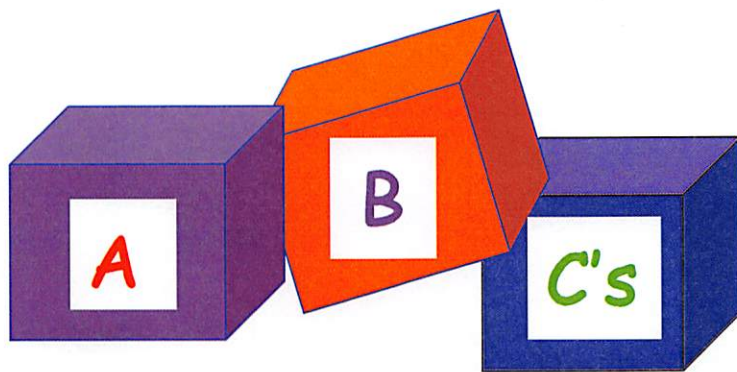
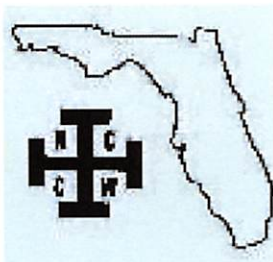


*Florida Council of Catholic Women*



*of*

*Planning*



**FCCW Conference 2008  
Sarasota, Florida**

**Revised August 2023**



Revised August 2023

By FCCW Board Members:

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Chair

Diane Tugander, Past Province  
Director

Jean Bazley, Past Province  
Director

Martha Klinikowski, Board  
Member

Karen Lorenzen, Miami  
Archdiocesan President

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**Spiritual Moderator**, Reverend Clem Hammerschmitt

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## **Introduction**

The impetus for the idea of the “ABC’s of Planning” was a question raised at an affiliation meeting; “NCCW offers so many programs that we cannot possibly do everything. What ever happened to the idea of focusing on one thing, one program, one subject/cause?” The “ABC’s of Planning” is one answer to that question. We are offering one answer as there are usually many ways to approach an opportunity, a challenge, etc. It is the hope of the 2007-2009 Florida Council of Catholic Women Board Members that this will serve as a valuable tool in your finding your own answers to a successful Council.

The ideas included in this manual may spark new ideas, add them in. This manual starts with June as most planning is done during the summer months. Your Council may do their planning in a different month, or you may hold a program in a different month than suggested, rearrange the manual. While “ABC’s” are usually recited in the same order, in this case, you may customize these “ABC’s” to suit the needs of your Council.

### **The “ABC’s of Planning” contains the following:**

- **Image Section:**
  - Extreme Makeover: CCW Edition
  - An Image Survey
  - How to Create an Affiliation Brochure
  - How to Create Banners and Posters
- **Program Section:**
  - Suggestions for Planning Programs
  - Ways to Incorporate Existing Programs into the chosen theme
  - Annual Planning Form
  - Sample Annual Planning Form
  - Monthly Planning Form (A form is provided in each of the monthly sections)
  - Sample Monthly Planning Form
- **Spirituality Section:**
  - Liturgy Planning Forms
  - How to Customize a Prayer Service to reflect the chosen theme
  - Spirituality Resources
- **Month by Month Sections** including suggested programs, bulletin announcements and prayers or prayer services.

**Note:** *A Monthly Planning Form is provided in each section for use in expanding the information required for the monthly programs*

**IMAGE**

Where does a council's IMAGE come from and why is this important to us?

Our culture tells us that IMAGE is everything....it can make or break an organization, a person, a product, or a society.

It's a new year, a new year for your council. What is your council's image in your community? Many of you may be surprised how your image of your organization differs from what you think it may be!

Take a Climate Survey.

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Who is the Council of Catholic Women in _____ the Parish?</li><li>2. What do they do?</li><li>3. Why are they important to our parish community?</li></ol> |
|---|

You may be surprised to learn from other climate surveys done in parishes that the community as a whole thinks the following:

Answers:

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Old women who bake cookies and help Father.</li><li>2. Play cards, sell raffle tickets, have bake sales.</li><li>3. Have no idea.</li></ol> |
|--|

Of course, it depends on who you ask. If you ask active members of council, they may have these answers:

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Women who care about their faith and issues of the Church both locally and globally.</li><li>2. We make a difference in the world.</li><li>3. Our parish community is enriched by their action and spirituality.</li></ol> |
|---|

How do you communicate what you are doing in your parish community so your IMAGE can be more accurate?

IMAGE has several key components. Here are two: Visible / Behavioral

Visibility – Bulletin announcements, Brochures, Newsletters, Photos, Identification – (badges, scarves, name tags, etc.) Websites, Invitations

Behavioral=Relationships- Welcoming, Spiritual components, Hospitable, Organized and prepared  
Location, Scheduling – dates and times, informative, clean and polished  
Appealing and interesting, informative – Who, what, where, when, how, why  
Clear communication of intended message

**IMAGE Committee      Linda Clark, FCCW Leadership Trainer**

## **EXTREME MAKEOVER – CCW EDITION**

We are familiar with the popular shows on television that involves extreme makeovers. When was the last time your council had a makeover? Is now the time? Only you can be the judge if it is time and what is the list of improvements you need and want.

I would like to list some of the many characteristics of a healthy council and have you check off how many your affiliation currently possesses. This checklist could be the beginning of a LIST OF IMPROVEMENTS or a MAKEOVER you may want to start to ensure your council is as healthy as possible!

Use this list to begin your council makeover.

- ✓ **A Full Board** – having missing officers can only make more work for other members.
- ✓ **A Job Description** for each officer and commission chair – members need to know what is expected of them before they accept a position.
- ✓ **Leadership Training** – no one will be successful without proper training. Train, train, train! Use former officers who were successful to put together a team of trainers.
- ✓ **NCCW Guidance and Resource Manual** – Use it, study it, train from it, and be an advocate for it! Struggling councils do not use the manual to its potential. Successful ones use it frequently!
- ✓ **Plan, and plan some more!** Set realistic goals. Refer to Chapter 1 in the Manual.
- ✓ **Interesting Programs and Speakers** – Ask yourself why would someone want to join your affiliation.
- ✓ **Image Check** – What do others think of your council? Who do they say you are?
- ✓ **Active Commissions** – Affiliations with active commissions are healthier and more productive.
- ✓ **Membership Committee** – Nurture your established members and welcome and educate your new ones. Welcome new women!
- ✓ **Create a Realistic Budget** – Members want to know what they are working for and have a voice in the distribution of funds.
- ✓ **Communication** – Without effective listening and communication, an affiliation will fail to operate.
- ✓ **Evaluation** – Evaluation of programs, events, and your annual activities is vital for the ongoing growth of your organization.
- ✓ **Technology** – Are you using it and how? Emails, website for council?
- ✓ **Celebrate your success stories.**

**IMAGE Committee**

**Linda Clark, FCCW Leadership Trainer**

## **Basics of a CCW Brochure**

One way people learn about organizations that they do not know is by reading about them. People just want a quick overview of the subject. Brochures are used to inform, educate, and persuade – quickly. Information should be presented in a clear, organized manner. A brochure should grab the reader’s attention and get them interested enough to want to know more. It shouldn’t contain so much information that it overwhelms the reader. It should give enough information so that the reader won’t be left wondering “what’s this really about”. Choose 2 or 3 key points about your CCW to describe. If there are other important elements, consider listing them in a simple bullet list somewhere in your brochure. Give the reader the most significant, most interesting facts – the information that will make them want to find out more.

### **STEPS TO WRITING YOUR BROCHURE**

1. Write down what you know about council: Mission or Purpose, Members.
2. Refer to the template and sample brochure in your “Council of Catholic Women – ABC’s of Planning” Book.
3. Use the Organization Checklist for questions and ideas to include in your brochure:

#### **ORGANIZATION CHECKLIST**

- \* Name of Organization
- \* Mission Statement or Purpose
- \* Organization Activities
- \* Dates, Time and Location of meetings
- \* Membership requirements
- \* How to contact the organization
- \* Lists Programs and Projects
- \* Does the brochure make the reader want to join the organization (or find out more about it)?

4. Using the checklist, list the major components of your brochure. Write headlines with subheads. Write the descriptive text. Make lists.
5. Sketch out some rough ideas of how you want your brochure to look.
6. Using the page layout software available to you, transfer your rough sketches to the computer.
7. Print your final design and fold as necessary.

### **WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR CCW BROCHURE**

- Give 2 to each member, one to keep and one to give to someone they think might be interested in council.
- Ask your Pastor if you could put them somewhere in Church
- If there is a packet for newly registered families, ask to have your brochure included

## ***Come Join Us!***

### Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Month and Day only)*

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Send checks made payable to: SJCCW  
To: 326 Marlborough Place  
West Palm Beach, FL 33405

St. Juliana CCW Dues: \$14.35  
Optional:  
- Catholic Relief Services \$ 1.00  
- Burse Fund \$ 3.65  
- Scholarship Fund \$ 1.00

Total Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

*FCCW: Revised August 2023*

*Florida Council of Catholic Women – Province of Miami*

*\* Meetings will change to 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every month following the 11:00am Mass – September 2007-May 2008*

## ***How We Work***

St. Juliana Council of Catholic Women works on a committee structure in conjunction with the NCCW mission statement.

**SPIRITUALITY** promotes programs to create a community of God's people who are educated and dynamic in their faith.

**LEADERSHIP** gives support to the membership through public relations, training, organization and personal development for women.

**SERVICE** involves members in answering the needs of our own communities in programs that affect the lives and well-being of all.

**LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY** provides information about legislative issues and encourages involvement and social responsibility.

***Join your sisters in council today. Find out what we are about and what you can do to become more involved.***



## ***St. Juliana Council Of Catholic Women***

*an affiliate of the  
National Council of Catholic Women*

### **Mission Statement**

***The National Council of Catholic Women acts through its membership to support, empower and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service. NCCW programs respond with Gospel values to the needs of the Church and society in the modern world***



## Who We Are

Membership is open to any Catholic woman in good standing. When you join us, you also become a member of the Palm Beach Diocesan Council of Catholic Women, Central Deanery, and the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW). NCCW is a nationwide organization with over 5,000 affiliations representing millions of Catholic women.

**We hold General Meetings the third Monday of the month at 7:00 pm, September through May.\***

In addition, our affiliation also has Circles for those who wish to meet with women of similar ages and interest. The Circles meet once a month. Currently, we have two Circles: Assumption and Holy Family.

**Circle membership is not required.** Associate membership is also available.

## What We Do

- Promote a variety of programs and projects enabling each member to lead or participate as she chooses.
- Maintain an atmosphere of service, leadership, spirituality and sociability.

## Some of What We Offer

- Back to Basics Angel Program  
*Benefits children in our Diocese*
- Project Book Bag
- Council Sunday
- Memorial Mass and Day of Refection
- Collaboration with PBDCCW, FCCW, NCCW and Catholic Charities through conferences, conventions, state programs and leadership workshops.
- Provide Parish Financial Support
- Host Parish Receptions
- Christmas and Easter Bake Sales
- Participate in Deanery programs.
- Promote devotion to vocations through the Annual Take-a-Sister to Lunch, Seminarian Luncheon and Burse Fund.
- Collaboration with National programs both domestic and international with Catholic Relief Services such as Water For Life and The Madonna Plan.
- Assist women and children through support of pregnancy crisis centers, domestic violence shelters and programs such as "Against Trafficking of Human Persons".

## Palm Beach Diocesan Deaneries

### Northern Deanery

Holy Family	Port St. Lucie
St. Bernadette	Port St. Lucie
St. Christopher	Hobe Sound
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	Port St. Lucie
St. Helen	Vero Beach
St. Joseph	Stuart
St. Lucie	Port St. Lucie
St. Mark	Ft. Pierce
St. Martin de Porres	Jensen Beach
St. Sebastian	Sebastian

### Central Deanery

St. Ann	West Palm Beach
St. Clare	Palm Beach Gardens
Holy Name of Jesus	West Palm Beach
St. Jude	Tequesta

<b>St. Juliana</b>	<b>West Palm Beach</b>
Our Lady Queen of Apostles	Royal Palm
St. Patrick	Palm Beach Gardens
St. Peter	Jupiter
St. Rita	Wellington
St. Therese de Lisieux	Wellington

### Southern Deanery

Ascension	Boca Raton
Holy Spirit	Lantana
Our Lady of Lourdes	Boca Raton
St. Joan of Arc	Boca Raton
St. Jude	Boca Raton
St. Lucy	Highland Beach
St. Luke	Lake Worth
St. Mark	Boynton Beach
St. Matthew	Lake Worth
St. Thomas More	Boynton Beach
St. Vincent Ferrer	Delray Beach

## **BANNERS, POSTERS, AND SIGNS**

- Are ways to advertise your councils and events.
- You need to advertise all events or programs.
- Do not be the group known only for card parties, fashion shows, etc.
- You can use other ways to advertise your group: shirts, pins, and aprons, etc.
- Decide whom you are advertising for (women, parish, or community), and where to place the advertising (bulletin, church, community places, or paper).

