

Good evening everyone. Welcome to the first member call of the 2019-2021 NCCW year. I am Pat Voorhes, NCCW President Elect. Tonight we are going to remember and reminisce about the 2019 NCCW Convention.

We will begin tonight with part of the prayer Pope Francis wrote for us Christians to ask for inspiration to take up the commitment to creation set before us by the Gospel of Jesus:

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

God of love....

I am joined tonight by first timers Wendy Plawski and Bridgett Adler from the Superior Diocese; first timer Karan Curtis from the Salt Lake City Diocese; NCCW Past President Bobbie Hunt; Susan Porter, Wasatch Deanery President, and Marianne Mulvihill 2nd Vice President for the SLC DCCW.

I will read a brief summary of each day of the Atlanta 2019 convention and then my guests will give remarks of some special event that they found enjoyable.

I also have remarks from other attendees who could not be with us tonight but wanted to share.

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.

Wednesday morning 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. She shared stories of the early days making movies with Elvis and how he used to read Scripture verses with her during their breaks. Mother told us she sees NCCW as a special organization whose programs and actions show that we continue to be concerned about others—we mother the lost children, abused and abandoned and that she said is the mystery of God's love.

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. Kathy Bonner, a long time supporting member of NCCW, past officer and retired Leadership Training Team member really puts a personal and informative touch on this presentation. Attendees were particularly receptive to her suggestion to pass on the puzzle piece to another attendee and explain that we are all pieces of the puzzle of the big puzzle of NCCW.

Wednesday evening we had a free pre-release screening of the movie, *Love and Mercy* courtesy of Carmel Communications, a Silver Sponsor of Convention. This film was about Sr. Faustina and the power of the Divine Mercy. We expect to hear when it will be released in the theatres.

Wednesday evening closed with the Lourdes Virtual Pilgrimage Experience. This prayerful experience drew us nearer to God in the company of Our Lady as we were guided through a prayerful visit to the Grotto, the experience of the water, prayer in a Rosary procession and a Eucharistic blessing without ever leaving our seats. We were able to write petitions to be taken to Lourdes, touched the grotto rocks and received Lourdes water. It was an extremely moving experience.

Susan Porter will now make comments on her Wednesday experience. Be sure to unmute yourself by pressing *6 Bridget Adler and Karan Curtis please comment.

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.

Our keynote speaker, The Most Reverend Peter A. Rosazza, Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Hartford spoke on *Women Respond to Pope Francis's Plea to Save Mother Earth*. He reminded us that every issue has moral implications; we have a moral responsibility to work for social justice; and we play a pivotal role in caring for all creation.

The Most Reverend Joel Kozen, Atlanta's auxiliary Bishop presided at the Opening Liturgy. Also present was the Most Reverend William Wack, Bishop of Pensacola-Tallahassee, the Most Reverend Peter Rosazza, the Reverend Richard Dawson (chair of the spiritual advisors) and 40 spiritual advisors from around the country. Bishop Kozen commended NCCW for our commitment to a sustainable environment, ending domestic violence & human trafficking and nurturing the love of God in our young people.

Thursday afternoon we 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. This video is available on the NCCW website.

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. The Peace and Healing Rosary reflection and the Kind Cards are available on the NCCW website.

All 600 of us gathered in the center of the hotel and took a picture that will be in our 100 year anniversary history book. Pre-sales are \$30.00 until 12/31/2019 by going to the NCCW website or calling the office 703-224-0990.

Thursday evening we enjoyed our Province Dinners. It is always a fun time seeing old friends and making new friends with our sisters in council.

Wendy Plawski will now make comments on her Thursday experience.

Friday mornings breakfast speaker was a delight. Kim Michael Polote from Savannah, Georgia sang and gave her presentation titled: *The Divine Shopping Spree...Being a Kept Woman in his Word*. Kim shared her love of God and Scripture through a unique storytelling style. She emphasized Ephesians 6:10-18 and told us to put on the armor of God to stand up against the wiles of the devil. We should wear the armor of our truth, Kim shared a quote from her grandson that resonated with me: *GRACE is God's riches at Christ's expense*.

Friday's liturgy was presided over by the Most Reverend William Wack from Pensacola, Tallahassee in for the Most Reverend Gregory Parkes. Bishop Kozen, Bishop Rosazza, Fr. Rick Dawson and the 40 spiritual advisors concelebrated. Bishop Wack spoke on the story of Ruth during his homily. He told us that it doesn't mater when we come to the game, if we choose to be all in, God will do great things through us.

Friday afternoon we heard from the Service Commission who 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.

Friday afternoon at our Annual Business meeting we heard reports and adopted three resolutions: Suicide Awareness, Opioid Crisis Affecting Our Nation and Reuse Products and Reduce Consumption. Tune in to our November member call when we learn how to put our resolutions into action.

We were able to catch another movie premiere of the movie "Pray" the story of Patrick Peyton from our Silver Sponsor Carmel Communications on Friday evening. The inspiring true story of a poor Irish immigrant who sets sail for America in 1928 with dreams of becoming a millionaire but, with the help of the most iconic celebrities of Hollywood, ends up spending his life championing the message, "the family that prays together stays together." We await the date of the release of this movie in local theatres.

This was followed by our fundraiser featuring the wonderful singing of a select ensemble of Harmony: Atlanta's International Youth Choir.

Bobbie Hunt will now make comments on her Friday experience.

Saturday morning we heard from Dan Misleh. Dan is the founding executive director of Catholic Climate Covenant. His presentation was titled Practical approaches to Sharing Laudato Si in your community. He applauded NCCW for our resources on the website explaining Laudato Si and we learned 10 ways we can make a difference in our care for creation.

The Education committee followed with a report on their initiatives that included writing summaries for The Joy of the Gospel, Laudato Si, and a handbook for high school councils. The committee provided information developed by the Archdiocese of Chicago that will assist councils in inviting young women to join our membership – entitled Golden Rose Award. If you would like more

information about the Golden Rose Award you can email Ellen Bachman at pennyln99@aol.com.

After lunch on Saturday we heard from Matt Holzmann on mental health. Matt is the Vice Chair of the Orange County Mental Health and Chair of the government relations for Orange County National Alliance on Mental Illness or NAMI. He spoke from a personal experience having lost his son to suicide and from educated experience of working with families in crisis as a NAMI instructor.

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.

The Most Reverend Jerome ListECKI, Archbishop of Milwaukee, presided over the closing liturgy. 2019 – 2021 NCCW President Jean Kelly was installed along with myself as President elect; Secretary Tracy Janis and the Leadership, Spirituality and Service Commission Chairs.

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 tenor, Sam Hagan and his piano accompanist.

Maryanne Mulvihill will now make comments on her Saturday experience. Read Amy Kennedy's and Becky Colombo's written comments.

Sunday morning the NCCW Executive Committee and the Board of Directors met very early to continue our hard work and dedication to the mission of NCCW to act through its members to support, empower, and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership, and service.

A convention is not possible without the support of our NCCW Staff, the many local volunteers, Anne Boyer for her musical and liturgical skills, and all of the NCCW members and spiritual advisors that joined us.

Thank you for joining us tonight and join us next month on October 16th

We will close tonight with the Prayer to Our Lady of Good Counsel led by Maryanne Mulvihill.