023. It will be held at St. Olaf's Catholic Church in Elbow Lake at 6:30 p.m. There will be reports from the Lenten Retreat held March 18, 2023, by the Diocesan CCW at St. Paul's church in St. Cloud and from the Eucharistic Revival held by the diocese on April 16, 2023, in Parker's Prairie.

New business will be discussion and adoption of bylaws. Next will be information of upcoming events such as Fun, Food and Fund Day to be held June 15, 2023, in Elk River.

The Fall Conference will be September 16, 2023, in Wadena hosted by the North Western Deanery. Looking at the calendar rotation schedule, our deanery is to host the FFF day in June of 2024, so we are looking for a parish who is willing to be our location host. There will also be sharing time to hear about upcoming events at local parishes and ACC's.

The video called 'Water for Life' from CRS will be shown. Food and door prizes will be available for the evening meeting.

This is an opportunity to gather with other women in our South Western deanery. Hope to see all of our parishes and ACCs represented.

*Cheryl Weller, Secretary*

## EASTERN DEANERY SPRING UPDATE

As our deanery prepares to host this years' **Fun, Food, Fund Day**, we met in February to plan the event and volunteer for assignments. The Eastern Deanery now has a checking account established at the First National Bank. Our funds were transferred from the prior deaneries of Princeton/Foley and the Little Falls Deanery. Prior deanery funds were allocated by the number of parishes that were transferred by the 2021 restructure. Our next goal is to fill Officer positions. You are asked to prayerfully contemplate being an officer at the deanery level. Training and mentorship is available, so you will get support, if wanted.

On March 11th, 2023, I attended a lent retreat sponsored by St. Andrew's parish in Elk River, MN, called Jesus Approaches: A Women's Retreat: "He knows you by name; he knows you by heart" presented by Liz Kelly (LizK.org). It was excellent, well attended and very inspirational.

On Sunday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, St. Michael's in Buckman, MN, hosts the **Divine Mercy Sunday** event from 1 – 4 p.m. This is a beautiful way to stay close to Jesus, following Holy week and Easter. The afternoon includes the Divine Marcy Chaplet, the Rosary, testimonials, confession and adoration. All are welcome to come and go, as you are able to participate.

On Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup> the St. Joseph's Pierz Christian Mother's/Women's confraternity honors Mary, as they do every year on Mother's Day, through a **crowning of Mary ceremony** in which a family brings roses up to Mary's statue prior to the 4:30 p.m. Mass. It is a wonderful way to honor and acknowledge her as *Mother of All*.

There are so many, many more events and prayerful activities that take place throughout our parishes to support the Church's efforts. Most notably are the fund-raising events that continue to support the three catholic grade schools in our deanery area, including Saint Andrews School in Elk River, Saint John's Area School in Foley and Holy Trinity School in Pierz, MN. These are three of the twenty-two Catholic schools in the Saint Cloud diocese. The Catholic schools are such gems in our communities. For all of you that had the privilege of attending parochial schools, you understand the core values of a faith-based education and the values you carry with you the rest of your life. We are so lucky and are honored to support future generations of strong Catholics. Many of our local volunteers work hard to sustain financial support of the catholic schools, as well as the religious education programs for the Catholic students attending public schools in our communities. I like to think of supporting Catholic education of school-aged children as a way to "pay it forward". We can do this by continuing to financially support the schools and religious education for all children in our area catholic communities.

***Peace, I give to you, peace the world cannot give.*** John 14:27

In Jesus' Name,

*Nita Hayes, President*



(Editor's Note, NCCW has resources available such as "Women embracing Women" a mentorship booklet There is also a booklet titled "Regain, Retain and Grow" [nccw.org](http://nccw.org))



## NORTHWEST DEANERY

Greetings from the Northwestern Deanery, we have enjoyed the wonders of Winter with a lot of patience from our Heavenly Father.

The beautiful snowflakes, flocked trees and Sun Dogs. Many of us were lucky enough to enjoy the beauty and watch the aurora in the night sky, also all the amazing sunrises and sunsets with God's glorious vivid colors to behold.

As we were anticipating our first meeting in the new year God decided we needed more time for reflection, so after a couple of interesting snow storms we were able to come together at our March 28 meeting in Henning, Thanks to all who took time to attend and participate. We formed a Bylaw Committee - Eva Koep, Linda Scephurek, Sheri Streasick, and myself.