## **HOW TO DO THE ADVERTISING**

- Decide the size you want to advertise with.
- Signs can be 8"x11" or bigger.
- Posters are bigger and need to be pasted together if done on the computer.
- Banners are long.
- You can get signs, banners, and posters made by office supply stores, sign or print shops, and mail order companies like Oriental Trading.
- Web site for Oriental Trading: [www.orientaltrading.com](http://www.orientaltrading.com).
- Computer programs to use are: Microsoft word or works, American Greeting Card, Print Shop, Hallmark Greeting Card, etc.
- If you do an event every year or for so many months or weeks, get a permanent sign or banner made. It can go on the church grounds or hung up before the event.
- You can get banner rolls at office supply stores if you are doing it on the computer, or you will be pasting the banner together.
- Use color in your sign or color paper to make it stand out.
- If making many copies of the sign on color paper, your first copy should be on white paper. Copying from color copy does not always show up.
- Signs should be put on card stock that is a heavier paper when putting them up in places. You can get card stock at grocery stores, Wal-Mart, and office supply stores, etc.

## **WHAT NEEDS TO BE ON ADVERTISING**

- Name of the event or program.
- Where the event or program takes place.
- Time the event or program takes place.
- Always advertise the cost of the event.
- Speaker of the program or event.
- Who is giving or doing the event. Use Council of Catholic Women, not just CCW.
- If raising money, put where the money is going to like the building fund, etc. People might give money even if they cannot come to the event.

## **Spirituality**

Spirituality promotes programs to create a community of God's people who are educated and dynamic in their faith. Our community – the Council of Catholic Women – is dynamic in their faith and we are continually seeking ways to learn more about our faith and to share our faith. All of our gatherings create opportunities for prayer.

There are many sources available for prayers and prayer services. The National Council of Catholic Women has two excellent resources: NCCW "Called to Pray" and "Enhancing our Spirituality: A Collection of Prayers and Readings for Personal or Group Reflection, 2007". The NCCW Website provides current information about each of the NCCW's Commissions. The Church Commission offers resources for prayers and projects. It is a valuable resource that is constantly being updated. Check the website: [NCCW.org](http://NCCW.org) for more information.

### **How to Customize a Prayer Service to Reflect the Chosen Theme**

Prayers and prayer services can be changed to include a different theme. Do not be afraid to be creative as the intent is to Praise God, Give Glory to His Son, and/or to Honor Mary the Blessed Mother. God loves to hear from us – speak for He is listening! The following page shows an example of how to change a prayer service to the theme of Marriage and Family.



## Community Prayer Service (NCCW Called to Pray)

The words in *italics* were added into the prayer

**Leader:** We come together this \_\_\_\_\_ (time of day) \_\_\_\_\_ as brothers and sisters in Christ to do his will by loving one another as he first loved us. *May we discern and follow your will as we participate in programs that celebrate Marriage and Family.* Let us begin our celebration by lifting our voices to God in joyful celebration. Please stand.

**Song:** "Gather Us In," Marty Haugen, GIA, Chicago, IL

**Reading:** Acts 4:32-37

**Leader:** We will now offer prayers of petition. The response is: "Lord, open our hearts."

That we believe God loves each of us and that we are precious and loved by God, we pray:

**Response:** Lord, open our hearts

**Leader:** That we may respond to God's call, *to promote the sacrament of marriage*, we pray:

**Response**

That our love for one another may joyfully grow as we serve one another, *as daughters of God*, with the individual gifts given to us, we pray:

**Response**

That as we grow stronger in Christ, we may bond together through justice *for families* in our communities, nation, and world to become Christ's peace on earth, we pray:

**Response**

That our time together may enlighten, teach and challenge us to see with new eyes, hear with an open mind, and have a new heart in which to bring Christ to others, we pray:

**Response**

*That we may find ways to support family life and show how the family is a reflection of God's love for us, His children, we pray:*

**Response**

**Let us pray:** Thank you dear Lord for bringing us together this \_\_\_\_\_ (time of day) \_\_\_\_\_. We give you our love and ask for your guidance and blessings upon all of us, especially for those DCCW members that cannot be present with us. *We also thank you for our own families as they support us in our Council work.* We stand now, join our hands and lift our voices to you praying as you taught us...

**All:** Our Father...

**Leader:** In the spirit of the community of God let us extend to one another the sign of peace.



**LITURGY FORM**

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_

OCCASION \_\_\_\_\_ PRESIDERS \_\_\_\_\_

THEME \_\_\_\_\_

MUSIC MINISTER OR LEADER OR SONG \_\_\_\_\_

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS \_\_\_\_\_

LECTOR(S) \_\_\_\_\_

**ORDER OF MASS**

GATHERING SONG \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST READING \_\_\_\_\_ READER \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (SONG OR READ) \_\_\_\_\_

SECOND READING \_\_\_\_\_ READER \_\_\_\_\_

GOSPEL \_\_\_\_\_

HOMILIST \_\_\_\_\_

GENERAL INTERSESSIONS (WHO WILL WRITE THEM –THEME)

\_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSE \_\_\_\_\_ READER \_\_\_\_\_

PREPARATION OF GIFTS (SONG) \_\_\_\_\_

OFFERING OF GIFTS \_\_\_\_\_

RESSIONAL SONG \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIAL NOTES \_\_\_\_\_

*Give a copy of this completed form to presiding priest with a copy of the intercessions.*

**Source: NCCW Church Commissions (1991) NCCW Called to Pray (1995)**

## **SPIRITUALITY RESOURCES**

- ◆ Bible (New American Bible – Personal Study Edition, The New Jerusalem Bible)
- ◆ Catechism of the Catholic Church
- ◆ United States Catholic Catechism for Adults
- ◆ Compendium – Catechism of the Catholic Church
- ◆ God is Love/Deus Caritas Est – Encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI
- ◆ Spe Salvi – Encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI
- ◆ Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship – A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States
- ◆ Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church – Pontifical Council for Peace
  - and Justice
- ◆ Enhancing Our Spirituality: A Collection of Prayers and Readings For Personal or Group Reflection - NCCW

### **Book Club Suggestions**

The Rhythm of Life: Living EveryDay with Passion and Purpose by Matthew Kelly

Rediscovering Catholicism: Journeying Toward Our Spiritual North Star by Matthew Kelly

Holy Moments: A Handbook for the Rest of Your Life by Matthew Kelly

To Love and Be Loved: A Personal Portrait of Mother Teresa by Jim Towey

Make Room for God: Clearing Out the Clutter by Susan K. Rowland

Jesus of Nazareth by Pope Benedict XVI Books - Joseph Ratzinger

Champions of the Rosary: The History and Heroes of a Spiritual Weapon by Donald H Calloway

Why We're Catholic by Trent Horn

Immortal Combat by Dwight Longenecker

Reveal the Gift: Living the Feminine Genius by Lisa Cotter

The Way is Made by Walking: A pilgrimage Along the Camino de Santiago by Arthur Paul Boers

The Red Tent by Anita Diamant

### **World Wide Web Resources**

**Saint of the Day** – [www.americancatholic.org/features/saints/bydate.asp](http://www.americancatholic.org/features/saints/bydate.asp)

This site includes a monthly calendar with the saints and includes a link to a brief biography of the saint of the day.

**American Catholic** – [www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org) - also provides Minute Meditations, Daily Catholic Questions, etc

**Vatican Website** – [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

**Encyclicals** - [www.papalencyclicals.net/all.htm](http://www.papalencyclicals.net/all.htm)

**Zenit** – [www.zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org) – The World Seen from Rome

**EWTN** – [www.ewtn.org](http://www.ewtn.org) – Daily Mass readings, Catholic Almanac (liturgical colors and saint of the day), prayers, novenas, litanies, the Holy Rosary

**Apostleship of Prayer** – [www.apostleshipofprayer.org](http://www.apostleshipofprayer.org) – Our Holy Father's Monthly Pray Intentions

**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops** – [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) – daily Mass readings, New American Bible, Liturgical Season Resources (Ex. Lenten Resources include – What We Believe, What We Celebrate, How We Live, and How We Pray

### **Hymn Suggestions**

*All Creatures of Our God and King*

*All the Ends of the Earth*

*Canticle of the Sun*

*Earthen Vessels*

*For the Beauty of the Earth*

*Gift of Finest Wheat*

*Glory and Praise to Our God*

*I Am the Vine*

*One Bread, One Body*

*Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow*

*Seed, Scattered and Sown*

*We Have Been Told*

**The Creator's Gift**

*The gentle blowing breeze  
Nudges the lovely flowers  
Into a dance, releasing  
Rain from recent showers.*

*In the clear waters of a pond,  
Goldfish play hide-and-seek,  
Darting in, out, and around;  
Beneath the water-lillies peak.*

*The melodious song of birds  
Is heard as they build a nest  
Where a newborn baby bird  
Becomes the latest guest.*

*The distant purple mountains  
To the heavens try to reach.  
Far below, the rolling surf  
Tosses waves upon the beach.*

*In this wonderful world  
Are special gifts from the Creator's hand.  
We thank and praise Him now  
For everything so wonderful and grand.*

Bernice Laux



**Thoughts in Solitude**

*My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.*

*I do not see the road ahead of me.*

*I cannot know for certain where it will end.*

*Nor do I really know myself,*

*and the fact that I think that I am following your will*

*does not mean that I am actually doing so.*

*But I believe that the desire to please you*

*does in fact please you.*

*And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.*

*I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.*

*And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road*

*though I may know nothing about it.*

*Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost*

*and in the shadow of death.*

*I will not fear, for you are ever with me and you will never leave*

*me to face my perils alone.*

Thomas Merton

**Do You?**

*Do you pause to see the sunrise  
as you start each golden day?*

*Do you stop to watch the sunset  
in the midst of work or play?*

*Do you listen to others  
as they share their dreams with you?*

*Do you give them inspiration  
for the great deeds that they would do?*

*Do you give a cheerful greeting  
to the persons who are sad?*

*Do you reach out, smile and touch them?  
Do you leave them feeling glad?*

*Do you give yourself in service?  
Are your motives good and true?*

*When you spend life helping others  
they will see God's love in you!*

*William Arthur Ward*

## **Program Planning**

Programs do not need to be overly complicated, but they should be interesting and well planned. Many of us have attended poorly planned events with lackluster speakers and bad food. Even if the topic presented was an important one, the message was lost due to the distraction of all the “problems”. It is important to present interesting programs that have a wide appeal.

Once the topic or program is chosen, it is important to plan and to plan well. Where will it be held, what time will it be held, what are the refreshments, who will be responsible for the room set-up, what materials will be required – the questions – who, what, where, when and how all need to be answered for every program. It is also important to do the after program debriefing – what worked, what did not work, what could be done better. All this information should be placed in a written report along with recommendations for when the program is held again.

There is no reason to reinvent the wheel only a reason to improve upon its design! The preparation of the report will serve as the basis for next year’s planning and the next year and the next year. The program should be evaluated every year to improve upon or to possibly not hold it. Some programs become obsolete or need a complete overhaul. If attendance is falling off, re-examine it and see how it can be renewed or replaced. A good honest look at programs should be discussed at the Summer Planning Meeting.

Simply put – keep programs interesting, relevant and well planned. When you add in the right advertising, your Council will have a successful year!

## **Ways to Incorporate Existing Programs into the Chosen Theme**

Choosing a theme for the Council Year does not mean that all existing programs need to be tossed aside. The successful annual programs should certainly remain in place, but here is an opportunity to be more creative in marketing. The following is a listing of examples of using existing programs with a theme:

### **Council Year Theme:      **Marriage and Family****

#### **Annual Christmas Bake Sale:**

- Offer Family Pictures with Santa
- Sell Fair Trade Chocolate. Create a display that shows how the purchase of Fair Trade chocolate helps families in third world or developing countries support themselves
- Advertise that a portion of the proceeds will benefit a charity that helps families or to purchase phone cards for military personnel so that they can call home over the holidays

#### **Annual Card/Game Party:**

- Create/Sell a Family Ticket at a special price for family members attending
- Advertise that a portion of the proceeds will benefit a charity that helps families
- Set up a "Family Tournament" with families playing as teams with such games as Trivial Pursuit. Award a prize to the winning family

The program does not necessarily change, just add a twist and tie it to the theme. By looking at a new way to promote a program or to add something different, existing programs will remain fresh and interesting. Get creative and have fun!

**JANUARY**

**Program:** Safe Haven for Newborns  
Helping pregnant women and newborns at risk

**History:** The Safe Haven Act in Florida now allows a woman to leave a newborn child up to 7 days old at Fire Station or Hospital with no questions asked. The mission of "Safe Haven for Newborns" is to get the word out about this law to all pregnant women.

Safe Haven for Newborns depends on donations to continue their work to advertise this act to all women at risk.

**You can help:**

For a donation of \$75.00, Safe Haven for Newborns will send you a professional CD that talks about Safe Haven, the law and the mission of Safe Haven for Newborns. You also will receive 15 decals that you can sell for a \$5.00 donation. In effect you will only be fronting the \$75.00 to Safe Haven for Newborns, since you will be collecting the money for the sale of the decals. Once the decal is placed on your car rear window, you become a moving billboard for Safe Haven for Newborns and thus help spread the word about the act.

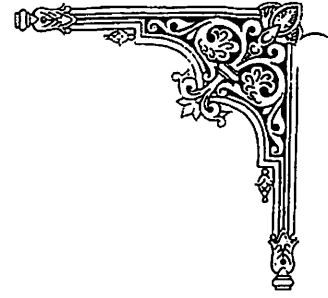
**Contact:** 6955 NW 77<sup>th</sup> Ave Suite 302  
Miami, Florida 33166  
877-767-2229  
or [safehaven@asafehavenfornewborns.com](mailto:safehaven@asafehavenfornewborns.com)

**For further info see their web site:** [www.asafehavenfornewborns.com](http://www.asafehavenfornewborns.com)

A good lead into your program would be someone asking:

"What good is a law if no one knows about it?"

