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Friday evening, July 31

To Be Rescheduled Convention / Leadership Training Workshop
watch www.LDCCW.org for details

First Board of Directors Meeting in the Fall
Saturday, October 24

Congratulations to the National Council of Catholic Women for
100 Years of Spirituality, Service, and Leadership!

Prayers and blessings from the
La Crosse (Wisconsin) Diocesan Council of Catholic Women
A few years ago, when I was asked to be president of the Tomah Deanery, I was really not sure. I didn’t know what to do. I didn’t know how to lead. I really was not sure how much time it would take—I still had kids at home! My husband asked me, “What are you afraid of?” Quite honestly, I had a lot of lame excuses, and no good answers to his question. Since that time I have taken on many roles and challenges. Through them all I have learned a most important lesson: We are NEVER alone! We are all in this together and we need each other. This is why I had chosen the theme for the last two years to be Isaiah 41:10 “Fear not, for I AM with you. Do not be discouraged for I AM your God.” I need to be reminded every day that God is in control and there is no need for me to worry. That’s why there are 365 references in scripture that tell us not to be afraid! We have each other!

More specifically THANK YOU! You have helped me and each other in so many ways that these last 2 years have been simply astounding. You are all amazing women who are relevant and who are making the world a better place! You are amazing witnesses to the world.

I welcome our new officers and I look forward to working with everyone of you in my new role as Immediate Past President.

Thank you all! Lorraine Riedl

Fear Not

“Dont be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.”

Isaiah 41:10
Hello to all my dear sisters from your new president, Melanie Frei!

How strange it is to be addressing you in the format of a Web-based audio conference. Yet this situation underscores one of my goals as your new president. This goal to make progress toward becoming a “paperless” organization. Several past presidents have suggested that it is time to move away from reliance on a Xerox machine to disseminate information and coordinate activities, and learn to use modern technology more effectively. This goal applies, first of all, to me, and then to all of you.

As I was anxiously contemplating how much I don’t know about administering a website or posting on Facebook or setting up an online conference, I began considering finding someone else to handle these things for me. Then this week, I providentially read an inspirational article on this very topic.

My husband and I recently joined “Word on Fire,” a ministry outreach of Bishop Robert Barron focusing on the New Evangelization. Their recent quarterly magazine featured articles on the challenges of the Digital Age. Bishop Barron, in his opening letter, wrote how he is concerned that many of us will feel overwhelmed with technology to the point that we don’t keep up with the new media or actually abandon its use. If that happens, countless non-Catholics, former Catholics, and especially young people, will hear only distorted versions of the Gospel - or may never hear it at all.

This reminded me of a missions conference I attended some years ago now, where the speaker asked a rather elderly audience, “How many of you do not feel comfortable using a computer?” After many sheepishly raised their hands, he bluntly said, “Get over it. If we want to reach the world for Christ, we have to keep up with technology.”

I completely agree. I don’t want to fall behind. I don’t want to lose connections with the young people in my life. But it is hard, awfully hard. Often I get what I call “techno fatigue.” Then I have to take a break. Later I get acquainted with another tool, and it takes me to a new plateau! I call this in my life a “techno-leap.”

Why is this move to a paperless organization one of my goals for the LDCCW? Because I want our organization to be an effective, efficient and attractive group of ladies that know how to use the tools needed in this Digital Age in order to “respond with Gospel values to the needs of the Church and society in the modern world.” Does this phrase sound familiar to you? It should. It is from our mission statement!

Each president has the opportunity to choose a theme for her term. LuAnn chose “The Simple Path of Mercy.” Kathy encouraged us to “Be the Bearer of Hope, Joy and Mercy.” Lorraine was inspired by Saint John Paul II’s admonition, “Be Not Afraid.”

My theme is expressed with the words of Jesus in John 10:10:

“I came so that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.”

I want us to proclaim the beauty, truth, and goodness that we enjoy as Christians, so that others can experience the abundant life which Christ, our Good Shepherd, died to give us.

Let us challenge ourselves, as we come out of our COVID hibernation, to roll up our metaphorical sleeves, learn some new skills, and work together in sharing our abundant life in Christ with a hurt and broken world.

Thank you for giving me the privilege of serving you as your new president. I look forward to seeing how God will use us together in the next two years. Priscilla, Patroness of the LDCCW President, pray for us!
Election Results!

