

CONVENTION 2019

August 21-August 24, 2019 Atlanta, Georgia

The 99th Annual Convention of the National Council of Catholic Women was held at the Renaissance Atlanta Waverly Hotel & Convention Center. 600 women and priests gathered together to celebrate the theme, *NCCW Caring for God's Creation*.

Prior to the official Convention kick-off, an optional tour of the World of Coke was offered.

A Welcome Liturgy was held with the Chair of the Spiritual Advisors, Rev. Richard Dawson, as the principal celebrant and The Most Reverend Peter A. Rosazza concelebrating. Following Mass, the Board of Directors met and heard reports concerning our finances, convention updates, resources, and office updates.

The Welcome Luncheon featured Mother Dolores Hart, O.S.B., who was awarded the first Honorary Lifetime Membership Award of the National Council of Catholic Women, given to a distinguished American Catholic woman. As a young woman, she made her film debut with Elvis Presley in Paramount's 1957 film *Loving You*. After starring in several Hollywood feature films and Broadway productions, she stunned the world with her decision to enter cloistered religious life at the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Connecticut where she is prioress.

A First Timers Orientation was held to assist those that were attending for the first time to get the most out of convention and to navigate where to go and what to do.

Wednesday evening we had a free pre-release screening of the movie, *Love and Mercy* courtesy of Carmel Communications, a Silver Sponsor of Convention.

Wednesday evening was closed with the Lourdes Virtual Pilgrimage Experience. Guests were able to write petitions to be taken to Lourdes, touched the grotto rocks and received Lourdes water. It was a moving experience.

Thursday morning we officially opened our 2019 Convention with prayer, salute to the flag and the singing of the hymn to Our Lady of Good Counsel, patroness of NCCW. The Opening General Session also included introductions, letters of welcome, and personal greetings from the Catholic Women's League of Canada and from NCCW-affiliated Catholic women's organizations to include the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, the Young Ladies Grand Institute and our Gold Sponsors, Catholic Relief Services, Cross Catholic Outreach and the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help.

We enjoyed our speakers throughout the Convention: Our keynote speaker, The Most Reverend Peter A. Rosazza D.D., Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus, of the Archdiocese of Hartford, spoke on *Women Respond to Pope Francis's Plea to Save Mother Earth*. We also heard from Kim Polote who sang and gave her presentation titled: *The Divine Shopping Spree...Being a Kept Woman in His Word*. Dan Misleh tied into the theme and spoke on *Practical Approaches to*

Sharing Laudato Si in Your Community. Matt Holzmann gave an informative presentation on Mental Health.

We also learned a great deal from our Commission presentations: Leadership focused on promoting NCCW with their version of Family Feud and previewed the 3 ½ minute video “WE ARE NCCW” produced by Linda Clark; Spirituality took on the difficult topics of Bullying, Suicide & Loss of a child through personal testimonies and provided each attendee the Peace and Healing Rosary reflection, Kind cards and Suicide fact sheets and Service called for us to go GREEN FOR GOOD and provided many ideas including little mesh bags to be used and RE-used for produce.

Our nationally acclaimed Leadership Training Development Team provided an informative and entertaining summary of what they can present to help councils grow. Beth Mahoney, Chair of the Education Committee and her members talked about the Rose Program that can be used in your councils.

We were able to catch another movie premiere of the movie “Pray” from our Silver Sponsor Carmel Communications on Friday evening. This was followed by our fundraiser featuring the wonderful singing of a select ensemble of Harmony: Atlanta’s International Youth Choir.

We prayed the rosary and Beautiful Masses were held each day where we prayed for our deceased members and for many other intentions, and recognized our Past NCCW Presidents. We were blessed to have in addition to The Most Reverend Peter A. Rosazza, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut, The Most Reverend Joel M. Konzen, S.M. Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, The Most Reverend William A. Wack Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee, The Most Reverend John Kevin Boland, Bishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. The Most Reverend Jerome E. ListECKI, Archbishop of Milwaukee presided at our Closing Mass. We are most grateful to them and to our Spiritual Advisors, chaired by the Reverend Richard Dawson.

At our Annual Business meeting we adopted three resolutions: Suicide Awareness, Opioid Crisis Affecting Our Nation and Reuse Products and Reduce Consumption.

At the Closing Session, we heard report from the Executive Director of the National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations who thanked us for our Vocation Purse Club. We also received personal greetings from our representative to the Religious Alliance Against Pornography; our representative to the United Nations in NY detailing all the work undertaken on our behalf at the UN and an update from our representative to the World Union of Catholic Women’s Organisations.

We witnessed the ceremony to install our new Province Directors as one-half rotate off each year and participated in our Recommitment to the NCCW Service. We applauded the work they do to ensure that ideas, comments, and resources pass from National to all levels of Council

and from parish and diocesan levels to National. This important communication guarantees that we are all united in our efforts, voice, and presence.

We were invited to our Centennial Celebration that will be held from August 26-29, 2020 in Arlington Virginia. The red, white and blue colors were represented by the members of the Arlington Diocesan Council of Catholic Women who will host us next year.

Saturday evening, we met for the last time at this Convention and announced the winner of the Our Lady of Good Counsel award as Patty Johnson, Past President. Everyone present enjoyed a wonderful banquet highlighted by an amazing musical performance by Sam Hagan & Pianist.

We are so grateful to the Georgia hostesses, and our NCCW staff who all worked so hard to make this a special time enjoyed by all in attendance. We also are very grateful for all who attended the Convention and who will take the information learned as well as the message of the prayers and the fun we shared back to all who could not make it this year.

This convention provided a wonderful opportunity for our Council sisters to gather from across the nation to learn, pray, and have fun together. We look forward to implementation of our resolutions and to maintaining the friendships made at this Convention. May you continue to Care for God's Creation.

Jean A Kelly
NCCW President