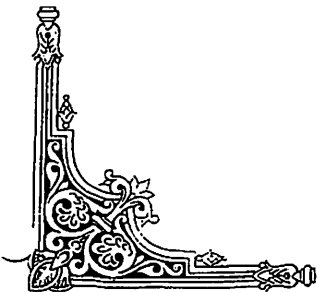
For further information for presenting this program you can contact Rosi Schuhmacher Reese at [ccwrose@yahoo.com](mailto:ccwrose@yahoo.com)



**January Prayer to End Abortion**

Fr. Frank Pavone  
National Director, Priests for Life  
Used with permission.

Lord God, I thank you today  
for the gift of my life,  
and for the lives of all my brothers and sisters.  
I know there is nothing that destroys more life  
than abortion,  
yet I rejoice that you have conquered death  
by the Resurrection of Your Son.  
I am ready to do my part in ending abortion.  
Today I commit myself  
never to be silent,  
never to be passive,  
never to be forgetful of the unborn.  
I commit myself to be active in the  
Pro-Life movement,  
and never to stop defending life  
until all my brothers and sisters are protected,  
and our nation once again becomes  
a nation with liberty and justice  
not just for some, but for all,  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.



## **JANUARY**

**Theme:** Santa' Mistakes

### **Suggested Bulletin Announcement:**

**Council of Catholic Women:** The Council of Catholic Women (CCW) will be having a Santa's Mistakes Auction for their January Meeting. Please bring any and all those unwanted items you may have received for Christmas and join us. We will be auctioning off these items and the money will be given to our charity. Please join us for a lively and fun loving meeting (insert date, time and place.)

### **Suggested Activities:**

Find someone with the gift of gab that can be the auctioneer.

Serve Refreshments.

Everyone receives something for Christmas that they do not want or cannot use. It may be useful to someone else. You will be surprised at some of the fun you can have and make a little money for your charity.



## **FEBRUARY**

**Theme:** Be a "Heart Smart Family."

**Suggested Bulletin Announcement:** (Date & Time)

**Know the facts, Get the Stats!!** Heart Disease is the #1 killer of women, but many women do not know they are at risk. Striving for good health, should be a top priority in your life. The early death of a "mom" could have devastating effects on a FAMILY. The Council of Catholic Women will be presenting a "Healthy Heart Program" and all parishioners are invited to attend. Come and let us show you ways to maintain a **healthy and happy heart!!**

### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:**

- ❖ Begin with a prayer service focusing on prayers for good health.
- ❖ Invite a Cardiovascular Specialty Nurse to be your guest speaker.
- ❖ Have her do a power point presentation with information on Heart Attacks, High Blood Pressure, and types of Cholesterol. Allow time for questions & answers.
- ❖ Create an informative and fun "Heart Smart Quiz". (use websites for info)
- ❖ Give all attending a small heart shaped pin, as a reminder to make good health a "Priority in their Life". (Pins are available at arts & crafts stores)

### **Web Sites:**

[www.hearttruth.gov](http://www.hearttruth.gov)

[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)





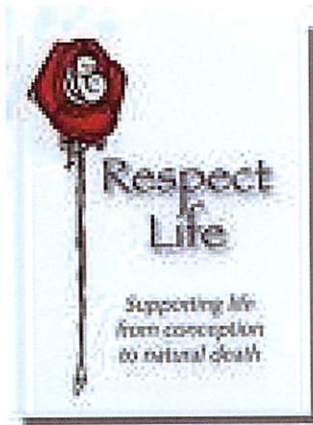
## **Prayer for Chastity**

Dearest Jesus!

I know well that every perfect gift, and above all others that of chastity, depends upon the most powerful assistance of your providence, and that without you a creature can do nothing. Therefore, I pray that you defend, with your grace, the gift of chastity and purity in my soul as well as my body. And if I have ever received through my senses any impression that could stain my chastity and purity, I ask you, who are the supreme Lord of all my powers, to take it from me, so that I may with a clean heart advance in your love and service, offering myself chaste all the days of my life on the most pure altar of your divinity.

Amen.

St. Thomas Aquinas



## **FEBRUARY**

**Theme:** Human Trafficking.

### **Suggested Bulletin Announcement:**

Human Slavery – also known as human trafficking – is still happening today! Millions of people, including children as young as age five, are among the 700,000 people enslaved globally every year.

### **Actions Addressing Human Trafficking:**

- ✓ For continued parish education, use a section of the parish bulletin board and post current news articles about human trafficking.
- ✓ Plan an evening meeting raising awareness. Invite a speaker or watch a DVD about the issue such as “**Lives For Sale**” or “**Not For Sale**” documentaries on immigration and human trafficking.
- ✓ Go on-line to get the monthly “**Stop Trafficking Newsletter**” and print it for the bulletin board. Go to : <http://homepage.mac.com/srjeanschafersds/stoptraffic/index.html>
- ✓ See a trafficked person by calling the Trafficking hotline 1-888-373-7888
- ✓ Spread the word: talk about the issue in you various prayer groups and with your acquaintances.

### **Resources:**

There are many web sites that provide information about human trafficking.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

US Dept. of Human Health Services: [www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking)

Department of State: <http://www.state.gov/tip>

Department of Justice: <http://www.usdoj.gov>

“Lives For Sale” DVD: <http://home.maryknoll.org>

“Not For Sale” DVD and book by David Batstone: [www.notforsalecampaign.org](http://www.notforsalecampaign.org)

**PUBLIC STATEMENT**  
*Issued by*  
**INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF RELIGIOUS  
AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (INRATIP)**

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*For Immediate Release*

*Institute of Maria SS Bambina  
Rome: October 19, 2007*

**Introduction**

At their first international conference on human trafficking, Catholic Sisters from 26 countries and all continents gathered in Rome. Statistics indicate that there are 800 congregations and over 1million Catholic sisters in the world. Delegates to the conference committed to use their personnel, resources and historical commitment to those living in situations of poverty to eradicate human trafficking - a modern day form of slavery. The following is their statement to the world.

**Definition**

Trafficking in human beings means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons using threat, force, coercion, fraud, deception or abuse of power by payments to achieve consent of control over a person for the purpose of exploitation. Trafficking in children requires only the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall mean among other things, sexual exploitation, domestic service, forced labor or removal of organs. (Palermo Protocol)

**To All Religious Leaders**

We appreciate all the religious leaders who have supported us in the fight against trafficking in persons. We call on all religious leaders to end religious practices and customs that discriminate against women and girls, and hence contribute to the attitude of gender inequality underlying the growth of human trafficking in our world today. We urge all religious leaders to denounce injustice and violence against women, children and men who are sexually exploited, exploited for labour or used in the sale of organs. We encourage you to relentlessly use your pastoral responsibility to defend and promote the human dignity of persons exploited by these forms of slavery.

**To People of Good Will**

We urge all people of good will to open your hearts to the victims and to act to change the root causes of human trafficking - poverty, gender inequality, discrimination, greed and corruption. Each small action of restoring dignity to another person furthers the dignity of each one of us. Our hope rests in a vision of humanity which honors the principle that no woman, child or man is a commodity for sale. Relying on the love of God, we ask you to join us in our prayers and our actions to eradicate this social and moral evil.

<http://www.stophumantraffic.com/>

### **Prayer to End Trafficking**

Lord of freedom and love, we are saddened to know that more than one million people are trafficked into slavery each year. The effects of contemporary slavery are felt in every one of the 180 countries where Franciscans serve. As sons and daughters of our father St. Francis we are tormented by this reality that will leave devastating repercussions for generations to come.

Our hearts grieve for what our minds can barely comprehend, particularly when we hear of women, men, and children who are deceived and transported to unknown places. We recognize this sexual and economic exploitation occurs because of human greed and profit. We are sorrowful and our spirits angry that human dignity is being degraded through deception and threats of force.

Help the violators to be transformed and enlightened to realize the scope of their unjust actions. Allow them to see the value and the dignity of every human person. As Franciscans who serve the poor in a spirit of peace and justice, we must protest this atrocity and work against the demeaning practice of human trafficking.

Lord of Life, strengthen those whose hearts have been broken and lives have been uprooted. Give us the light, grace, and courage to work with you so that we can all participate in the goodness of creation.

Fill us with the wisdom and courage to stand in solidarity with the victims so that we may all enjoy the freedoms and rights which have their source in your Son and our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Adapted from a prayer by Sr. Genevieve Cassani*

[www.FranciscansInternational.org](http://www.FranciscansInternational.org)



## **MARCH**

**Theme:** St. Joseph's Table

### **Suggested Bulletin Announcement:**

**Council of Catholic Women:** The Council of Catholic Women (CCW) will celebrate the feast of St. Joseph at our March meeting with a St. Joseph's Altar. All women of the parish are invited to join us. Please bring a meatless item to donate to our pantry (*or a local pantry if the parish doesn't have one*). (*Insert time and place of meeting.*)

**History:** In the Middle Ages, Sicilians prayed to St. Joseph to end a famine caused by a drought. When their prayers were answered and it rained, the people showed their thanks to St. Joseph by sharing their precious food with the poor. Continuing that tradition, altars are erected that consist of at least three tiers to symbolize the Trinity. At the center of the table there is a picture or statue of St. Joseph surrounded by flowers and candles. The altar and the food are blessed, so none of the food may be wasted. The poor are often invited to St. Joseph Day celebrations to enjoy the food that is prepared, but more often now, collections are taken to be given to charities.

Since the feast day falls during Lent, the food served is meatless. Pasta, bread baked in crosses and other Christian shapes, cookies, fruit, artichokes and pastries are all served at room temperature.

### **Suggested Activities:**

- Prepare a three-tiered altar with a picture of St. Joseph in the center surrounded by flowers and candles. Ask members to bring a meatless food item and display the items on the altar as people arrive. Since it may be impractical to invite the homeless/needy to your monthly meeting, donate the food collected to a food pantry, either at the parish or locally.
- Provide handouts explaining the tradition of the St. Joseph's Table for the members attending, or publish it in your affiliation newsletter ahead of time.
- Include prayers to St. Joseph in your opening and closing prayer services.
- A St. Joseph's Table is a way to show thanks to St. Joseph for prayers answered. Ask the members to write down prayers that have been answered and place them in a basket before the statue of St. Joseph.

### **Resources:**

There are many web sites that provide history, suggested activities and recipes for a St. Joseph's Table. Some are listed below.

- <http://buffalolore.buffalonet.org/stjoseph/stjoseph.htm#LOCATION>
  - <http://www.catholicerald.com>

## **MARCH**

**Theme:** Capital Days

### **Suggested Bulletin Announcement:**

**Council of Catholic Women:** The Council of Catholic Women (CCW) will be joining the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women and the six other DCCW's from around the state in Tallahassee for Catholic Days at the Capital. If you can join us (give dates and time of travel) in Tallahassee please attend a special meeting to finalize our plans.(give date, time and place of special meeting.)

### **Suggested Activities:**

Make appointments with your legislators before the trip.

Attend the Florida Catholic Conference information session in Tallahassee.

Make sure you keep all appointments that are made and discuss the issues of the Florida Catholic Conference.

**Resources:** <http://www.flacathconf.org>.

### **Prayer for Catholic Days at the Capitol**

We gather knowing that there is much to learn and much to do.

We have traveled here from the east and the west, north and south.

We may feel excited or tired.

We may feel peaceful or anxious.

We may be ready to inspire or in need of inspiration.

We acknowledge, Lord Jesus, our need for your presence in this day.

We acknowledge our need for you on our trip to Catholic Days at the Capitol and in everything we do as we speak with the Legislators on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves.

As we begin this day, we take a moment to pause and to open a space inside us, for Christ to enter in, that we might hear His voice and see His face. We now pause, in silence, to ask Christ to be with us.

Amen

**APRIL**

**Theme:** MADD - Mothers against Drunk Drivers

**Suggested Bulletin Announcement:**

**Council of Catholic Women:** Are you MADD? Come help keep the family unit intact. Too many families are torn apart by the death of a mother, father or child by drunk drivers. There will be information about MADD, statistics that will get you MADD and we will be playing some games that will help raise money for MADD. Ignorance is BLISS – so come join us on (date and time) to be informed and get MADD!

**History:** MADD was started by a mother who got MADD when her child died in a car accident caused by a drunk driver.

**Suggested Activities:**

- 1) Invite a guest speaker from a local chapter.
- 2) Get your Youth involved in a contest to see how many pledges they can receive from classmates not to drink and drive – at your meeting have the kids tell of their experience trying to obtain the signatures of their classmates.
- 3) Invite someone, whose parent died while they were a child to share how that affected their life
- 4) Go to MADD.org and collect as many facts and figures about the subject and just play a truth or false game with your members and see how much or little they know about MADD and the drunk driving

**Resources:** [www.MADD.org](http://www.MADD.org)





#trashchallenge

No More Single Use Plastics!

Adopt A Highway Program



Don't Be A Litterbug



say No To Plastic Bags!

Three "R's" : Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle

Let's Go Plogging

No More Plastic Straws



Keep America Beautiful, Lady Bird Johnson

## ***Caring for our Environment***

**"Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on One another." Laudato Si'**

**Protecting Our Planet Begins With YOU! So, what can YOU do now? Start a program in your own neighborhood, look at suggestions above and act on them. If we work together – WE CAN DO THIS!**

***"God gave us the earth and the earth has been good to us. Let us be Good to the earth." From the Book of Genesis***



**APRIL**

**Theme:** Water for Life

**Suggested Bulletin Announcement:**

The Water for Life program was established in 1978. Catholic Relief Services partnered with the National Council of Catholic Women to respond to the critical need for water projects in developing countries. The greatest humanitarian crisis in the world today is food and water scarcity issues that threaten the peace and security of most developing nations. Program funds are used for integrated water systems that combine irrigation, sanitation systems and basic hygiene education. These all contribute to stronger communities.