We worked at getting our summer fund raiser for the NW Deanery organized, sadly we are in need of more volunteers, so please e-mail Linda Scephurek at [lindascephurek@hotmail.com](mailto:lindascephurek@hotmail.com) to sign up. We will be selling brats at Coborn's Market in Little Falls on July 7 & 8 from 10 am-5 pm both days.

We also are going to need help from all of our ACCs with our Fall Conference that will be held at St. Ann's Parish in Wadena, on September 16; be listening for a phone call on that.

God has given each of us very wonderful and special gifts, let us all be willing to give back to God what he has given us.



Love and God's Peace,  
*Bonnie Jennen, President*

## WEST CENTRAL DEANERY

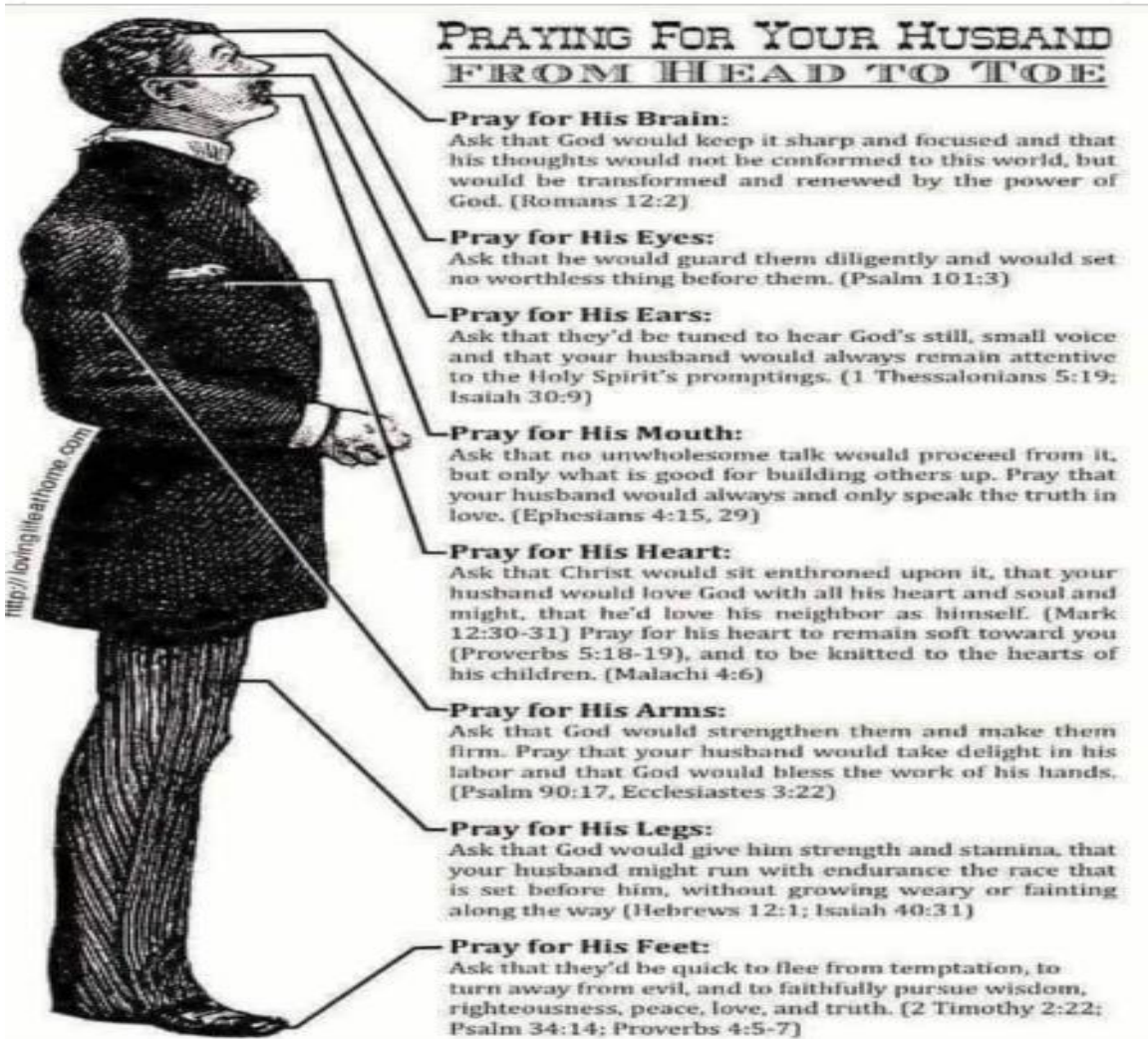
The West Central Deanery met on April 26, 2023 at Saint Rose of Lima Church in Saint Rosa, MN. We began the evening with Mass celebrated by Father Dan Walz. Music played and songs led by [Jesse Kuechle](#). After a light supper, the meeting began, led by Jean Hopfer, Committee chair. Reports were given by the treasurer, Sue Berg, and interim secretary, Kathy Thell.

