

FALL 2023, NEWSLETTER

## EXECUTIVE BOARD JOSEPHINE MAESTAS

DIOCESAN PRESIDENT

### YOU ARE A LIGHT!

It has been a very busy summer with lots of events, meetings, phone calls, text messages and e-mails galore. We started the summer off with 13 of us attending the Orlando DCCW Leadership Symposium in Titusville. One thing that stuck with me was “What you say is not as important as how you say it”. I don’t remember which of their deaneries does this but they do an Adoration Crawl. They list every parish that has adoration, the times, dates, etc and then they have a sign up sheet for everyone to participate and even take selfies of themselves at the various parishes.

Next up 8 of us headed to Salt Lake City, Utah to attend the National Council of Catholic Women’s annual convention August 23-27, 2023. Before I even left the house, I received a call from Fr. Ted who had to regretfully tell me that he was unable to travel with us as he ended up with a severe eye infection. And although he was very much missed by all his fans at National, it was the right decision for him to stay home. He is thankfully fine now. The very first thing I heard that first day of sessions was YOU ARE A LIGHT, FAITH HAS NO BOUND. As you probably already know, Catholics are a very very very small percentage of the population in Utah. There were great speakers, great sessions and great fellowship. One thing that stuck with me was “God gave you

the gifts, it is your responsibility to use them”. At our Florida Province Dinner, our very own Missy Garrett was installed as the Province Director Elect – CONGRATUATIONS MISSY! On Friday they had a breakfast panel and one thing I learned was “share the faith but don’t debate or argue”. There was an affiliate or deanery (not sure) that holds a tea for the mothers of the Seminaries. There was also a Past NCCW President’s panel. I was pleasantly surprised when Winkie LeFlis out of the Orlando Diocese said her passion was/is Faith, Family and Friends. We unfortunately came home to prepare for Hurricane Idalia. I am very thankful all of our families were safe and for the most part spared of any damage.

On September 13th 5 of us had our annual meeting with Bishop Parkes. He once again has asked that we have the Bishop’s Mass at the hotel. We asked him about the possibility of having



a bus for anyone from our Diocese going to Catholic Days at the Capital. He didn’t say no, but he gave us a place to look for a possible grant that could help with that. He approved the 500 Club Fundraiser, so we’re pretty excited to get that going finally. He approved our Convention theme which is “Courageously living the Gospel with Faith, Family and

Friends”. HMMMM didn’t we just hear that? Oh yeah a Past NCCW President said that was her passion. I was pretty excited when I heard her say that as I had already chosen that for our theme but was just waiting on the Bishop’s approval.

Last but not least, on Saturday, September 16th, there were at least 7 of us (that I know of) that attended the Diocesan event “Eucharistic Encounter” at the Marriott downtown with 750 total participants from around our Diocese. It was



nothing short of an amazing day from the worship music to the speakers, to the food that you didn't even realize what time it was. I was surprised yet impressed that the Bishop was there from start to finish. Unfortunately, due to a down pour of rain, we were not able to do the Eucharistic procession from the hotel to Amlie Arena. But the Bishop did process around the entire ballroom. It was livestreamed so hopefully you were able to catch that if you weren't able to attend in person. For me personally, it was just what I

needed to help lift my spirits and although I know my Sisters, events like this allow me the opportunity to get to know each other more and on a deeper level.

Planning is ongoing for our very own convention at the Embassy Suites in Brandon (same hotel as last year) May 2-5, 2024 as well as for the FCCW Conference that will be hosted by us October 24-27, 2024.

I feel I am leaving something out, but as my beautiful Momma always says "God will provide". Please know that I am here for you, to support you, to encourage you, to mentor to you and most importantly to be your Sister in Christ.

### YOU ARE A LIGHT!

May our Blessed Mother continue to intercede for each of us and our loved ones,

## ELLEN JIMENEZ ST JOAN OF ARC CCW, PRESIDENT

St Joan of Arc Council of Catholic Women has a full schedule of events and service projects for this year.



At our first meeting this year, our ladies brought underwear or feminine hygiene products to donate to the most needy Hernando County Public Schools. A total of 200 pairs of underwear and 750 tampons and pads were donated.

and made them with donated material. So far, 250 dresses have been sent to Haiti, Columbia, Nicaragua and Africa and they are not slowing down!

Our parish had a Ministry Fair that the CCW participated in. Eight women signed up as interested in joining us. What I found most effective in getting the women to stop at our table was having actual samples of a couple of our service projects. We had a Box of Joy filled with toys and other goodies. There was also a drawstring bag, with men's toiletries on top of it, showing what we give to the homeless men in Spring Hill.

We just finished filling 53 Boxes of Joy for Cross Catholic Outreach. We had so much fun together putting all kinds of small toys, toothpaste and toothbrush as well as socks and underwear in the shoeboxes. That service project seems to make everyone who participated in it happy!