We had a successful election of officers! We had 43 voters and 8 deaneries participate. We had a unanimous “Yes” for our slate of officers with 4 undervotes (meaning they abstained from voting in one or more offices). Our new officers and chairs are:

President: Melanie Frei
President-Elect: Susan Tully
Vice President: Marie Fleisner
Secretary: Candace McGrath
Treasurer: Kay Kesler
Immediate Past President: Lorraine Riedl
Parliamentarian: Monica Gornicky
Diocesan Liaison: Paula Boyle
Pro-Life Liaison: Janet Amundson
Spirituality: Ann Walgenbach
Service: Natalie Goeden
Leadership: Kathy Herfel
Spiritual Advisor: Fr. Eugene Wolf

The Annual Council Sunday Collection usually held on the Sunday following Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday) has been postponed due to Covid-19. Please watch for more information on our website and future newsletters.
The National Council of Catholic Women mourns the death of George Floyd and the long list of victims that have gone before him. Racism takes many forms and can happen in many places. It includes prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their color, ethnicity, or national origin.

We ask our members to read the USCCB pastoral letter against racism "Open Wide Our Hearts: the Enduring Call to Love," (please click here) and engage each other in dialogue and reflection during this time of unrest and sadness. This could be a daunting task, one that will bring a feeling of discomfort and anxiety and because of this we are suggesting several tools that may assist you. The pastoral letter above as well as a study guide to this letter is available by clicking here. In addition, the National Museum of African American History and Culture has created a web portal “Talking About Race” with many free resources and reflections for you to use in this process of discernment and reflection. It can be easily accessed by clicking here.

Racism is alive in our country, although many would like to think that it is a thing of the past, events of this past month have proved it is not. We are all created in the image and likeness of God bringing to light that no one person regardless of race, ethnicity, or national origin is better than another.

We remain in prayer for the victims of racism and violence and continue to reflect on aspects of peace and justice.

Jean Kelly

NCCW President

OUR MISSION

The National Council of Catholic Women acts through its members to support, empower, and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership, and service. NCCW programs respond with Gospel values to the needs of the Church and society in the modern world.
Worshipping in a Lockdown
by Candace V. McGrath, Secretary

On Tuesday, March 17, 2020, St. Patrick’s Day, our First Communion Class was scheduled to have their First Confessions. On that day, Governor Tony Evers announced any gathering of more than 10 people was to be cancelled, starting at 5 pm. I tried to call my Priest, Monsignor Roger J. Scheckel, but I couldn’t get through. I am his CRE.

I arrived at St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church at 5:30 pm, an hour before the ceremony was to take place. I went to the rectory and knocked on the door. Monsignor asked if I had gotten his message. I had been checking my messages about every ten minutes and he had just emailed me. He said maybe we should cancel the ceremony. In my disbelief, I told him I didn’t have all the students phone numbers and emails. We were going to have this ceremony.

When the students arrived, I spaced them six feet apart and had an empty pew between them. Monsignor told everyone in his introduction about the Governor’s order, which went into effect, an hour and a half earlier. He said if there was any trouble, he would take the blame. The First Confessions went quickly, and everyone was out the door within an hour. Only three students were absent. As I looked around the church, I realized it would be three weeks before I would be there again.

In this digital age I quickly found some online Masses. His Eminence Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke said we were not required to take Communion or go to the Sacrament of Confession during the lockdown, to gain a plenary indulgence. This was also the guidance from Bishop William Patrick Callahan, who has an online Sunday Mass, through the Diocese of La Crosse, on YouTube.

I started taking Spiritual Communion. I also started praying the rosary with a couple friends at the church in the morning.

There are a few Priests I’ve gotten to know during the pandemic. Father Charlie Richmond is the Priest at St. Mary’s in Viroqua. He’s young, energetic, has seen a lot of good movies, and gives great homilies. He has Mass on Facebook at 9:30 am every morning and 10:30 am on Saturdays because he has Confession, which I have been to, from 9:00 – 10:00 am those mornings. Many churches have Confession available if you look for it.

Another Priest I’ve gotten to know is Father Mike Schmitz. I went to an online three-day retreat with him. He lives in Duluth, Minnesota. I know him from the Chosen Confirmation Program by Ascension Presents. He has Sunday Mass on YouTube. He also has done numerous short videos on almost every topic in the Catholic Church. He told me to get out of the house and go to church and pray. He inspires me. I watch a live Mass every day.

As a Consecrated Marian Catechist, I say a lot of prayers each day, which take about an hour in the morning and a half hour at night. I report regularly to my Spiritual Advisor, Monsignor. He has been a good shepherd of his flock during this Safer at Home order. My faith has grown and I am grateful.
And our great 2020 pandemic adventure continues:

Wow, who could have imagined what is happening in our churches.

Most things familiar to attending Mass and Church are removed for our safety. No holy water, no bulletins, no hymnals, nothing that could let someone be contaminated with Covid-19.

