



Winona Diocese Council of Catholic Women

CONNECTING CATHOLIC WOMEN

January 2016

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From our President Cindy Meling

Open Our Eyes Lord

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Merry Christmas to one and all!!!! Christ has been born!!!!

Advent season is over but wanted to mention that on our facebook pages, of which we have two, the Best Advent Ever has been posted for everyone to see videos and read about mercy. They are very good and can be very helpful anytime. They really make you think about the subjects they are speaking about that day. Take a look at the Winona Diocese Council of Catholic Women facebook pages, think and pray about what is being said on each day of Advent. It made my Advent Season memorable.

The Year of Mercy has been announced and I received a book, "Beautiful Mercy" that has 24 authors writing about mercies they have encountered in their lives. They experienced God's unconditional love so we can share it with others. Sharing God's love should be year round not just during the Christmas season. There are so many people who need our help in so many different ways. We need to listen to what the Lord tells us in silence and ask him to open our eyes to what needs to be done.

"Grant me, O Lord my God, a mind to know You, a heart to seek You, wisdom to find You, conduct pleasing to You, faithful perseverance in waiting for You, and a hope of finally embracing You. Amen." Thomas Aquinas

I also want to wish you a Happy New Year and wish you God's Love and Blessing to all. And what will your new year bring to you and others.



LEADERSHIP COMMISSION

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Our Mission Statement

The Council of Catholic Women acts through its members to support, empower and educate all Catholic Women in spirituality, leadership & service

The New Year is always a time of great expectations. We are going to pray more, be more active in our church, more time with family and most of us would like to lose weight!

Let's be realistic, most of us need a plan to do any of the good works. We also need to be realistic about losing weight, it's not going happen for me, so let's get started with what we can do...

Plan for the New Year---Start communicating with your officers and team about what would be interesting and educational for the New Year!

USSCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) have resources available, please look at their website for ideas. <http://www.usccb.org/>

Have a Blessed and Happy New Year! --- Teri



POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR JANUARY

JANUARY



Universal: Interreligious Dialogue -That sincere dialogue among men and women of different faiths may produce the fruits of peace and justice.

Evangelization: Christian Unity - That by means of dialogue and fraternal charity and with the grace of the Holy Spirit, Christians may overcome divisions.



Spirituality Commission
Legislative, Respect Life & Anti-Pornography
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Make plans to attend the MCCL March for Life on Friday, Jan. 22, at the state Capitol in St. Paul, beginning at 12 noon. Invite your legislators to attend!

Encourage students in grades 7-12 to enter the National Right to Life Pro-Life Essay Contest. Deadline is Jan. 23; for more information, visit www.nrlc.org. The topic is, "What can I do to build a pro-life generation?"

Invite MCCL to speak to your church, school, community group or other gathering. Help them reach more people with the message of life! Simply contact the MCCL state office at mccl@mccl.org or 612-825-6831.

March 8 is when the legislative session begins. Assisted suicide is going to be in the forefront this year.

For information on Sexual Exploitation go to Dawn Hawkins NCOSE (National Center of Sexual Exploitation). Formally it was known as Morality in Media. Since the change in their name they have reached more people.

I hope that you had a very Blessed and Merry Christmas and may you have a prosperous New Year!

Novena to the Holy Innocents



Please join in praying the Novena to the Holy Innocents. During this Christmas Season we are reminded of all the children who are in need of our prayers. The novena is from December 19th-28th.

Heavenly Father,

“By their wordless profession of faith in your Son, the Holy Innocents were crowned with life at His birth.”* Knowing how precious they are to you and how similar they are to the millions of innocent lives lost through abortion, we call on them to join in our prayer:

1. That all our elected leaders, legislators, and judges may come to acknowledge the humanity of every child in the womb and enact laws and policies to defend them, we pray: *Lord, hear our prayer.*
2. That everyone throughout the world may be given the light to see beyond all doubt the uniqueness and full humanity of every child who has ever been conceived, we pray: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For these intentions and in union with the Holy Innocents, we pray as the Lord Jesus taught us: “Our Father, who art in heaven...”

Pray this novena for nine consecutive days any time of the year. Since the Feast of the Holy Innocents is celebrated on December 28th, it would be most appropriate to pray this novena beginning on December 19th so as to conclude the day before their feast. (Cf. Matthew 2:13-18)

FAMILY & COMMUNITY CONCERNS COMMISSION

Nancy Back

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As promised, I am sharing information on the 12 Days of Christmas. The twelve days are counted from Christmas to Epiphany. Epiphany is the Feast Day that we celebrate when the Wise Men met Baby Jesus and presented Him with the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts foreshadow what is to come in His life. I will visit this again with you in the Easter season.