The theme was "What Does a Deanery Do?" Handouts edited by Jean Hopfer and Arleen Roelike were presented. These are also on the website.

Nominating committee reported several calls have been made to find candidates. At this time the deanery is looking for candidates for President and Vice President. Any volunteers? Anyone can nominate a candidate. Please Call Jean Hopfer, 320837-5239, Caroline Jacobs, 3220-256-3207 or Marilyn Bergman, 320-836-2880. This area has always been very active, let's not let it die.

We discussed the Diocesan Rotation Schedule for events, West Central will be hosting the Spring Retreat in March of 2024. It was decided to use a Deanery rotation schedule using Area Catholic Communities instead of individual parishes.

*Arleen Roelike, Deanery Reorganizing Committee*




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You may pray for others by substituting names, such as fathers sons or other loved ones

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**NCCW Convention registration is open!! Join us: August 24th-26th at the Hyatt Regency Salt Lake City, Utah.**

**Register at [NCCW.org](http://NCCW.org)**

# WHEN GOD CALMS THE STORM

A presentation from the D of I

## Looking for God in the Storm



It was the early evening of the first day of the new year, 2007, and my son and I had just gotten home from visiting my dad, who was in a respite care unit at a local hospital enduring the final stages of his battle with lung cancer. Additionally, he'd suffered a stroke that morning, limiting his movement and robbing him of his ability to speak clearly.

I felt like one of the disciples in the boat on the stormy sea, being tossed around by the waves, desperately trying to row to the other side with the wind against us. In my mind, I went back to the past year in which we'd rowed our way through the sea of biopsies, scans, doctor appointments, chemo treatments, procedures, holidays, and a few trips to visit extended family. But the wind had picked up speed these past few weeks: the cancer had stopped responding to treatment, blood clots had formed in his lungs, and his doctor told me of the kind of death he would most likely suffer, adding: "I wouldn't wish this kind of death on my worst enemy. And now this—a stroke, robbing him of what little ability he had left. Just a few years earlier, we'd lost Mom to this same disease and I admit to wondering this day—"God, where are you now?" I didn't have to wait long for his answer.

## A Prayer Offered with the Eucharist

Shortly after arriving home from the hospital, the phone rang. It was a nurse at the hospital saying that Dad was suffering from chest pains, and that it would be best if we came back to the hospital right away. Although Dad was a very faith-filled man who taught us kids to love the Lord and see Jesus in other people, he wasn't Catholic. It was my dearest desire that Dad experience the grace of the sacraments of the Church before he died. Our priest, Fr. Tim, had asked me several weeks earlier if Dad wanted to join the Catholic faith but when I asked Dad, he was a little hesitant, saying, "I don't think so right now, thanks."

I once heard Mother Angelica of EWTN fame speak on how if you're really praying hard for something, you should bring it with you when you receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Consequently, for the past several weeks, every time I received the Eucharist—taking the Body of Jesus into my hands—I offered him up to God in exchange for Dad to have the desire to join the Catholic faith.

On the way to the hospital that evening, we called our priest, Fr. Tim. Would he come and give Dad a blessing or pray over him? He agreed, asking once again, "Do you think he'd like to become Catholic?" Heavy-hearted, I replied, "I don't know. I don't think he's changed his mind."

The doctor met us in the lobby of the hospital and explained how serious Dad's health was and that he had requested no unnecessary treatment due to his advanced cancer. She seemed to be preparing us for the worst. My husband and my two brothers and I entered Dad's room. He was in pain but so glad

to see us. We gathered around his bed; I held his hand and told him Fr. Tim was coming. In my mind, I imagined Fr. Tim offering Dad the very sacraments that I had been praying for him to receive. But would Dad be open to them?