**Suggested Activities:**

On the website under resources there are 2 activities, slide show, and video available. Children's book: Drop by Drop

**Resources:** [crs.org/nccw](http://crs.org/nccw)



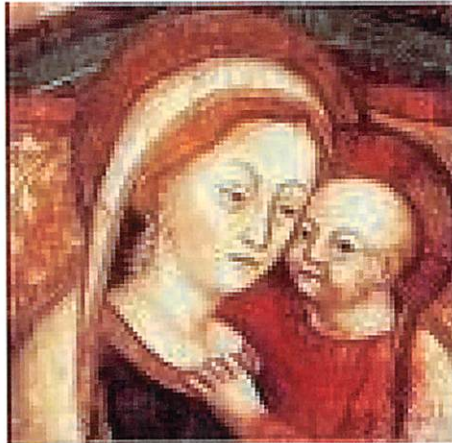
## **MAY**

May is dedicated to Our Blessed Mother. The month contains Mothers' Day, dedicated to all Mothers. It also has Memorial Day, when we honor all those who have died for our freedom and country.

### **Merry Mary Day**

This way to honor Mary can be done as the main focus at a CCW meeting, or as part of other Marian devotions. Many deaneries and affiliates around the country have similar programs. It can be used in May or October, which are typically the months we honor Mary, or it can be used during Advent or any other appropriate time.

- Set up a display table with attractive linens, fresh flowers, and/or candles. Invite the ladies to bring in their statues of Mary, holy cards, carvings, icons, or any keepsakes they have about Mary. Invite them to set their items on the display table.
- At some point during the meeting, let each person have an opportunity to tell why their item is special to them and have them share their story (you may want to agree on limiting the time each person speaks).
- You can conclude with a rosary, a hymn about Mary, or a crowning.



National Council of Catholic Women, Enhancing Our Spirituality: A Collection of Prayers and Readings For Personal or Group Reflection, 2007.

**MAY**

**Theme:** Images of Mary

**Suggested Bulletin Announcement:**

May is dedicated to Our Blessed Mother. All women of the parish are invited to a special meeting of the Council of Catholic Women where we will honor Mary with a prayer service, *Images of Mary*. (Include date, time and location of meeting).

**Program:** Prayer Service

**IN HONOR OF MARY MOTHER OF GOD**

**LEADER:** Let our prayer rise like an incense before you, O God.

*ALL: And may your grace descend upon us gathered here*

**LEADER:** Send forth your spirit and renew the face of the earth.

*ALL: Yes, and renew our own hearts so that we may be better ministers of your gospel.*

**LEADER:** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

*ALL: As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.*

**OPENING SONG:** Select an appropriate song.

**READING:** Luke 1: 46-55

*Short period of silence.*

**LEADER:** Today we shall pray for the needs of our world by reflecting on several titles of Mary. Weaving today's concerns with words of solace and hope from traditional Marian prayers. A symbol will be brought up for each prayer.

We invite you to recite with the presider the Hail Mary. Please listen to the other Marian prayers. Listed below are the images of Mary we shall be praying with.

Mary - Gentle Mother  
Mary - Seeker of Justice  
Mary - Ponderer of God's Lord  
Mary - Giver of Hope  
Mary - Comforter of the Poor  
Mary - Gentle Mother

**MOVEMENT:** Wind chimes are presented

**READER 1:** Mary, your own rootedness in the Hebrew Scriptures has given you a gentleness of spirit not found among others. Did you, as a young girl commit to heart these words of the prophet Micah?

"You have been told O Israel what is good and what the Lord requires of you - Only this: to act justly - to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

This gentleness of spirit - This breath of God's life in you is captured for us this morning by the symbols of these wind chimes. They move with an unseen force, gently making music for our lives, and reminding us to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God.

**ALL:** *Hail Mary...*

**SONG:** "Gentle Woman," Carey Landry

## **MARY - SEEKER OF JUSTICE**

**MOVEMENT:** Chains are presented

**READER 2:** It is by no small chance does the church celebrate your great feast, the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God, on the same day we celebrate World Day of Peace. Oh Mary, Seeker of Justice, how many times did you hear these words of Isaiah the prophet?

"This rather is the fasting I wish releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke, setting free the oppressed, sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and homeless, clothing the naked when you see them and not turning your back on your own." (Isaiah 58: 7-8)

As a reminder of Mary as a seeker of justice and of our own desire to bring this world to a more just stance, we bring up chains, symbol of oppressed people. We pray that we may have the courage to be united with our sisters and brothers suffering in oppressed countries.

**ALL:** *Hail Mary...*

**SONG:** "Stabat Mater"

**MARY - PONDERER OF GOD'S WORD MOVEMENT:** Candle is presented

**READER 3:** St. Luke tells us that Mary pondered the news of the angel in her heart. To ponder - to prayerfully draw information into our hearts - to move into the interior silence of our own being and there surrender to God what needs to be surrendered. It is only in interior silence that we receive the gift of a discerning heart. Our own symbol is a candle. Only by silent of heart - of pondering the word of God as Mary did that we will be able to bring Jesus the light into this world.

**ALL:** *Hail Mary...*

**SONG:** Magnificat of your choice

**MARY - GIVER OF HOPE**

**MOVEMENT:** Green bough is presented

**READER 4:** Mary, you who were filled with grace, we praise God that you were able to share the gift of hope with all you came in contact with. With the shepherds and kings, with the women in Nazareth, with the wedding party at Cana. By your presence at the cross you gave courage and hope to your dying child. You filled Peter, who denied your son, with the hope of forgiveness and new life. How the early church counted on you, Mary, as the giver of hope. The church's liturgical color for hope is green - Our symbol is a green bough reminding us to be a sign of hope to one another.

**ALL:** *Hail Mary...*

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly to you, O Virgin of virgins, my mother. To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer me. Amen.

## **MARY - COMFORTER OF THE POOR**

**MOVEMENT:** Icon-Mother of the Streets is presented

**READER 5:** Mary, you yourself were poor - your Son, our Savior being born in a stable that housed animals. And when it was time to present him in the Temple, you and Joseph gave the offering of the poor - two pigeons. The truth is Mary - we are all poor - poor in spirit - we neither know how to accept nor take care of the riches your son has given us. Jesus said that what we do to the least of our brothers and sisters you do for him. Who is the least right now in my life - and why? Our symbol is an icon called Mother of the Streets. I would like to read the paper that came with this picture:

Mother of God: Mother of the Streets, each year, larger numbers of homeless people live on the streets of modern cities. These people may be jobless workers, battered women, the untreated mentally ill, or simply those too poor to get by. They tend to be "invisible" to the rest of society, but they are a real presence of Christ the Judge in our midst, demanding charity and justice for the hungry and naked. They extend the Incarnation of Christ, the Suffering Servant, in history.

This icon depicts the Mother of God as the mother of those on the streets. She is Black, as so many of those in the streets are also people of color. Her garments, and those of her Son, are covered with jewels and gold decoration, making manifest the hidden worth and dignity of street people, who are living icons of God.

In 1984 the Catholic bishops of the U.S. declared, "To turn aside from those on the margins of society, the needy and powerless, is to turn aside from Jesus ... Such people show His face to the world." Such people are also a presence of Church, for where Christ is, there is His Church. The task of the institutional Church is to return to communion with the crucified Church of the streets.

**ALL:** *Hail Mary...*

**SONG:** "Salve Regina"

**ALL:** *Prayer to Our Lady of Good Counsel*

Please note symbols needed for this prayer: wind chimes, chains, candle, green bough, and an icon called Mother of the Streets.  
(If an icon is not available, any appropriate image of Mary may be used.)

*National Council of Catholic Women, Called to Pray, 1995*

**MAY**

**Theme:** Mother's Day Contest

**Suggested Bulletin Announcement:**

You are invited to a special Mother's Day celebration to honor all the women in the parish especially 3 special women. Many children from our School and Religious Education Program will be joining us for this very special evening. This is an evening you will not want to miss!

**Mary is the model for all mothers**

**Where to start:**

Contact the head or your School and Religious Ed and offer this project for all the students. Have them tell the children this will be a surprise for their mothers Give the children a little time to think about their assignment and then have them write them at one of their classes. You need three women to act as the judges (and this is the hard part) – Have three age categories so the very young are not competing with the older children. You need three prizes for the mothers and something for the children. When you have the winners, call them and invite them to the meeting. You don't have to tell them why, just say their child is being honored for something.

Decorate the hall with all the children's essays. Ask Father's permission if they can stay in the hall during May as a tribute to mothers.

**The night of the Meeting:**

Start your program with a reading about the Annunciation and then ask all the women to reflect on what Mary must have been like as a mother. Explain about the contest and have each child come up read their essays one by one. Then present flowers, gifts to the mothers and something for the children.

**Suggested Activities:**

NOW – get everyone involved. Ask your members to come forward and share about their mothers and how they were like Mary.

## **PRAYER FOR MOTHERS**

Blessed be the Mother,  
Who lets the Lord be her guiding hand,  
Whose faith brings her family courage,  
Whose wisdom comes from God,  
And whose children still stand and honor her.

Obtained from the Marianist Mission, Dayton, Ohio

## **Mary is the model for all mothers**

### **THE LIVING ROSARY**

The Living Rosary can be said by members of the parish affiliation or any members of the entire parish with different organizations being different decades of the rosary. It is a beautiful prayerful tribute to our Blessed Mother.

A lector reads a meditation for each decade of the rosary.  
Each Our Father carries a blue carnation and each Hail Mary carries a white carnation. After each says their prayer they are put in vases placed before our Blessed Mother.

### **All Hearts Must Be One**

Everyone has the same emotions  
Everyone has the same feelings  
Everyone has the same desires  
No matter where we live  
or what we believe in  
all hearts must be one

We must make the world  
a place where  
love dominates our hearts  
nature sets the standard for beauty  
simplicity and honesty are  
the essence of our relationships  
kindness guides our actions  
and everyone respects one another

Susan Polis Schultz  
One World, One Heart





## **A MEMORIAL DAY REMEMBRANCE**

### **The Story of Memorial Day**

After the bloody war between the States, citizens of the North and South felt a need to honor those fallen in the war. On various days people from different communities would place flowers at the graves of those they wished to honor. The day came to be known as Decoration Day. By 1868, the Northern states were keeping the day on May 30<sup>th</sup>.

In 1882, the day was renamed Memorial Day and extended to honor the fallen in other wars. Since 1950, Congress has designated Memorial Day as a day when the people of the United States might unite in prayer for permanent peace. In 1941, President Nixon declared it a national holiday and designated the commemoration for the last Monday in May.

Besides honoring those Americans from the armed forces, it is also a day for personal remembrance of all loved ones. Flowers on graves, church services, visits to the cemetery are all ways to mark the day with dignity and solemnity. In this spirit it is only fitting to make this day one of prayer in our Catholic faith with its long tradition of remembering the faithful departed.

**SCRIPTURE READING: II Maccabees 12:43** Judas Maccabeus then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to two thousand silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection of the dead in view.

### **PRAYER**

Lord God, You are the glory of believers and the life of the just. you so redeemed us by dying and rising to life again. Since our brother and sisters believed in the mystery of the resurrection, we join our prayers to those of the Blessed Virgin Mary as we ask that they share the joys and blessings of the life to come. Grant this through Christ the Lord.

**Amen.**

**Obtained from:**  
The Association of the Miraculous Medal  
1811 West Saint Joseph Street Perryville,  
Missouri 63775-1598

## **INSTALLATION OF AFFILIATION OFFICERS**

The women we are about to present to you will lead \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women for the next two years. Each of us has different gifts and different ministries. These four women have been recognized for their gift of leadership and responsibility and have been chosen by you to serve as officers of the \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women.

Will the newly elected officers please come forward and face the members.

\_\_\_\_\_ You have been chosen to serve in the highest office of the \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women. As president it is your responsibility to preside at all meetings. You will delegate responsibilities, lead your board of directors, and represent the \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women with grace and dignity.

Are you willing to accept this responsibility?

**RESPONSE:** I WILL

We present you with this candle tied with a White ribbon, symbolizing purity of thought and action.

\_\_\_\_\_ You have been chosen as the VICE - president of \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women. You will assist and support the president in any way possible.

Are you willing to accept this responsibility?

**RESPONSE:** I WILL

We present you with this candle tied with a Blue Ribbon, symbolizing loyalty and dedication.

\_\_\_\_\_ You have been chosen to be the recording secretary of the \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women. It is your responsibility to keep full and accurate records of all Board Meetings and be responsible for an accurate roll call.

Are you willing to accept this responsibility?

**RESPONSE:** I WILL

We present you with this candle tied with a Green Ribbon, symbolizing new beginnings and new challenges.

\_\_\_\_\_ You have been chosen as the treasurer of the \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women. It is your responsibility to give a full financial report at all Board Meetings, to receive all funds as income and to disburse such funds as needed or authorized.

Are you willing to accept this responsibility?

**RESPONSE:** I WILL

We present you with this candle tied with a Red Ribbon, symbolizing courage and honesty.

**TO ALL MEMBERS:** You the membership of the \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women have vested in these four women the responsibility of leadership during the next two years. Will you support them in their commitment to God's call to service?

**RESPONSE:** I WILL

As \_\_\_\_\_, I declare you are duly installed. May I present to you the new Officers of the \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women for the years \_\_\_\_\_.

**A Board Member's Prayer**

I have been asked to serve, Lord, and I have agreed.