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/advent/customs-and-traditions/the-history-of-the-twelve-days-of-christmas/>



I went to the above for the following information.

From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning:

the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the Church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember. To fit the number scheme, when you reach number 9, representing the Fruits of the Holy Ghost, the originator combined 6 to make 3, taking the 6 fruits that were similar: the fruit in each parenthesis is the that was not named separately. There are actually Twelve Fruits of the Holy Ghost.

The "True Love" one hears in the song is not a smitten boy or girlfriend but Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day. The partridge in the pear tree also represents Him because that bird is willing to sacrifice its life if necessary to protect its young by feigning injury to draw away predators.

According to Ann Ball in her book, HANDBOOK OF CATHOLIC SACRAMENTALS:

The two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments

The three French hens stood for faith, hope, and love.

The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The five golden rings represented the first five books of the Old Testament, which describe man's fall into sin and the great love of God in sending a Savior.

The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit-----Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.

The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.

Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit-----Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience [Forbearance], Goodness [Kindness], Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Continency [Chastity].

The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.

The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful Apostles.

The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in The Apostles' Creed.

Original Source: Fr. Calvin Goodwin, FSSP, Nebraska

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Please share this interesting information with others to help education them.

Ruth Sonnek
Blue Earth Area CCW President

Following is one of my favorite devotionals to begin a new year. May God grant you each a joyful year.

The Year God Has Made



Today is a day like any other-the sun comes up and goes down, and time clicks along at its usual speed. But with our calendars, and in our minds, today marks a new beginning, a chance to press the restart button of life. In His grace, God gives us a new day every 24 hours, and a new year every 365 days. He's the Lord of new beginnings and King of fresh hope.

Think of it this way. Without Christ, we're like passengers on a doomed ship, sailing into the night, fearing the storms ahead, hoping there's enough entertainment on board to distract our forebodings. But with Him in our hearts, we're sailing under a heavenly flag with the Captain of our Salvation at the helm; and we know this will be a good voyage- a great year even if there are choppy waters along the way.

We can face the future without fear, for all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God. This is the year that the Lord has made! We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Paul Eber

Barb Hussong
Worthington Area CCW President



Begin and End Each Day with Prayer in the New Year

If every Christian woke up at least 10 minutes earlier every morning and devoted at least five minutes for prayer and five minutes for Bible reading, they would not only grow spiritually but they would also be blessed and be a blessing to others. That routine is almost certain to make your day not only more productive but also more blessed.

How many of us climb into bed each night and pray sleepy-time, bed-time prayers and frequently fall asleep before finishing them. Start a routine of reading your Bible and then praying to God just before bedtime. What you'll discover is that you go to bed with so much more peace of mind and research indicates that the human brain rehearses the last things that you were reading or thinking about before you go to sleep and so the Word of God can be more instilled into your thinking while you drift off into a more peaceful sleep. Reading and meditating on the Word of God and then praying for others and for yourself and finally asking for God's forgiveness is a sure way to have a more peaceful sleep.

Resolve to make 2016 a more productive year by disciplining your body and mind to take in the Word of God and to consistently pray for others and yourself. If you spend more time reading the Word of God and praying, you will begin to not only have better days, but you'll also grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Martha Arnold
Owatonna Area CCW

In light of the beginning of the Jubilee Year of Mercy declared by Pope Francis, I would like to write about a local organization which began organizing in Steele County in 2012.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped our Steele County Society of St. Vincent dePaul; St Michael Conference (a lay Catholic organization that provide works of mercy to our neighbors in need). It has been a slow but steady work in progress. Individuals, local CCWs and other organizations have had bake sales, collections, and sent other donations, etc. to support our conference's work.

In Steele County, the Society of St. Vincent dePaul began by making Home Visits in response to calls we receive. The visits are made by two trained volunteers to find out how we can best help those who call SVdP solve their problem or get out of their difficulty. (It may be loss of a job, hospitalization, car accident, a chronic health problem, or some other crisis that a family or individual experiences); "there but for the grace of God go you and I". I feel SVdP is a great way for us to give back to our Lord for all the mercy He has shown to us.

Probably the most success came a year ago when the Society of St Vincent dePaul asked for volunteers to form committees and serve an evening meal each week; we had many people contact us, and eight groups were formed, and we are still getting volunteers to help out with these fellowship meals served on Tuesday evenings at St Joseph's church in Owatonna. It is rewarding to be able to help out those less fortunate in our own communities.