### **Jesus Climbs into the Boat.**

Suddenly, I had this overwhelming urge—a physical sensation welling up in my body— that I had to ask for love of me—I wanted him to do it for himself. And I'd just asked him a few weeks before. Could this sudden, overwhelming urge be God nudging me? Was he working to answer the very prayer I'd brought before him each time I'd received the Eucharist for weeks now? Dare, I hope? I pulled my brothers out of the room and discussed this "feeling" I had and my reluctance to ask Dad. My oldest brother, who wasn't practicing any religion at the time, said, "I'll go ask him."

And that's when Jesus climbed into the boat with us.

My brother came out of the room a few minutes later saying, "Yep, he does!"

Stunned, I asked, "Are you sure you understood him? He's had a stroke, you know. He can't speak well... to which my brother replied, "I told him to squeeze my hand if he wanted to become Catholic and he squeezed it three times!" Oh, the joy that filled my heart! Jesus was powerfully answering the prayer I'd so hesitantly brought before Him in the Eucharist.



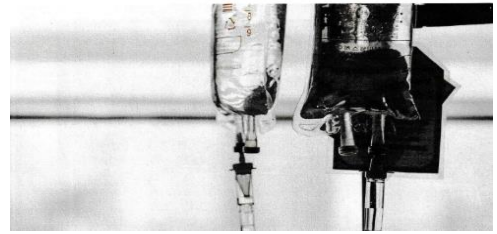
The priest came, and Dad was received into the Church, confirmed and anointed. He made a Spiritual Communion because his illness prevented him from receiving the Blessed Sacrament. I sat by Dad's side holding his hand through it all, hardly able to comprehend the holiness of the moment. We prayed the Lord's Prayer together one last time. The storm's winds that had been blowing so fiercely died

down, and Dad rested peacefully through the night.

### **Winds of Doubt Continue to Blow.**

But, like the disciples, there was a part of me that still doubted. Was Dad resting comfortably because of the grace of the sacraments or the newly-installed morphine pump (the machine that administered the drug that relieved pain and gave the sensation of being able to breathe)? Several times that long night, I got out of the recliner and walked over to Dad's side to adjust the oxygen mask, knowing how hard it was for Dad to breathe without it and wanting to make him as comfortable as possible. During one of my bedside vigils, the nurse came into the room lit only by the glow of a light in the side of the wall and stood next to me, gently and quietly taking Dad's vital signs. She and I both commented how peacefully he was resting.

"That morphine must be doing the trick," I whispered. Startled, she glanced over at me and said, "He hasn't used that pump all night. "What? How was that possible? He was in so much pain and struggling so hard to breathe before the priest came. What had changed?"



## Peace in God's Perfect Timing

Jesus had shown up. His grace was present in the sacraments that gave Dad the peace he needed. And that's when I, like the disciples in the boat in the storm-tossed sea, was completely astounded. Dad passed away a few hours later: calmly, peacefully, and prayerfully. God had answered my prayer brought before him in the Eucharist at the perfect time and in the perfect way. And I realized: God doesn't come too early, and he doesn't come too late. He comes just when we need him the most.

February 1, 2023; *Barb Schmitz*



*(Barb Schmitz is a parishioner at St. Joseph's Church in Brooks, MN. This is a presentation she gave at a D of I gathering.)*



# FUN, FOOD & FUND DAY

## HOPEFUL HEARTS

Thursday, June 15, 2023

St. Andrew's Catholic Church  
566 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Elk River, MN 55330

### SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY:

9:00 a.m. – Registration & Continental Breakfast; Silent Auction Opens

9:30 a.m. – Welcome & Opening Prayer

9:45 a.m. – Kent Yoder – *"The Eucharist: Our Source, Our Summit & Our Hope"*

10:15 a.m. – Musical entertainment by *"The Hopeful"*

10:45 a.m. – Break

11:00 a.m. – Mass (*Worship music by "The Hopeful"*)

12:15 p.m. – Luncheon

1:15 p.m. – Silent Auction closes; Chaplet of the Two Hearts and Rosary

Enjoy wonderful entertainment while you share fellowship, delicious food and browse the many beautiful silent auction items.

Registration: \$20 by June 4

Make checks payable to: St. Cloud DCCW

Mail to: Lora Knafla, 11719 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW, Rice, MN 56367; (320) 393-2701

Sponsored by the St. Cloud Diocesan Council of Catholic Women and hosted by its Eastern Deanery