Our women have been making dresses from pillowcases for girls in very poor countries. Then they branched out

We continue to donate to the Foundations of Life Pregnancy Center. Diapers, wipes, body wash, new clothing, handmade hats, toys and books are donated on a regular basis. The center makes Blessing Baskets with our items to be given to the new moms. Our ladies decided that instead of giving

small gifts to each other at our Advent Luncheon, we would bring in a gift for the Pregnancy Center.

One of our CCW members is a lay missionary who goes to Nicaragua every year to share God's word and to bring food and clothing to the poorest of the poor. Aurora Ortiz is such a blessing to us! We contribute funds to help her in her ministry.

Our members help weekly at People Helping People by filling bags called Weekend Blessings for those kids in our area who might otherwise go hungry.

We have 6 fundraisers planned for this year to allow us to

help support a number of organizations as well as to give to our parish.

We are very excited to report that Christie Fiorentino secured a grant from Bombas Company. We have received socks, and hopefully underwear will follow. Many pairs of those socks were part of our shoebox project.

And, if that isn't enough, somehow we agreed that St Joan would host a Juke box Bingo Fundraiser for Our Lady of Life District! That is planned for February 24th as a luncheon. We hope to see all of you there!

May Our Lady bless each of you in all that you do!

## DOREEN WARD

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY CCW, PRESIDENT

### Our Lady of the Rosary – Spirituality

In August the CCW sponsored an evening with Deacon Bill Ditewig. He spoke on the synod and answer questions from the guests. During the last weekend of October, the group will hold its annual religious article sale with all the profits going to the Bishop's Vocation Fund and the National Council of Catholic Women Purse Club.

### Our Lady of the Rosary – Leadership

In August the women of the parish were invited to attend a dinner to learn more about the CCW and what we do. About 12 women attended along with some current members and we were able to get 10 new members.

### Our Lady of the Rosary – Service

OLOR's CCW gives small gifts for the homebound of Pasco's Meal on Wheels clients. 110 gift bags were just assembled and will be delivered to the center at the beginning of December. The group has committed to 25 Boxes of Joy. Our pastor has agreed that we can put an announcement in the bulletin and collect during the first two weekends of October. The group already has 2 large boxes filled with donations. Hopefully we can do an additional 25. Proceeds from our next Bunco's 50/50 and basket fund raiser will be used to help pay for shipping.

We have had an evening with Deacon Bill, and a family night of Bunco. We packed up and will be donating 110 gift bags for home bound meal on wheel clients of Pasco County. We collected and filled 40 boxes of joy for Catholic Outreach. We have made just under 200 gifts in the jar to sell in December to benefit SVDP. We are having a religious item sale the last week of October, with 100 percent of the profits benefiting the BVF and NCCW Purse.



# CORINE PAJOTTE

## CORPUS CHRISTI CCW, PRESIDENT

My Dearest Sisters in Christ,

In the month of October 2022, I was able to attend my first Florida Council of Catholic Women (FCCW) Convention in Sarasota. It was a rewarding spiritual experience listening to the different Speakers and meeting different Ladies of the Council of Catholic women around the Diocese of the State of Florida.

My greatest memory of attending FCCW, was listening to one of the Speakers on Friday October 21st. Here, I had the honor of hearing Jim Towey, who was a trusted advisor and a personal friend of Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

Some of the highlights of Jim Towey's speech proved the love, admiration, and reverence he had for Mother Teresa, hence the publication of his book – *'To Love and Be Loved' – a personal portrait of Mother Teresa.'*

In his speech, Jim spoke about the process of going to confession and the wisdom that comes from the sacrament of confession. He explained that with confession, people learned and came to recognize:

- how to forgive themselves
- how to make peace with regret, and
- how to discover in the process that God needs us.

Jim further explained that Mother Teresa had in every one of her chapels next to a crucifix the words 'I Thirst'. It was with these words that Mother (as he fondly called her) realized God was calling her to go out in the streets to be with the poor and to lift the dying.

Per Jim, the first followers of Mother Theresa spoke of her being a great Mother and a very Merciful person. However, to him, Mother Theresa was a woman and a mother, the most Mary-like person he ever met, since Mother like Mary, was a Virgin, and a mother to the world.

He explained too, that to many mothers, Mother Theresa reminded them of the glory of Motherhood and asked that we, the ladies attending the FCCW Convention continue to keep praying for Mothers around the world and to entrust them to the mercy of God.

Jim believed that Mother not only knew physical hardship but spiritual hardship. Many times, she felt abandoned by God and stated that the worst disease that Mother Theresa had was loneliness. The sense of not being loved, wanted and welcomed, hence the inspirational title of his book –

*'To Love and to be Love'*. Mother Theresa said the most important thing to a human being was to love and to be love.