ORGANIZATION HISTORY

The Society began in 1633 in France with the efforts of St. Vincent dePaul, a Priest, and St Louise de Marillac who founded the Daughters of Charity, a group of laity and sisters who traveled the streets and paths to come to the aid of those in need. St Louise and St Vincent worked to serve Christ corporally and spiritually in the persons of the poor and they both died in 1660. St Vincent had said, "You will see with the light of faith that the Son of God, who became poor, is personified for us in the poor."

It was in 1830 that the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Catherine Laboure, a novice in the Daughters of Charity in Paris and Catherine saw the Miraculous Medal established.

And in 1833 the Society of St. Vincent dePaul was established by Frederic Ozanam, a law student, along with the help of Sr. Rosalie Rendu of the Daughters of Charity in Paris to continue the work of helping the poor that St Vincent had begun.

Elizabeth Ann Seton founded the Sisters of Charity in 1809 in the United States and she patterning her Rule after the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent dePaul in Paris. The organization spread throughout this country. There are SVdP conferences in the Diocese of Winona located in Rochester and Steele County. Bishop Quinn is the National Spiritual Director for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.



ST. AGNES

Feastday: January 21

Patron of young girls, chastity, rape survivors, and the Children of Mary

Birth: 291 Death: 304



St. Agnes of Rome was born in 291 AD and raised in a Christian family. Agnes was very beautiful and belonged to a wealthy family. Her hand in marriage was highly sought after, and she had many high ranking men chasing after her. However, Agnes made a promise to God never to stain her purity. Her love for the Lord was great and she hated sin even more than death! Whenever a man wished to marry Agnes, she would always say, "Jesus Christ is my only Spouse." According to legend, the young men she turned away became so angry and insulted by her devotion to God and purity that they began to submit her name to authorities as a Christian follower. In one incident, Procop, the Governor's son, became very angry when she refused him. He tried to win her for his wife with rich gifts and promises, but the beautiful young girl kept saying, "I am already promised to the Lord of the Universe. He is more splendid than the sun and the stars, and He has said He will never leave me!" In great anger, Procop accused her of being a Christian and brought her to his father, the Governor. The Governor promised Agnes wonderful gifts if she would only deny God, but Agnes refused. He tried to change her mind by putting her in chains, but her lovely face shone with joy. Next he sent her to a place of sin, but an Angel protected her. At last, she was condemned to death. Even the pagans cried to see such a young and beautiful girl going to death. Yet, Agnes was as happy as a bride on her wedding day. She did not pay attention to those who begged her to save herself. "I would offend my Spouse," she said, "if I were to try to please you. He chose me first and He shall have me!" Then she prayed and bowed her head for the death-stroke of the sword. Other accounts of Agnes' life hold the Prefect Sempronius responsible for her martyrdom. It is said he condemned the young girl to be dragged through the streets naked. Some versions of the legend state that Agnes' hair grew instantly to cover her entire body and all the men who attempted to rape the beautiful virgin were immediately struck blind. The stories go on to explain that another man presided over Agnes' trial after Sempronius excused himself. The new man sentenced Agnes to death. At first, Agnes was tied to a stake, but either the wood would not burn or the flames parted away from her. This prompted an officer to draw his sword and behead the girl. It is believed that her blood, which poured out to the stadium, was soaked up with cloths by Christians. She died a virgin-martyr at the age of 12 or 13 on 21 January 304. Agnes was buried beside the Via Nomentana in Rome. Her bones are currently conserved beneath the high altar in the church of Sant'Angese fuori le mura in Rome, which was built over the catacomb that held her tomb. Her skull is preserved in the church of Sant'Agnese in Agone in Rome's Piazza Navona. In 1858, Father Caspar Rehrl, an Austrian missionary founded the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes. St. Agnes is widely known as the patron saint of young girls. She is also the patron saint of chastity, rape survivors and the Children of Mary. She is often represented with a lamb, the symbol of her virgin innocence, and a palm branch, like other martyrs. She is shown as a young girl in robes holding a palm branch with the lamb either at her feet or in her arms. Her feast day is celebrated on January 21. On her feast day, it is customary for two lambs to be brought in to be blessed by the pope. On Holy Thursday the lambs' wool is removed and woven into the pallium the pope gives to a newly consecrated archbishop as a sign of his power and union with the pope

COMING EVENTS

Saturday, January 9th

11:00 AM

St. Casmir

Wells, MN

WDCCW Executive Board Meeting

All Area Presidents are invited to attend.

Anyone is welcome to contribute articles to this E-news. Cutoff date for articles is the 26th of each month. Please send your submission to wdccw@dow.org. Our President reviews all items and reserves the right to decline them before they are printed.
Fran Berreau
Communications Committee for the WDCCW