

Help! Our Council Is Struggling!



Lately, I have heard this phrase quite often both at parishes as well as deaneries. So if your council is struggling, you are not alone, but don't lose HOPE! Struggles in the spiritual life lead to the best times of growth so let's think of these struggles as opportunities!

Let's get back to basics. Why do Councils of Catholic Women exist? In 1920, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops established the Councils of Catholic Women to support, empower, and educate Catholic women in areas of leadership, spirituality, and service. The bishops did not want each parish to do their own thing – they already had that. They wanted to establish a network of women to not only join efforts to accomplish many great things, but also to support each other, learn from each other, and grow with each other.

At the parish level, we are *really* good at doing good works. I could write pages and pages of all the wonderful things our ladies do all around our diocese, but how are we supporting each other spiritually and emotionally? Have you considered a spiritual component such as a book study? There are more resources available today than you can shake a stick at (to quote my grandmother.) Check out *Unlocking the Beauty of the Catechism* by [C. Ruff](#), [Endow](#) (Educating on the Nature and Dignity of Women), [WINE](#) (Women in the New Evangelization), [Well Read Moms](#), and many more! And in your groups, don't forget to include questions such as:

- How is your week going?
- What are you struggling with?
- What are you looking forward to?
- Where do you see Jesus in all of this?

Having a great parish council of Catholic Women is wonderful, but remember, the bishops established a NETWORK of ladies!

The deanery level is a great opportunity for several local parishes to come together and share resources and ideas. If you are having a hard time coming up with enough people for a Well Read Moms group, for example, offer it to the deanery! If a parish is struggling to accomplish a goal, ask surrounding parishes for their help. You don't have to go it alone!

Our diocesan council of Catholic women offers workshops, share shops, and days of reflection for all the women of the diocese. We also offer grants and scholarships! All this and all of our reports are found at our website [LDCCW.org](#). What we need is to be able to communicate with you, deaneries and parishes. Our board of directors consists of the officers, commission chairs and representatives from all the deaneries.

If your deanery doesn't have a "president", would you be able to find a "contact person" that would forward communications to the rest of the parishes in the deanery? It would also be fantastic if a "representative" attend our quarterly business meetings to learn what is happening and to have a voice in how our diocese is operating. If your parish would like to be added to the email list, let our secretary, Kay Kesler, know (secretary@ldccw.org)

Finally, I encourage all parishes to be affiliate members of the National Council of Catholic Women ([nccw.org](#)) The resources available to members are enumerable and very useful. This is YOUR voice as Catholic women. The National Council of Catholic Women has an advisory seat at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops AND we have a seat at the United Nations!! (How cool is that?!) We are also members of WUCWO, World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, ([wucwo.org](#)) who has an advisory seat at the Vatican and who has regularly scheduled meetings with the Pope. Let your voice as Catholic Women be heard above the cries of the secular world.

The Renaissance Team is a team of ladies who are available to come to your parish or deanery and help begin, renew, invigorate your councils. We are available to answer questions and provide resources to help you grow in areas of leadership, spirituality and service together, in communion with other Catholic women. Our president elect, Marie

Fleisner, is the chair of this team, (presidentelect@ldccw.org) but you can call me or anyone on the board and we will be glad to visit you!

Dorothy Day, foundress of the Catholic Worker movement, said:

“We cannot love God unless we love each other, and to love, we must know each other.”

This is why it is so vitally important we gather as women to learn together, to laugh together, to console one another – to love.

Did you notice I didn't mention checkbooks, or agendas or bylaws? You see, if you get God right, then you can get relationships right. When you get relationships right, everything else will take care of itself.

We are called to grow the Kingdom, not the checkbook balance!

Lorraine Riedl, Leadership Commission, April 2023



*“Now we must
help each other
get to heaven.”*

Blessed Karl of Austria

Blessed Karl of Austria (1887-1922) was the Austro-Hungarian emperor from 1914 to his death in 1922. As a Catholic monarch, he embraced his office as the will of God. Informed by the Church's social teaching, the emperor sought at all costs to promote peace, equality, and justice in the midst of a world at war.