Help me to know my fellow board members: their gifts, their concerns, their lives. I am doing your work, Lord, and love for me and for them is, above all, personal.

Help me to welcome conflict as a sign of the diversity in this board, as an opportunity to reach for creative solutions. Help me to recognize this diversity as a sign of your capacity to love us all and help me to cherish it as a great strength.

Help me to approach issues with an open, inquiring mind, free from prejudice, with my spirit depending on yours for the strength to make hard decisions.

Help me to listen: to know when and to whom I should listen.

Help me to learn to use my gifts to promote through, thoughtful discussion of important concerns in our Catholic Community.

Help me develop my skills as a peacemaker, to know how and when to mediate, to conciliate, to negotiate.

Help me to enjoy doing your work and to remember your promise: whenever two of us are gathered in your name, you are with us.

Sit with me now.

**Amen**

**Council of Catholic Women**

**JUNE/JULY/AUGUST**

**SUGGESTED PLANNING CALENDAR  
FOR AFFILIATION PRESIDENTS**

*This is a suggested calendar only – affiliations activities will vary, so customize this planning calendar accordingly. The key is to Plan!*

**June, July and/or August:**

- Prepare rosters for submission to Division, Arch/Diocesan President
- Notify NCCW of officer changes
- Set-up Summer Board Meeting to plan for next Council year
- Summer Board Meeting
  - Appoint Committee Chairman
  - Choose theme or focus for the Council year
    - Use planning form from "*Binder*"
- Choose a Sunday in October for Council Sunday and plan
  - Prepare Calendar for the year, coordinate events with Parish Secretary
- Prepare Budget

**September**

- Prepare Agenda for Monthly Meetings – Board and General
- Attend NCCW Convention
- Provide calendar to Pastor and let him know which events you would like him to attend – Follow up with formal invites at appropriate times.
- Attend District/Deanery Meetings (may be held in October)

**October**

- Prepare Agenda for Monthly Meetings – Board and General
- Council Sunday
- Attend Biennial FCCW Conference (Even Years)

**November**

- Prepare Agenda for Monthly Meetings – Board and General
- Pay Deanery, Diocesan and National Dues (Due in January)

**December**

- Prepare Agenda for Monthly Meetings – Board and General

**January**

- Prepare Agenda for Monthly Meetings – Board and General

**February**

- Prepare Agenda for Monthly Meetings – Board and General

**March**

- Prepare Agenda for Monthly Meetings – Board and General
- Appoint Nominating Committee

**April**

- Prepare Agenda for Monthly Meetings – Board and General
- Present Slate of Officers/Elections
- Appoint By-law Committee
- Appoint Audit Committee
- Appoint Budget Committee
- Send in monies collected for Burse Fund, Water for Life, etc.
- Attend Arch/Diocesan Convention (could take place in May)

**May**

- Prepare Agenda for Monthly Meetings – Board and General
- Install officers.

***Failure to plan is a plan for failure!***  
***Anonymous***

**Annual Planning Form**

Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Council Year: \_\_\_\_\_

This Year's Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Programs:

September: General Meeting \_\_\_\_\_  
Non-Meeting Program \_\_\_\_\_

October: General Meeting \_\_\_\_\_  
Non-Meeting Program \_\_\_\_\_

November: General Meeting \_\_\_\_\_  
Non-Meeting Program \_\_\_\_\_

December: General Meeting \_\_\_\_\_  
Non-Meeting Program \_\_\_\_\_

January: General Meeting \_\_\_\_\_  
Non-Meeting Program \_\_\_\_\_

February: General Meeting \_\_\_\_\_  
Non-Meeting Program \_\_\_\_\_

March: General Meeting \_\_\_\_\_  
Non-Meeting Program \_\_\_\_\_

April: General Meeting \_\_\_\_\_  
Non-Meeting Program \_\_\_\_\_

May: General Meeting \_\_\_\_\_  
Non-Meeting Program \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual Planning Form - Sample**

Affiliation: (name of parish) Council of Catholic Women

Council Year: 2023-2024

This Year's Theme: Marriage and Family

Programs:

September: General Meeting Council as a Family  
Non-Meeting Program Cross Catholic Outreach - Box of Joy

October: General Meeting Baby Shower Respect Life; Breast Cancer Awareness  
Non-Meeting Program Council Sunday; Domestic Violence;

November: General Meeting Stop Worldwide Hunger Day of Fasting  
Non-Meeting Program Farm workers; Elections;

December: General Meeting Advent Prayer Service  
Non-Meeting Program Christmas Bake/Craft Sale;

January: General Meeting Santa's Mistakes  
Non-Meeting Program March for Life

February: General Meeting Heart Smart Family  
Non-Meeting Program Hugs Collection Due Human Trafficking

March: General Meeting St. Joseph's Table  
Non-Meeting Program Capital Days

April: General Meeting MADD = Mothers Against Drunk Drivers  
Non-Meeting Program Water for Life; Care for Mother Earth

May: General Meeting Merry Mary Day  
Non-Meeting Program Mother's Day Contest



**Monthly Planning Form**  
**for**  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Month)

Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Council Year: \_\_\_\_\_

This Year's Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

General Meeting Program: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Bulletin Announcement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dates for Announcement: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Chairman for this Event *(One of the Committees or Commissions could also be responsible for this program)*: \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Activities**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Opening Prayer**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Closing Prayer**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Non-Meeting Program**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Bulletin Announcement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dates for Announcement: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Chairman for this Event (*One of the Committees or Commissions could also be responsible for this program*): \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested Activities:

\_\_\_\_\_  
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Prayers – If Applicable:

Opening Prayer

\_\_\_\_\_

Closing Prayer

\_\_\_\_\_

**Monthly Planning Form – Sample  
for  
September**

Affiliation: (name of parish) Council of Catholic Women

Council Year: 2023-2024

This Year's Theme: Marriage and Family

Programs:

General Meeting Program: Council as a Family

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Bulletin Announcement: Calling all Council Sisters to join us for our annual Council of Catholic Women (CCW) Family Reunion. Come and meet the rest of your "family" as we start a new Council Year. All women of the parish are invited. If you have never been to a meeting, come and try us out and see what we are all about. Bring a covered dish that exemplifies your branch of our "family" to share at dinner (add specifics about time and place of meeting. (This could be Family Reunion for everyone in the Parish. It would be a good opportunity for the "men" to see how valuable CCW is to the "women" in their lives.)

Dates for Announcement: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Meeting Program \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Chairman for this Event *(One of the Committees or Commissions could also be responsible for this program):* \_\_\_\_\_

**Lighting Our Way Together Prayer Service**



Votive candles are handed to each person upon entry to the room.

(3 White lighted candles are set up to represent past, present and future)

God is with us and around us always. Do we look at our neighbor, friend and family and see the light of Christ or do we let everything else blind us from seeing that light. Do we help build up their light or are we the cause of their light being dim. If you treat everyone as if you were entertaining our Lord how much better would our world be. We must always be aware of the light of Christ in all we do and say. Living the light of Christ is not just the ritual of the Mass. A candle has for all times been the symbol of light, ambiance, comfort, heat and source of food. We use candles during our prayer rituals to remind us that the light is Christ present with us.

Today we will create a light to represent all of us and those who have brought the light of Christ to us. For those who have served in the role of CCW in the past, for those who serve in the role of CCW women in the present, and those who will serve in the role of CCW in the future.

We invite all present to approach the trio of candles. Please light your candle and return to your seat in silence.

Play "Go Light Your World".

We ask all of you to face the \_\_\_\_\_ as we share our light with you. As your flame is glows say a prayer for your hopes of servant leadership, for action, for advocacy, for compassion, for what is on your heart for you now, for what we can do to make a difference. Who should we be holding our candle out to? If you hold your light to yourself you are only illuminating yourself but if you hold it out to others they are also illuminated. We then become Women Who Make the Ordinary ...Extraordinary.

Play "In Perfect Tune" -

Now we ask you to silently bring your candles and place them in the trays provided located \_\_\_\_\_. In doing so we take our one little flame and unite for the good of others and create a much larger, brighter, stronger flame --- the Light of Christ.

Play "We Are Called".

Adapted from ODCCW Prayer Service – Lake Yale 2007

## **SEPTEMBER**

**Theme:** Council as Family

### **Suggested Bulletin Announcement:**

**We Are Family:** Calling all Council Sisters to join us for our annual Council of Catholic Women (CCW) Family Reunion. Come and meet the rest of your "family" as we start a new Council Year. All women of the parish are invited. If you have never been to a meeting, come and try us out and see what we are all about. Bring a covered dish that exemplifies your branch of our "family" to share at dinner. (Add specifics about time and place of meeting)

### **Suggested Activities:**

- ◆ Start with Mass to open the Council year. Have special intentions at the liturgy for families of all kinds.
- ◆ Mix up the seating. Have members sit at tables according to what part of the country/world they were born in. Use color-coded name tags; e.g., red for the west coast, green for the northeast, blue for the south, yellow for Europe, purple for South America, etc. Match the name tags to centerpieces on the tables and have women sit at tables that match their name tags.
- ◆ Start and/or end with a Prayer Service that includes prayers for family.
- ◆ Play a Get Acquainted Bingo with questions designed to help members learn more about each other and find other members with similar interests.
- ◆ Build a "family tree." Have each attendee fill out a card with pertinent information (name, phone, email, skills and interests) and have them hang it on a tree of some kind. Emphasize how we are bound together as "family" by our love of God and desire to be of service. Point out how diversity makes us strong and brings many skills and points of view to the table. Use these information cards to build a database of members' skills and interests to help in choosing members to participate in projects over the course of the next year.

## **Prayer Before a Meal**

*When all have been seated, the prayer begins.*

Leader:                    Let us give God thanks and praise for all we  
                                  have been given: (pause)  
                                  God of all creation, everything on earth  
                                  draws its life from you. We give you thanks  
                                  for the food you have set before us. Help us  
                                  to be mindful of all those who labored that  
                                  we might eat. Grant us, too, a spirit of  
                                  generosity, that all your people may be fed,  
                                  for such is your will. You are the one God,  
                                  living and true, now and forever.

All:                         Amen.



(Source: Rural Life Prayers, Blessings and Liturgies published by The National Catholic Rural Life Conference)



**FLORIDA COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN  
SPIRITUALITY COMMITTEE  
FOR THE  
MONTH OF SEPTEMBER  
PRAYER OF PEACE**

Gracious God, Author of our Faith,  
and Creator of all good things.  
If we were to go to the ends of the Earth,  
You are there!

We feel your omnipresence.  
as we marvel at your handiwork,  
The Sun, the Moon and the Stars  
all remind us of your wondrous deeds.

Your love for us is boundless  
and we ask that you teach us to love  
the people of all nations as you have loved us.

Grant to us the gift of peace  
that only you can give.  
And may that peace  
begin in our hearts and  
spread throughout the world!

Hear our prayer O Lord,  
Hear our prayer O Lord,  
Incline thy ear to us;  
And grant us Your Peace!

~ Amen ~

**Note:** September 21<sup>st</sup> of each year is International Day of Peace.  
In solidarity with culture of peace worldwide,  
this prayer may be recited at your Council gatherings.



## **NCCW prayer for peace**

Heavenly Father, we gather together to pray as one, no matter where we live or what we ask, we ask it of you, our great provider.

For our Church we ask for peace within our parishes as they merge, diminish their growing pains as changes affect her children, and wipe the tears of discord from our eyes.

For our legislative bodies we seek for peace to be present in their hearts as they implement policies and laws that will affect the concept of life from conception to natural death to fair treatment of all of our citizens, may the tears of inequality disappear.

For our international brothers and sisters who hunger for the basic needs that we so profoundly have in abundance. Peace in so many countries would pave the way for better living conditions, safe growing fields, educational possibilities, respect for one another, and bring our military home. May the tears of all of your children cease.

For our communities we ask for social justice, for economic opportunities, for a fair wage and when the floods of life come may our communities be ready to respond with the corporal works of mercy and wash away tears of despair.

For organizational members by their mere presence may they exude a calming air. May they bring peace to chaos, hope to the discouraged and tears of joy.

For our families from nuclear to global from structured to splintered, from lost to found, from separated to united, may we be willing to offer all the "second chance" to become all that you want us to be and defuse the anguish of the lonely.

We offer these requests knowing that you are the time keeper, the plan maker. You the one who knows all that is in our hearts.

Please hear our needs. We ask this through the intercession of Our Lady of Good Council-your mother.

**Written for NCCW Prayer for Peace**

**General Assembly 2008**

Julie Rothery, St. Augustine DCCW Church Chair  
Duplication is Permitted







## Bring a Smile to a Child in Need!

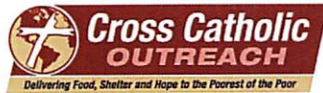
By getting involved with Box of Joy, you can help bless tens of thousands of children this Christmas season! Last year, **118,990 children** received a Box of Joy. And since this outreach's beginning, **512,885 Box of Joy gifts have blessed vulnerable children living around the world!**

Join us again to bless even more kids this year. Scan the QR code to sign up and get your community involved in this engaging work of mercy!



**Sign Up Now!** [boxofjoy.org](http://boxofjoy.org)

Box of Joy is a ministry of Cross Catholic Outreach



in partnership with



## Bless Children Around the World

Box of Joy provides schools, parishes, organizations and families with an inspiring opportunity to send gifts to Haiti, Guatemala and other developing countries.

A Box of Joy is a Christmas gift box that is packed with donated toys, clothing, school supplies and other items. Each child who receives a Box of Joy also receives a rosary and a booklet in their own language that tells *The Story of Jesus*. Box of Joy provides hope to children in need. Each gift represents Christ's love, and it may be the only Christmas gift they receive.