One of Mother Teresa's favorite line, that Jim fondly remembered was *'to accept whatever HE gives and to give whatever HE takes – Mother Teresa of Calcutta.'*

He also reminded us of the thirst God has for us and for our love. The more we are in touch with God, the more we will realize the dignity we have for each other and ourselves.

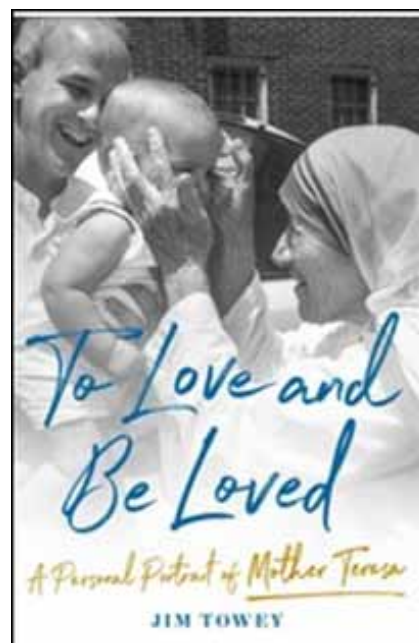
To conclude, Jim asked us to look in our bags. He asked if we were putting our complete trust and total surrender to the will of God. Were we confident in God's loving purpose in our lives even if it meant we had to suffer? Jim reminded us that we were all nourished by the Eucharist and had to choose to accept the trial and tribulations in our lives the way Mother Teresa did, the way the Lord expects us too.

To read more about Jim Towey's book: *To Love and Be Loved: A Personal Portrait of Mother Teresa.*

It's available on Amazon and/or the weblink below:

<https://store.fivewishes.org/ShopLocal/en/p/BOOK-JT/to-love-and-be-loved-a-personal-portrait-of-mother-teresa>

The book is published by Simon and Schuster and available in numerous languages. Jim and his wife are donating all royalties from the book to charities associated with the saint.





# LINDA SEUFERT

## DIOCESAN LEADERSHIP COMMISSIONER

As I start the 2023-25 term as Leadership Commission Chairperson, I reflected on my past experiences with the CCW and how what I learned may help me be successful in this position. I was reviewing some of my Holy Family CCW President's report and came across a paragraph that caused me to stop and think. It read, "I realized that the CCW is like an extended family and the monthly meetings are like family reunions. We get together, catch up on what is going on in our lives, eat some good food, discuss upcoming events, celebrate accomplishments, support each other, pray together, laugh together and even argue (or should I say have some deep discussions) with each other. We also worked together in fundraising and supporting the activities of the church. We have accomplished a lot this year, as you will hear about shortly, but more importantly we have strengthened our friendships and faith. CCW is a very special ministry and I am blessed to be a part of it."

Though I wrote this in 2014, the words are still relevant. Being a part of this wonderful ministry is a blessing and knowing that I am following in Mary's footsteps takes this blessing to the highest level. I continually hear, "We are the best kept secret". And we are! The CCW is made up of vibrant and dynamic women who quickly become your friends! We work hard, but always have fun and work each activity with love in our heart and a compassionate spirit. It is time we share this secret with our church community so more women can experience the joy, spirituality and support provided by the CCW.

So this 2023-25 term, like the NCCW, I will be focusing on membership. This is a huge task, and I will need everyone's help! And the work has already started.

In July, I attended the Leadership Symposium held by the Orlando Diocesan CCW and attended a session on growing

and retaining members. This information was brought to the SPDCCW Workshop and Training held in August. I also spoke on the importance of having an "elevator pitch" statement. What is an elevator pitch? An elevator pitch, elevator speech, or elevator statement, is an overview of your organization, what it does, who it helps, and what impact you have on the community. An elevator pitch comes in very handy when you are at a networking event and someone asks "what does your organization do". (The statement should be 30 seconds or less.)

I also covered what a member experience is and why it is important. What your members feel, think and gain from your ministry can affect their involvement. If the experience is positive, a strong relationship can build. It promotes membership retention and possibly recruitment of new members, often via referrals.

I have attended a few affiliate meetings and the fall conference of Our Lady of Life District. It was great hearing that the affiliates are working on recruitment and new members are joining.

Let's all work on growing our membership. I challenge each of you to do at least one of the following items:

- Call a member you have not seen this year and invite them back to a meeting.
- After a meeting, call the new member or guest and ask if she has any questions. Thank her for attending and remind her when the next meeting and/or activity will be.
- Invite/bring someone you know to a meeting.
- Introduce yourself to an unfamiliar member at a meeting and thank them for being a part of the CCW.

Thank you. Our Lady of Good Counsel, Pray for Us.

### SPDCCW SPIRITUAL ADVISOR

Rev. Ted Costello

### DIOCESAN FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Coleen Ward

### DIOCESAN SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

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