

Spirituality Commission Chair Report

KCCW Board Meeting April 12, 2018

Sister John Catherine, O.P.

Over the course of this year, the Spirituality Commission set out to provide three reflections drawn from themes related to the apparitions of Our Blessed Mother at Fatima. The first of these was circulated in October, the next just before Lent, and the third should be forthcoming after Easter. The first treated Eucharistic devotion as taught by the Angel to the three children. The second treated the Holy Rosary and its efficacy in fostering devotion to the Lord as we ponder His life with Our Lady's eyes. The third will treat prayer for peace—so needed in our own hearts, in our families, our parishes, and our troubled world.

The focus on the Blessed Mother and her role in our spiritual lives is continued by this week's convention theme. Focus on and devotion to Our Lady, of course, never stops with her, but leads us directly to her Son. In hopes of drawing us more deeply into relationship with Jesus and Mary during this Convention, the Spirituality display will include complimentary Magnificat copies for the month of May. Magnificat provides the daily Mass readings. Our display will also include a variety of devotional materials. The Holy Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet are especially recommended as simple daily prayers that can draw us more deeply into relationship with the Lord. Divine Mercy Sunday, just passed, is a powerful annual reminder of the tender love of the Heart of Jesus for sinners. Our Lady is like her Son in her compassion and care for sinners. Since we honor Mary under many titles, we recognize Our Lady of Lourdes and seek her intercession for healing in a particular way at this Convention with our virtual Lourdes pilgrimage. All of us need healing in one way or another, and this opportunity is an encouragement to turn to Mary with trust and confidence that she will intercede powerfully for us.

Underlying all prayer and every devotion is confidence in the Lord's tender care for us and His desire for our trust and our love. Sometimes the problems we face in our life and especially in our relationships with others can seem like a hopeless snarl of interconnected tangled knots. So much needs to change, and we cannot control our own lives, let alone those that have become tangled up with ours. Another title of Our Lady, beloved of Pope Francis, is Our Lady Undoer of Knots. Under this title Mary invites us to place the ribbon of our lives entirely in her hands and let her begin to work on the knots that we despair of ever undoing by ourselves, but which we trust that God can resolve.

The Spirituality Commission encourages the women of the CCW to pray for priests. As women who have taken Mary as our model and guide, we can imitate her maternal care for souls, not only by serving those closest to us, but also by prayer. In a particular way, Mary was a mother to St. John, and she extends that spiritual motherhood to all priests. Here in Knoxville, our priests need our prayers for them as they face the everyday battles that fidelity to the Lord and their vocation demands. We can make it our mission to offer prayers and sacrifices for our bishop and the priests of our diocese. When you visit the Spirituality display table, draw the name of one of the priests of our diocese and keep that priest in prayer in a special way.