P6300

## **OCTOBER**

### **Council Recognition Month**

October is Council Recognition Month and is a perfect opportunity to hold a Membership Drive and to educate all Catholic women about the Council of Catholic Women. The following are suggestions for ways to promote your Council during the month of October.

1. Contact the Diocesan President to verify she has requested a letter from the Bishop declaring the Month of October as Council Recognition Month.
2. Prepare bulletin announcements to run each Sunday in October.
3. In coordination with your pastor, choose a Sunday in October to promote the Council of Catholic Women and your CCW's activities. This is Council Sunday for your CCW.
4. Council Sunday Activities:
  - a. Arrange to have the bishop's proclamation displayed in your church or printed in the bulletin.
  - b. In coordination with your pastor, choose one particular Mass for all members to attend. The members may process in together and/or sit together so they can be recognized by the celebrant.
  - c. Encourage the cooperation of the coordinators for the various liturgical ministers to schedule women of your council as lectors, gift bearers, and Eucharistic ministers.
  - d. Have members speak at all the Masses about Council and to invite the women of the parish to speak with members after the Masses and to visit the displays.
  - e. Encourage members to use an identifying emblem, such as a blue ribbon in honor of "Our Lady of Good Counsel", name tag, etc.
  - f. Display NCCW literature, NCCW brochures, Prayer Cards to Our Lady of Good Counsel, Works of Peace leaflets and your own special flyers on your council.
  - g. Coffee and donuts or other light refreshments may be served in the display area.

(See Section 4 of the Guidance and Resource Manual for more suggestions)

## **Council Recognition Month**

### Bulletin Announcements

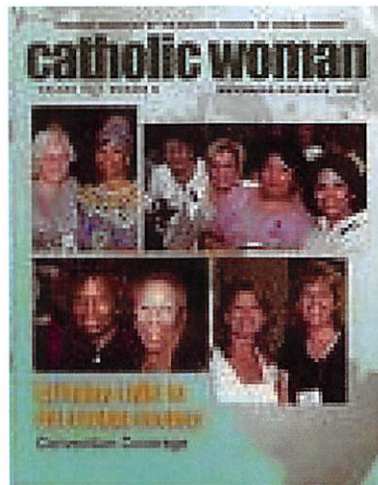
Bulletin Announcements should run for a period of four (4) weekends prior to the date for your Council Sunday, the weekend of Council Sunday and the weekend after. The following are options for bulletin announcements. These are suggestions and should be customized to fit your Council's activities. In each bulletin announcement, simply input your Council's information where indicated by the *italics*. The bulletin announcements can be placed in the bulletin in any order that seems appropriate for your Council.

A theme or phrase used throughout the series of bulletin announcements is suggested as consistency of message is an effective marketing tool. If your Council has chosen a specific theme, this is the perfect time to advertise it and should be used throughout the year in all your advertisements.

A more general phrase, such as "Did You Know" or "Join Us and Be Counted" are also quite effective and these can be used year after year. This phrase should be used on your display boards as well. The important thing to remember is to develop something that will be catchy, easy to remember and will attract new members to your organization.

Council Month and specifically Council Sunday are the perfect opportunities to educate your parish about the Council of Catholic Women. This really is the "kick-off" to your Council year, so it should be approached with enthusiasm and excitement.

A well planned Council Month and Council Sunday will attract new members and reenergize existing members. Remember to have fun – this is a celebration of your affiliation – its membership, its accomplishments – this is the attitude that will make your organization attractive to potential members.



## Did You Know?

### Bulletin Announcements

Created by the Pensacola-Tallahassee Diocesan Council of Catholic Women

#### **Four Weeks Prior to Council Sunday:**

Did you know that the *(insert parish name)* Council of Catholic Women advocated abolishing international trafficking of women and children two years before President George Bush did so formally, supports immigration reform, advocates against embryonic stem cell research and same sex marriage?

Did you know that October has been designated as CCW Month? Join us and be counted!  
Contact: *(name and phone number)* for more information.

#### **Three Weeks Prior to Council Sunday:**

Did you know that the *(insert parish name)* Council of Catholic Women's Water for Life Program, a sacrificial giving, sends funds to Catholic Relief Services for third world countries to dig water wells where there are none? Also in partnership with Catholic Relief Services, supports the Refugee Women Emergency Fund and gives Afghan women saffron bulbs, a cash crop that more than replaces the poppy crop?

Did you know that October has been designated as CCW Month? Join us and be counted!  
Contact: *(name and phone number)* for more information.

#### **Two Weeks Prior to Council Sunday:**

Did you know that the *(insert parish name)* Council of Catholic Women are stewards within our own parish community in the following areas: *(insert names of service projects)*. The members of the *(insert parish name)* Council of Catholic Women logged over *(insert number of hours)* volunteer hours during the *(previous year's dates 200?-200?)* Council Year.

Did you know that October has been designated as CCW Month? Join us and be counted!  
Contact: *(name and phone number)* for more information.

**One Week Prior to Council Sunday:**

Did you know that the *(insert parish name)* Council of Catholic Women is an affiliate of the National Council of Catholic Women which is a voice for all American Catholic women today. The National Council of Catholic Women seeks to transform the world through prayer and action, unites more than 5000 affiliated Catholic women's groups in the United States.

Did you know that October has been designated as CCW Month? Join us and be counted! Contact: *(name and phone number)* for more information or meet with members after all Masses, next Sunday, *(insert date)*

**Week of Council Sunday:**

Did you know that the *(insert parish name)* Council of Catholic Women as an affiliate of the National Council of Catholic Women, has an observer at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, an observer at the United Nations and is a member of the World Union of Council of Catholic Women?

Did you know that this weekend is your opportunity to join this vital organization that supports social action through gospel values. Members are available after all Masses. *(add more information about location, etc.)*

**Week after Council Sunday:**

Now that you know, you owe it to yourself to be counted among the million plus members of the National Council of Catholic Women by joining the *(insert parish name)* Council of Catholic Women. Come be a Woman of Faith, a Woman of Action – For more information contact: *(insert name and phone number)* and join us at our next General Meeting – *(insert date, time and location of meeting)*

**Weeks after Council Sunday:**

Join Us and Be Counted! The members of the *(insert parish name)* Council of Catholic Women have been sharing their story these last few weeks. Join Us as we continue our work for our parish and local community with project such as *(list your affiliation projects such as food drives, Thanksgiving and Christmas Projects, fund raisers, etc.)* Our members logged over *(provide number of hours)* volunteer hours during the Council year *(provide previous year 200?-200?)*

Join us and Be Counted! All women of the parish are invited to attend the next General Meeting to be held *(provide all pertinent information regarding location, time and speaker/program).*

## **Council Sunday**

Suggestions for Affiliation Presidents  
to include in the Presentation to Your Congregation  
created by the Palm Beach Diocesan Council of Catholic Women

*These are suggestions and should be customized to suit your individual affiliation.  
They can be further customized by adding the phrase or  
theme that was used in the bulletin announcements.*

- We are dynamic Catholic women filled with the grace of God, the love of Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.
- We are members of a national organization, the National Council of Catholic Women, consisting of over 5,000 affiliated organizations across the country. Through NCCW we are members of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations.
- We acknowledge Mary as our role model and vow to imitate her by developing a deeper devotion to and a greater reverence for the Eucharist.
- We uphold the dignity of marriage and defend marriage as defined by the United State Council of Catholic Bishops as being between one man and one woman.
- Central to all our programs is the sanctity and dignity of human life. From conception to a natural death, we passionately embrace the precious gift of life. Our affiliation supports *(list here if you participate in the following)*:
  - **Walking with Moms in Need** – mentors and supports young women and those women who choose life for their unborn child.
  - **Help A Child** – trains village health care workers and offers immunizations and nutritional supplements necessary for survival.
  - **Madonna Plan** – educates women in third world countries on proper nutrition and childcare.
  - **Water for Life** – reduces disease by making clean drinking water available in Third World countries and offers emergency services during natural disasters.
  - **Respite Care** – through trained volunteers, offers relief and renewal to family members caring for loved ones at home.
- Committed to solidarity with women and children world-wide, we collaborate with Catholic Relief Services in raising awareness and money for programs to aid women and children in dangerous or desperate circumstances.
- In our local communities we advocate against domestic violence through collection of discarded cell phones, programmed to dial 911 in case of an emergency. We also advocate against child abuse and support local facilities that meet the needs of abused and battered women and children.

- Proudly we have a legislative voice at the Florida Catholic Conference's Catholic Days at the Capital, speaking on issues central to our Catholic belief system, such as partial birth abortions, human cloning and stem cell research.
- We are vehemently opposed to the Trafficking of nearly 27.6 million Human Persons in the United States, and so, we work to raise awareness in our membership, our communities, and in our government as to the tragic reality of this modern-day slavery.
- Through workshops, conferences, and conventions offered at the diocesan, state and national levels we are educated on issues of Catholic social justice. We see through direct and measurable results that collectively, as the Council of Catholic Women, we have a powerful voice and we **are** making a difference.
- We support vocations through contributions to the burse (seminarians) and purse (female religious) fund and recognition luncheons for our religious.
- We support the spirituality of our membership through Days of Reflection offered at the parish and diocesan levels, through Memorial Masses, and through the Living Rosary. Our patron is Our Lady of Good Counsel; prayer opens and closes each business meeting.
- We are stewards within our parish community. Our service projects include *(list projects)*. During the 20??-20?? Council Year, we donated \_\_\_\_\_ volunteer hours of service to our parish and community.
- We are Catholic women who embrace each others' individuality, yet nurture shared beliefs and values, acted upon through services and programs that promote Catholic social justice in our communities and in the world.
- We are women united across the country and as the National Council of Catholic Women, we have a history that began in 1920 – a history rich with spirituality, leadership development, legislative and administrative reform, but above all, passion for following in the steps of Christ as we serve one another.



**Prayer Petitions for Council Sunday**  
*(Option 1)*

As we celebrate National Council of Catholic Women's Sunday, we give thanks to you Father for what has been given and we offer our petitions for what is to come.

Our petitions today are formed from the **original** six commissions or areas of concern.

Our response is: Lord, hear our prayer.

**From International:** In all of the war-torn countries we pray for those who suffer from famine, fear, disease, indifference and repression, that those who are responsible will see Jesus in all of their victims...We pray to the Lord.

For those working in the International arena, our military, missionaries, medical and diplomatic corps return to us safely after completing their missions...We pray to the Lord.

**From Legislative:**

For all registered voters to educate themselves about the issues and then be faithful citizens and vote...We pray to the Lord.

**From Church:**

For all of those students preparing for Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation and Holy Orders, may they know they are the church of our future...We pray to the Lord.

**From Organization:**

For the recipients of Respite Care, Camps I Am Special, Promise and Care, Diocesan Anniversary Mass, Born Free, and Water for Life, may we ask your blessings upon them... We pray to the Lord. (List local programs)

**From Family Commission:**

For our communities that they will grow to become friendly conclaves where families can safely raise their children, where love and respect are given to all...We pray to the Lord.

For the sick, the elderly, the lonely, the dependent, those overcome with the heavy crosses, that you Father will always be with them: We pray to the Lord.

Today we pray for all deceased \_\_\_\_\_ Council of Catholic Women, especially our deceased past presidents: List deceased past presidents....We pray to the Lord.

Julie Rothery  
FCCW Spirituality Chair 2008-2010



**Our petitions today are formed from the original six commissions CCW**  
*(Option 2)*

Our response today is: Lord hear our prayer.

**From international:** we pray for all those people in countries whose only water supply is dirty and disease riddled, that we who have been blessed with oceans of clean water wade into the waters of action..... We pray to the Lord.

**From legislative:** we pray for all those people who have ventured into the political waters of elected office, that they may be awash with the cleansing tide of honesty, and right judgment.... We pray to the Lord.

**From community:** we pray for all of our neighbors, especially those we will never meet may the rivers of differences that we all have cleanse us of the thought of intolerance... We pray to the Lord.

**From organization:** we pray for recipients of Respite Care, Camps I Am Special, Promise and Care, the Diocesan Anniversary Mass, Born Free, that they will enjoy these blessings as a shower of rain refreshes the earth... We pray to the Lord.

**From church:** we pray for all those preparing for the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation, and Holy Orders, that they will wash in this water of life and grow with grace... We pray to the Lord.

**From family:** we pray for all families, small, broken, whole, those whose waters are troubled, those in calm waters, those treading in waters of illness, those suffering the ebbside of death, may we all know that the sea of division will.

Julie Rothery  
FCCW Spirituality Chair 2008-2010



**Prayer to Our Lady of Good Counsel**

*God of heavenly wisdom,  
you have given us Mary,  
Mother of Jesus,  
to be our guide and counselor:  
Grant that we may always seek her  
motherly help in this life  
and so enjoy her blessed presence  
in the life to come.*

*O Mother of Good Counsel,  
patroness of the National Council of  
Catholic Women, intercede for us,  
that we may be wise, courageous, and  
loving leaders of the Church.  
Help us, dear Mother, to know the mind  
of Jesus, your son.*

*May the Holy Spirit  
fill us with reverence for God's creation  
and compassion for all God's children.  
May our labors of love on earth  
enhance the reign of God:  
and may God's gifts of faith and living  
hope prepare us for the fullness of  
the world to come.*

*Amen.*

## **OCTOBER**

### **THEME: CANCER AWARENESS MONTH**

#### **SUGGESTED BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT:**

Council of Catholic Women: The month of October is Cancer Awareness Month and the Council of Catholic Women (CCW) is planning a panel of doctors, nurses and physician assistants to speak at their next meeting. All parishioners are invited to attend.

