

NCCW National Convention 2021, August 25th – August 28^h.

Experiencing 5 days of Celebrating, Learning, Praying and being Inspired with Catholic women from all across the United States brings multiple untold blessings which I could not begin to describe in just a few minutes.

It began with the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations North America Region Conference. The theme of this WUCWO conference was "Make me an instrument of Your Peace" and focused on the Resolutions adopted at the World-Wide General Assembly of WUCWO. We heard excellent speakers addressing "A HEALTHY PLANET DEPENDS ON ALL OF US", CARE FOR THE FAMILY IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND RESPONDING TO OUR CALL TO HOLINESS.

Tips to bring Home. Lower our Carbon footprint, Plant trees. Use Solar energy. Get outdoors and enjoy nature. Read and reflect on Pope Francis, Laudato Si. Care for our Common Home, Promote the care and development of persons with Intellectual Disability through employment, education, inclusion and friendship. Check out "Best Buddies" organization. Watch "The Baker Hired Simone" on You-tube.

Be aware of Domestic Violence in your area. Domestic Violence is the 3rd cause of homelessness. 8 million women miss work each year from Domestic Abuse. Women in prison are targeted for abuse and trafficking.

Next WUCWO General Assembly will be held in Assisi, Italy.
I along with many of the ladies present are hoping to attend.

The NCCW Convention opened with an Awards lunch. Since I had chaired the Our Lady of Good Counsel Award, I was on the program to recognize all the previous award recipients and to present the 2020ne OLGC awards to Cathy Bonner and to Winkie LeFils. The speaker for the event spoke on Women of Influence, a Witness to Christian Leadership; Women Saints, who by sheer will loved God and dialogued with Him.

From her I learned that by virtue of our Anointing, we are set apart, have dignity, and are called to bring as many people to God as we can. "Only so much of the Kingdom, we can have on earth, but what belongs to us is our heavenly inheritance which lasts forever."

The NCCW Birthday celebration with cake and ice cream was held the first evening of convention. Women came dressed up in all kinds of costume from the 1920's, 1950's, 1960's and other favorite eras. A film of 100 years of NCCW Women in Action was shown with many familiar events and pictures.

Thirty exhibitors were present and offered much information on their products and organizations. This was in a large space and we had ample time to visit with them and receive

many of their hand out and gift materials. Cross Catholic exhibited "The Box of Joy". Many rosaries were taken to them from our K-DCCW and St Francis of Assisi CCW for the Box of Joy. Visiting with Tessie O'Day and her new assistant Ericka at the booth and sitting with them at our Banquet was a pleasure.

The NCCW Silent Auction is a fund-raising event during convention and raises several thousand dollars. A beautiful quilt pieced by Carol Lamb and quilted by Kathy Upp with an embroidered message by Janice Cahill all from St Francis raised over \$100.00 in the Silent Auction. Sally Jackson also sent a donated item to the Silent Auction. The Purse Auction also raised several thousand dollars and is a fun event with NCCW Spiritual Advisor, Father Miguel Gonzalez as the auctioneer. One purse went for \$1,600 and was made by a nun in Wisconsin.

The daily Masses were especially inspiring. The opening liturgy principal celebrant was William Cardinal Gregory, The Archbishop of Washington. The Episcopal Liaison to NCCW from the USCCB, Bishop William Wock, was present during most of the convention and was a delight and joy to be with. The Bishops from the Dioceses of Arlington, VA and Salt Lake City, UT were also present along with the spiritual advisors from many of the Diocesan Councils across the country including our Father Dan Whitman from Knoxville DCCW.

At a special event, Breakfast with Bishop Bill, he addressed us on "Where do we go from Here? Disciples and Apostles" Bishop Bill asked us to live as Citizens of Heaven, trusting in God and serving our neighbor. He advised we can accept our trials and difficulties, knowing eternal life comes at the end. He instructed us to grow as disciples by spiritual reading, attending liturgies, frequent prayer and joining in solidarity with those who are suffering.

At business sessions, we heard from the NCCW leaders, Commission Chairs, committee chairs, Vision sponsors and several leaders of other National Catholic organizations. Their messages are always inspiring and give much reason to be proud to be a Catholic woman in the world today. We learned that NCCW will be sending \$20,000 plus to Catholic Relief Services from our donations to Water for Life and Madonna Plan. Cross Catholic will be presenting over 67,000 Boxes of Joy to children in developing countries. \$12,000 has been sent to the Vocation Purse club to assist with women's religious vocations. \$1,000 to the Basilica from Mother's Day cards. The Associates of NCCW celebrated their 50th anniversary as a support group for NCCW who have given \$337, 295 in grants to NCCW through 2020 and presented another grant at this convention. Patty Johnson spoke at the Associate's lunch and meeting on how these grants had benefited the National Council.

The Resolution passed at this NCCW Convention was on Healing Racism and resolved that NCCW members will invite women of all races and ethnicities to become involved in council; that they will study the Pastoral letter, "Open Wide our Hearts" and pray and promote the NCCW Prayer to Love: Healing Racism, both found on the NCCW web site. The goal is that at the next convention each Province will be able to name at least on action their councils have taken toward reducing racism. The speaker who addressed racism advised us that racism is sinful and denies that we are all made in the image of God. We who are in Christ are called to radical

love. She encouraged us to visit parishes with diversity and to get to know those different from ourselves.

The speaker at our closing session spoke on Growing in Faith with a Small Group. She encouraged us to develop spiritual friendships, to cultivate quality and virtue in friendships. She advised that we invite over and over again women to spiritual relationships to connect, unite and inspire each other.

Two evenings of entertainment were also a highlight as we enjoyed the liveliness of the Jersey Boys and the beautiful voice of Irish tenor Mark Forrest founder of Faith and Family Foundation

Next NCCW Convention, November 2-5, 2022, Minneapolis Minnesota.

Submitted by Patty Johnson