#### **Family Life and Cancer:**

Cancer doesn't happen to just one person. The complex emotions and lifestyle changes that follow a cancer diagnosis can be almost as overwhelming for family members as they are for the person with cancer. Cancer can change the way you relate to your family and the way they relate to you. Cancer affects all aspects of relationships and communication becomes especially important.

Lack of communication can lead to isolation, frustration, and unmet needs. People with cancer who don't discuss their illness feel they are facing cancer alone. Talking about and sharing emotions and needs allows families who work together to resolve problems and face difficult situations. Discussing feelings and problems with honesty, sincerity and openness can greatly reduce the stress that cancer places on families. Stay involved in social activities as much as possible; try to continue doing these with your family and friends. Your family might assume you don't want to be invited to events, so make sure that you or someone else lets them know to keep including you. Let people know about your physical limitations - most family members will be happy to plan quiet activities. Don't be afraid to cancel a date if you are physically or emotionally exhausted. Expect changes in your children's behavior as they adjust to your cancer. Younger children may become overly clingy, impulsive or want to stay home all the time. Older children may be angry or distant and withdraw from family activities. Try to keep your children's schedule as normal as possible.

Spend extra time with your family and encourage them to ask questions and talk about their feelings and fears. Reassure your family that they will always be taken care of and that you will always love them.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:**

Organize a Walk/Run a-thon for the month of October. This event should include the entire parish. Money that is raised should be donated to the American Cancer Foundation.

The night of the CCW meeting, celebrate a Mass for all members who passed away with cancer or who are suffering with cancer and those in remission.

Include prayers for healing of Cancer in your opening and closing prayers services.

Organize a panel of professionals to speak about the changes that will affect the cancer patient, family and friends.

**RESOURCES:**

**Libraries**

**Websites**

**American Cancer Society in your area**

**National Cancer Institute: When Someone in your Family Has Cancer**

**Cancer Net - Oncologist approved cancer information from the American Society of Clinical Oncology**

***Prayer for Women with Breast Cancer***

Father, for the strength you have given me I thank you.  
For the health you have blessed me with, I thank you.  
For the women who are going through breast cancer and their families,  
I ask you to strengthen and to heal as you see fit.  
Lord we know you want us to be in good health and to prosper.  
Lord use us to do the work you have for us to do.  
For we know time is getting short on this earth.  
Lord be with every woman who is sick and  
encourage them as only you can. I know how faithful you are.  
You have shown yourself to be everything  
you say you are in your Holy Word.  
I praise you for you made this body and  
you can heal this body.



## **HOPE**

God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 2 Corinthians 4:6-7

Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. Daniel 12:3

To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, God will give eternal life. Romans 2:7

Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.  
1 Peter 1:13

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you, O Lord.  
Psalm 143:8

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:16

## **Be Strong**

Be strong enough to face the world each day.  
Be weak enough to know you cannot do everything alone.  
Be generous to those who need your help.  
Be frugal with what you need yourself.  
Be wise enough to know that you do not know everything.  
Be foolish enough to believe in miracles.  
Be willing to share your joys.  
Be willing to share your sorrows of others.  
Be a leader when you see a path others have missed.  
Be a follower when you are shrouded in the midst of uncertainty.  
Be the first to congratulate an opponent who succeeds.  
Be the last to criticize a colleague who fails.  
Be sure where your next step will fall, so that you will not stumble.  
Be sure of your final destination, in case you are going the wrong way.  
Be loving to those who love you.  
Be loving to those who do not love you, and they may change.

*ABOVE ALL, BE YOURSELF!*

## **NOVEMBER**

**Theme:** Elections

### **Suggested Bulletin Announcement:**

**Council of Catholic Women:** The Council of Catholic Women (CCW) will have (insert the name and position of the speaker) as their guest speaker at their meeting this month. Please join us to hear about the duties of our local elected official. (insert date, time and place of meeting.)

**Council of Catholic Women:** The Council of Catholic Women (CCW) will have (insert name and title of speaker) as their guest speaker. The subject of this talk will be Voting for candidates with a Catholic way of thinking. Please join us (insert date time and place of meeting.)

### **Suggested Activities:**

Have a question-and-answer session.

Contact the Florida Catholic Conference for names of qualified speakers.

Help the Florida Catholic Conference by making phone calls to see how the person running for office feel about certain very important issues.

### **Resources:**

<http://www.flacathconf.org>



## **NOVEMBER**

**Theme:** Farm workers

### **Suggested Bulletin Announcements:**

All women of the parish are invited to join the Council of Catholic Women (CCW) as we celebrate Farm worker Awareness Week.

**“the food that overflows our market shelves and fills our table is harvested by men, women, and children who cannot satisfy their own hunger”**

**Cesar Chavez**

### **Suggested Activities:**

- ❖ Collect long sleeve cotton shirts for the migrant workers to help protect workers from sun exposure, bad weather, protection from pesticides and insect bites as they work in the fields.
- ❖ Celebrate the NCCW day of fasting and prayer to end world hunger on November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Sponsor a Power Point presentation on “Farm workers’ Lives and Work” by the National Farm Worker Ministry.

- ❖ Have a discussion on **“Honoring the Dignity of Work, A Call for Solidarity with Florida’s Farm workers and Other Vulnerable Workers”** available from the Bishops of the Florida Catholic Conference.
- ❖ Provide handouts on **“Jesus, the migrant farm worker”** by Nancy Powers, Ph D. In your prayer groups, lead prayers and reflections on farm workers lives, giving thanks for their labor and seeking justice for them.

### **Resources:**

Listed here are web sites that provide additional information.

Coalition of Immokalee Workers: <http://www.ciw-online.org>

National Farm Worker Ministry: <http://www.nfwm.org> (Their PowerPoint presentation is available through this site).

Florida Catholic Conference (Farm workers) [www.flacathconf.org](http://www.flacathconf.org)

Farm worker Association of Florida: <http://farmworkers.org/ffwafpage.html>.

**Prayer of Blessing**

*After the intercessions, the leader may invite those in the congregation who are food providers to come forward in these or similar words:*

Leader: I invite those of you who serve us by growing food, raising animals, fishing, or by preparing food to come forward as we ask God's blessing.

Leader: I invite the rest of the assembly to pray with me, and to extend our hands as a sign of blessing as we ask God to be gracious to our brothers and sisters.

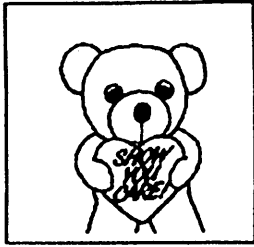
Leader: God of all creation, with unending love you brought forth the earth and shared your breath with all creatures. You sustain us and nurture us, feeding us with your own hand. Bless these men and women (farmers, shepherds, ranchers, fishers, cooks, community kitchen workers, etc.) who work with you to feed and nourish your people. May they be faithful stewards of your creation. Keep them safe and healthy as they perform their tasks. May they receive just recompense of their labors. May they know satisfaction in their work and respect in our community.

We ask this through Christ, Our Lord.

All: Amen.

Source: Rural Life Prayers, Blessings and Liturgies published by the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.





**Florida Council of Catholic Women  
"HUGS for the Homeless" Guidelines**

We are women dedicated to the Gospel values of love, hope and charity. The FCCW "HUGS for the Homeless" is a project that reflects the goals and dedication of the women of Florida to help spread the "Good News." Each year the project has grown. May this year's campaign be even more successful.

The total monies received by FCCW will be divided evenly between each A/DCCW. Each Diocese will receive 1/7 (one-seventh) of the total. Each A/DCCW may choose charities that assist the homeless in their area. **Please select your charities at your Fall meetings. The name and address of your charities will need to be submitted to the FCCW treasurer when you submit your "HUGS" money.**

- **All monies each affiliate collects needs to be sent to their A/DCCW Treasurer no later than March 1<sup>st</sup>.** (The A/DCCW Treasurer will then send monies to the FCCW Treasurer no later than **April 1<sup>st</sup>.**)
- **Success** of the program begins with you. Each A/DCCW can hold their "HUGS" drive anytime that is convenient between now and February of each campaign.

**REMEMBER** when advertising use the name of the FCCW. You can add your affiliation/deanery name to it. This is a good opportunity to promote your CCW affiliations/deaneries supporting FCCW and all our good works.

Thank you!

QUESTIONS: Reach out to Rosie Schuhmacher Reese

## **NOVEMBER**

**"HUGS FOR THE HOMELESS"** is a statewide project that is done between the months of November and ending in February. Every affiliation is asked to participate by not only collecting money but also by advertising the plight of the homeless families in Florida.

Every year monies are collected from the affiliations and forwarded to the deanery/district treasurers who then forward the monies when combined with the other affiliations is passed on to their A/DCCW treasurer who then sends the money to the FCCW treasurer.

When this project was created in 2008, it was decided that homelessness was the one issue that faced every part of the state. It is obvious that when the economy is down the homeless population is up. In the best of times, Florida has a huge number of homeless people due to the warm winter weather.

We do not compete against each other, rather we try to compete against our last year's figures and to do that we need all of our affiliations to become involved. Some ideas that have been tried:

- Advertise that your CCW will have a collection for the "HUGS for Homeless" project and that this is being done in all the dioceses.
- Hold a dinner or dance to raise funds
- Team up with your youth group and sponsor a car wash, you do all the advertising, collect the money and the kids wash the cars!!!
- Hold a bake sale

The ideas are endless, but be sure whatever you do, make sure to advertise it and give some statistics about the homeless situation in your area.

## **November Program**

### **International Potluck Dinner**

This is an event where members of the parish get together to share and sample food from around the world. It's a celebration of the diverse cultures and cuisines represented within the parish **family**. It provides an opportunity for the multi-cultural ministries to come together as one **family**, and what better place than at the supper table? However, we can take this and make it applicable to the individual families by asking them to make it a group project putting together the menu, doing the shopping, preparing food @ home, gathering the photos, music etc to create the ambience of their native country. The parish dinner should be open to not just adults, but to children as well to encourage **families** to make this a time to spend together. If the idea catches on, it could be the start of a family tradition to celebrate & learn about the history of their native lands. Individuals are invited to cook food from their country or region of origin, wear typical clothes and see pictures of paradisiacal places, while listening to music from around the world. The ambience would be like a mini=United Nations.

**A sampling of what the menu** could turn out to be:

Italian meatballs	Chinese Lo Mein	Spaetzle (Germany)
Arroz Con Pollo	Swedish meatballs	Shepherd's Pie
Greek stuffed grape leaves	Sushi	American apple pie

**Committees should be assigned for the following:**

Food	Supplies (paper goods, drinks, silverware, etc)
Decorations	Programs
Publicity	Set-up/Clean-up

### **Bulletin Notice Sample:**

Saturday, November at 6 PM we are having a Potluck International Dinner. All parishioners are invited to come and bring family, friends or a neighbor, as well as an ethnic dish or dessert (yours or somebody else's) and we'd love to have a copy of the recipe to share ! Whether it is your grandfather's specialty from the old country or your mother's favorite dish from the islands or your own recipe for something exotic- we want to taste it ! Global music and atmosphere will add to the fun as well as a great door prize. All free of charge! RSVP by signing up in back of church. A great event for children to learn about other food from other nations!

## **How to Volunteer at a Soup Kitchen on Thanksgiving**

- Step1** Find out which soup kitchens are located in your area. Do a search online, look in the phone book, call information or ask your city or town clerk.
- Step2** Contact a local soup [kitchen](#) and tell them you'd like to help.
- Step3** Organize a group of people from your church, synagogue or local organization who are willing to volunteer on Thanksgiving.
- Step4** Understand that the soup kitchen needs lots of help in other areas besides [food](#) service. Offer to pick up donations, do an inventory on them and store them away. You might also set up tables, prepare the food and help clean up after the meal is through.
- Step5** Include your [children](#) in your efforts. This is a great way to teach them the importance of community service.
- Step6** Consider making this a tradition in your family every year. Counting your blessings and helping people in need is a great way to celebrate Thanksgiving.

## **Hungry Children**

Sponsoring a Child Helps Provide Health Care, Education & Food.  
[www.ChristianChildrensFund.org](http://www.ChristianChildrensFund.org)

### **Other Projects:**

Food drive for soup kitchens and shelters  
Food drive for needy families in parish or community  
Adopt a family for the holidays.



## **THANKSGIVING PRAYERS**

### **We Give Thanks**

Our Father in Heaven,  
We give thanks for the pleasure  
Of gathering together for this occasion.  
We give thanks for this food  
Prepared by loving hands.  
We give thanks for life,  
The freedom to enjoy it all  
And all other blessings.  
As we partake of this food,  
We pray for health and strength  
To carry on and try to live as You would have us.  
This we ask in the name of Christ,  
Our Heavenly Father.

- Harry Jewell

### **Moravian Blessing**

Come, Lord Jesus, our guest to be  
And bless these gifts  
Bestowed by Thee.  
And bless our loved ones everywhere,  
And keep them in Your loving care.



### **Thanksgiving**

For each new morning with its light,  
For rest and shelter of the night,  
For health and food,  
For love and friends,  
For everything Thy goodness sends.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

## **DECEMBER**

In December we prepare for Christmas through Advent, and also the feast of the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the United States of America, the feast of Our Lady of Guadeloupe, patroness of the Americas. St. Nicholas and the Holy Innocents are celebrated in December too.

### **THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

**December 8<sup>th</sup>**

This feast stresses the need of us, the citizens of the United States, to focus on Our Blessed Mother and to pray to Her for our country. When we commemorate the Immaculate Conception we celebrate the redemption achieved by Christ. God made Mary free from all sin: original, actual, even uncontrolled desires. Mary is "full of grace." It is our job here on earth to conquer sin and evil with the help of Christ and His Blessed Mother.

### **THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADELOUPE**

**December 12<sup>th</sup>**

This feast is dedicated to the patroness of the Americas. Let us use this day to pray for the peace for this hemisphere with its many peoples and cultures. It is only through prayer that we can bring the countries together in peace and overcome the poverty that exists.

We are all working to solve the many problems that exist in this Hemisphere.

Our Lady of Guadeloupe appeared to a poor Indian convert, Juan Diego, in Mexico and Left her image on his mantle.

### **THE FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENT**

**December 28<sup>th</sup>**

The feast of the Holy Innocents is celebrated to commemorate the slaying of All the baby boys two and under who were killed at Herod's order, after Joseph took Mary and the baby Jesus to Egypt. (Matthew 2:13-18) It is a day that we should remember all the innocent babies killed by abortion. They too, are Holy Innocents. We also pray for all the babies that were stillborn, and who died shortly after birth.

## **ADVENT**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

**LEADER:** Our prayer service combines three Advent institutions: The Jesse Tree, the Advent Wreath, and the "O Antiphons." The "O Antiphons" were originally designed for use before and after the Magnificat during Vespers from December 17<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>. Using a series of messianic titles, drawn largely from Isaiah, they call upon the Lord Jesus to come into our lives and save us. In the following service we use the seven antiphons as expressed in the familiar Advent Hymn, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."

**SONG:** "O Come, O Come Emmanuel", Verse 1, Refrain, Verse 2

**LEADER:** This reading speaks of God, the source of all wisdom.

**READING:** Sirach 1:1-10

**LEADER:** An adaptation of Solomon's prayer for wisdom.

### **FIRST**

**READING:** Wisdom 9:1-4

**ALL:** *God of our ancestors, Lord of mercy, who by your Word have made all things, and in your wisdom have given us the rule of creatures that come from you, and have asked us to govern the world in holiness and justice, grant us wisdom, and do not reject us from the number of your children. Amen.*

**LEADER:** God has acted in human history over and over again. We hear an account of God's beginning to work through Moses and the people of Israel.

### **SECOND**

**READING:** Exodus 3:1-3, 3:4-8, 11-14

**SONG:** "O Come, O Come Emmanuel", Verse 3, Refrain, Verse 4, Refrain

**MOVEMENT:** The Jesse Tree is brought in. Paper "leaves" are now distributed. Write on it one way in which you are preparing for the Lord's coming. Each participant then takes his or her turn attaching the leaf to the Jesse tree. Each receives an unlit candle.

**SONG:** "O Come, O Come Emmanuel", Verse 5, Refrain

**THIRD**

**READING:** "Closed ... chains ... prison ... confinement ... darkness." There are many ways in which we choose to ignore that your life has come into the world. Be with us, Lord, as we examine our ways and attempt to break free from those which hinder us from seeing your presence.

**MOVEMENT:** Silent Reflection

**ALL:** *Lord, we acknowledge that you can open locked hearts, break the chains which hold us from one another, free us from the prisons of our own making, and bring light to our darkness. You are the Lord. We ask that we be able to truly recognize you as Emmanuel God-with-us. Amen.*

**SONG:** "O Come, O Come Emmanuel", Verse 7, Refrain

**LEADER:** All nations shall be united in God.

**FOURTH**

**READING:** Isaiah 2:1-5

**ALL:** *O Emmanuel, our kind lawgiver, the expected of nations and our Savior, come and save us, O Lord our God.*

**SONG:** "O Come, O Come Emmanuel", Verse 6, Refrain

**FIFTH**

**READING:** John 1:1-5

**ALL:** *O rising dawn, radiance of light eternal and sun of Justice: come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.*

**SIXTH**

**READING:** John 1:6-10

**MOVEMENT:** Each participant lights his or her candle from the Advent Wreath.

**SEVENTH**

**READING:** Matthew 5:14-16

**EIGHTH**

**READING:** We have been reminded today that Jesus is the Light of the world, and that we are called to give witness to this Light.



**An Advent Reflection on Mary**

*How Am I Like Her, Or Not Like Her*

**INTRODUCTION:** This reflection can be used with a group or as a personal reflection. If using it as a group, you can involve others by appointing readers and facilitators. Those using it for personal reflection might consider doing one Scripture reading per day and possibly journaling their thoughts.

**LEADER:** Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the most favored woman to walk the earth. Who better to be our model, but how do we compare to Mary? Let us take a walk through Mary's life and see how we would react to the various times in her life.

**READER:** First Reading - the Annunciation (read Luke 1:26-38)

Reflection on this reading: Mary is told she is to be the mother of Jesus and the thoughts that went through her head we may never know. Mary was a young Jewish girl who was unmarried and now with child. Mary must have known that there would be talk, for us as women know how cruel we can be when there's a piece of gossip to be heard.

Mary must have realized that as the mother of Jesus, she would be expected to be a better person than most. Is that why we are called to be followers of Christ? Are we better people and do we follow the teachings of Christ or do we just show up for Mass and meetings and think that makes us better than most?

Mary must have known that being the mother of the son of God could not be an easy job, but she said a joyful "Yes." Do we turn and run when a task is asked of us? When do we say "yes?" Is it a joyful "yes?" or do we reluctantly say "yes" and then complain about it for the duration?

**Question:** How do we say "yes" when asked?

**Meditation:** Think about the stumbling blocks in your life that keep you from saying "yes" to truly following Christ's teachings.

READER: Second Reading - the Visitation (read Luke 1:39-45)

Reflection on this reading: Mary is pregnant and her first thought when she hears her cousin is also with child is to go to her aid and be of service to her. Mary had the best excuse for not responding to Elizabeth's need. All Mary had to do was to say "I'm pregnant and I need to take care of myself." How often do we respond in the negative for various reasons? Did you say "no" to someone because your arthritis was acting up? Did you say "no" to someone because it was raining? Did you say "no" to someone because you didn't like one of the women who was on that committee? Did you say "no" to someone because you wanted the proceeds to be used for something else? Did you say "no" to someone just because you've helped already once this year? Whatever your reasons, we know in our hearts that Mary would always be there to serve. As followers of Christ we are called to serve. In the Annunciation, Mary said a joyful "yes" and now in the Visitation, her answer is with her actions.

Question: Mary goes to Elizabeth without thought of her own needs. How often do we put the needs of others before our own wants and desires?

Meditation: Take a minute to reflect on how you are or are not like Mary.

READER: Third Reading - The Birth of Jesus (read Luke 2:1-14)

Reflection on this reading: Mary, who is the most favored of women gives birth in a stable. Can you imagine a young girl without help giving birth in a stable? Today, with all our modern hospitals and all the pre-natal care, almost all children are born in an operating room in a very sterile environment. Here the Son of God is born in a stable that is anything but sterile. What were Mary's thoughts when she realized there was no room at the inn and she would be giving birth in an unclean stable? Do you think she might have said, "Why me?" Do you think she thought, "How can this be?" Do you think she thought "I deserve better than this?" I don't think so.

Mary seemed to be so secure in her relationship with God that she accepted whatever as part of God's plan for her. How do we accept the less than perfect days in our lives? Do we often say, "Why me?" Do we question God for every little bad thing that happens in our lives.

Question: In this perspective, how are we like or not like Mary?

Meditation: Think about how secure your relationship is with God.

READER: Fourth Reading - Jesus is Lost in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52)

Reflection on this reading: Have you ever lost a child? I remember as a child my brother was lost at the beach. He was nine years old. I remember how frantically each one of us searched the beach looking for him. I know how frantic I get sometimes when I misplace an important paper, a phone number, the remote control, or any little thing that I can't find when I want it. Here was Mary, entrusted with the care of our Lord. What thoughts went through her mind when Jesus was lost, and when they found Jesus and his answer was, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" What would our reaction be? Would we be as patient as Mary seemed to be?

Question: Is the lack of patience our greatest daily sin?

Meditation: Take a minute to pray for more patience in your life so that you may be more like Mary.

READER: Fifth Reading - The Death of Jesus (John 19:23-27)

Reflection on this reading: Mary stood at the cross of Jesus and watched her only son be put to death. First they nailed him to the cross, then they cursed him and insulted him and when he was dead, they drew lots for his clothes. Was Mary numb? Was Mary in shock as she stood silently watching her son be put to death? They say the greatest loss is when you have to bury a child. Can you imagine watching your child die, let alone be put to death in such a cruel way? I am sure when the angel appeared to Mary, she had no idea that she would have to watch her child die in such a cruel way. Mary accepted God's will for her child and the life she lead.

Question: How well do we accept the trials and sorrows that enter our life?

Meditation: Take a minute to reflect and ask God to give you the serenity to accept the things you cannot change.

## **CANDYMAKER'S WITNESS**

A candy maker in Indiana loved Jesus so much that he wanted to use his talents to make a special candy that would be a witness to Him. He incorporated several symbols for the birth, ministry, and death of Jesus Christ in the candy cane. He began with a stick of pure white, hard candy. White symbolizes the Virgin Birth and the sinless nature of Jesus; and hard to symbolize the Solid Rock, the foundation of the Church, and firmness of the promises of God.

If the candy cane is held up right, it is the shape of a shepherd's staff which the shepherd uses as he watches over his sheep. Jesus is our shepherd who reaches down into the ditches of the world to lift out the fallen lambs that, like all sheep, have gone astray. If the candy cane is turned upside-down it becomes the letter "J" to represent the precious name of Jesus who came to earth as our Savior.

The scriptures tell us that Jesus was beaten and stripes were put upon His back when he was crucified in payment for our sins and that by these stripes we are healed. The candy maker stained the candy with these stripes. He used three small stripes to show the stripes of the scourging Jesus received and these represent the Trinity; one God who reveals Himself to us in three ways: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The large red stripe was for the blood shed by Jesus on the cross and represents our belief in one God who is Father of us all.

Unfortunately, the candy cane has become a meaningless decoration available at Christmas time, but the meaning is still there for those who "have eyes to see and ears to hear".



### **The Angel Tree**

The Angel Tree, though intended to put a smile on the faces of underprivileged children, can also have an effect on the families in a parish. It can be **the start of a family tradition** whereby everyone participates in this project be it helping to shop, choosing the Angel from the tree, or even helping to cut out the paper Angels to decorate the tree at Church. It is a time when the family **can reflect on their own good fortune** while helping others and performing an act of Charity. They could even take this a step further and **"adopt" the children**, and perhaps continue to help with little extra kindnesses during the year.

The Angel Tree attempts to bring some sunshine into the dreary lives at Christmas time for children who are not so fortunate. At a time when every other "good little boy or girl" they know receives a visit from Santa Claus, many children do without at Christmas due to various circumstances in their homes – be it economics, single parent, etc. In this case, it's not only the children who benefit by receiving the presents, but their parent(s) have a chance to share the joy of their children, knowing that they will not have a Christmas without presents. It eases their guilt just a little too. So in the long run, everyone has benefited from the Angel Tree!

The Angel Tree provides much needed clothing items, special needs gifts and other wished-for toys to children, who otherwise would do without. These gifts in truth give poor children "food for the soul"-the hope of a brighter future.

You'll need to have an **assigned place in the back of the church** that is easily accessible to parishioners as they either arrive or leave for Mass.

- Have an **artificial tree** setup decorated with **paper angel ornaments**.
- On each angel indicate the age of the child, and whether it's a boy or a girl.
- As parishioners come & go, they are invited to take an angel from the tree, and donate a gift for that child.
- They bring the gifts back to the Church and leave them under the tree, with the Angel as a sort of gift tag so you know which age and gender the child should be.
- The CCW can work with your Outreach ministry to deliver/distribute the gifts

This is a relatively easy way to bring a little joy & happiness to underprivileged children. It really does not require you to be present at all of the Masses on the assigned Sundays, but someone should be assigned to check the tree on a regular basis to pick up what ever items have been left. Plan on starting the Angel Tree the first Sunday of Advent, and then finish the program. Maybe 3 weeks later. This should give ample time to deliver them to the families.

**Suggested Bulletin Notice:**

The members of St. Nicholas CCW welcome to another year of Angel Tree Christmas! We invite you to participate in this worthwhile program by donating a gift to a needy child. Simply stop by our tree in the back of the church, take an angel (which indicates the sex and age of the child) and bring back an unwrapped present to leave under the tree. You'll soon understand our excitement and enthusiasm as we reach out to families who otherwise would not have a very Merry Christmas celebration. There is so much joy that comes with sharing Christ's love with these children and their families.



**Journeys Ended, Journeys Begun**

Blessed are you, Lord our God,  
for you have created a vast and wonderful world  
and given each of us a life to live within it.

We ask your blessing on our Councils of Catholic Women  
as we embark on our Journey.

Lord may you guide us in our journey  
and be our companion as you reveal  
the road of beauty and adventure that lies ahead.

Free that road from all harm and evil,  
and open our eyes to the positive possibilities  
that are hidden all around us.

On our way may, we be equipped with a heart  
filled with love to reach out with love  
to those we meet along the way and a curious mind  
to experience the wonders which you have created.

With this map, may we read the invisible meanings of life;  
the meanings of disappointments  
and delays, of surprise and sorrows.

May we become fully aware of your presence  
and your compassionate love.  
May we see that all that happens  
is part of your Holy Plan.

May the blessings of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit  
be with us on all our journeys  
and bring us home again in safety and peace.

Amen