Mass is only for Sunday. For daily Mass one needs to view on their computer or television. And for some of us, we have to make reservations to attend Mass—due to the 25% limit. And for those who love making a difference for people of faith, our call may to help clean the church.

Catholic evangelizers are using Facebook, and email to reach out to all Catholics with prayer and educational videos. I look on this time as an opportunity for us: to develop a great domestic church within our home, strengthen our faith in a time of crisis and in this springtime appreciate Gods wonderful Creation. It seems like the birds are singing louder and longer this year, as a reminder that God loves his creation, even the sparrows.

This “adventure” has taken a personal turn for me. My church of 43 years, Bangor St. Mary’s is not longer able to hold Masses; the building is no longer safe for the public. The pastor has given two directives: 1) the merger of the 2 parishes will go forward, and 2) there will only be 2 Masses, instead of 4, next Sunday at St. Leo’s in West Salem. Not enough volunteers to clean the church signed up. The adventure continues.

Our Catholic Church has been through many crises like the pandemic. The plagues in Europe in 1400 and 1500 are one example. St. Charles Borromeo is one saint that not only helped reform the Church, but also worked during the plague and famine to physically minister to his congregation. When Milan was in the midst of a famine after a plague, he allegedly feed 70,000 people in a week, but also their spiritual needs- by having the church bells ring morning, noon, evening, and having the people recite prayers from their windows.

And next Sunday is the feast of Pentecost, when the Apostles receive the Holy Spirit, it marks the birthday of our Catholic Church. This year it will have even more meaning when we recite the refrain for the responsorial psalm:

LORD SEND OUT YOUR SPIRIT AND RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH.
LDCCW Leadership Commission
Lu Miller, Chair

From the LDCCW Leadership Commission, the hope that you continue being safe and healthy remains not just for these upcoming months but for the years ahead, as well, as we continue to understand the COVID virus more and more.

When I began walking The Simple Path, along the way I met some of the most special, influential people who helped get me to where I am at this time, to this moment we are in. So a very special - **THANK YOU** for everything..

**DNA TO LEAD – IS IT PRESENT IN YOUR FUTURE?**

I, as others, have learned to adjust to no weekend Mass in a church-filled setting, among my parish family, in the COVID world we are in today and that may be a part of our world for some time ahead. We have done so far, I believe, a wonderful job in making things work the best way possible and to connect and communicate to one another under the most difficult of such conditions. Recently at one of the daily homilies I was viewing at home, the homily challenged us by asking that if we do the job of listening, do we do the follow-through of what is expected then. The chances that come our way, are they ones we contemplate seriously or do we make them our “missed” chances as we do with opportunities and perhaps those turn into our “lost” opportunities.

These past 10 years, I have been so blessed to have been a part of the councils of Catholic Women, beginning at my parish, moving onto the Deanery level and then onto our Diocese level. One could say I kept climbing the ladder of leadership. It has been an amazing journey (path) and one that I wish so many of you would look at, ponder over and challenge yourself to undertake. I will relate that I took those chances but when presented with a challenge, I found myself being given the grace of God that I would need in responding to that specific call. **And he never let me down.** I was very fortunate to follow, at the Diocesan level, some very influential leaders – each bringing to our diocese their own gift – whether it was in how they looked at our finances, in their spiritual connection, in their strong communication skills, in the way as leaders they organized our events; and with each, their own individual wisdom – just knowing what was the best and most fruitful for the ladies of our council. In a way,
we were seeing their own DNA to lead at its best. Having watched them over the years, they helped form me to be a leader with the skills I am very proud of and will always be proud of. They even helped me as I prepared my presentations or my commission reports these past 2 years – thank you Past Presidents for always being in my background. The ladies of our Diocese are amazing and will hold a special place in my heart as well as our leaders of the past, leaders of today and leaders of tomorrow hearts. Our organization has truly been blessed and will continue being blessed with its leadership. Congratulations to each of you as you continue on in your journey or on your own path, no matter what level of leadership it involves.

THANK YOU

A very special thank-you to Lorraine Riedl who took the reigns over as President of our diocese these past 2 years and extending a warm welcome to Melanie Frei as the incoming President of the La Crosse Diocesan Council of Catholic Women. Let us continue praying for those who are stepping forward to take new or renew positions in leadership.

With the ending of terms taking place at this time, what next? Please pass on the necessary information to your successor to enable her to do the best job she is able to. There is a resource that will assist in the process of what to sift through and include in the pass-off process: It may be found out in the web page under https://www.nccw.org/commissionscommittees/, under Leadership Commission to the resource titled, WHAT TO KEEP AND WHAT TO TOSS.

Additionally, please remember to continue reviewing all the resources that are available for all: NCCW.org for information assisting with membership, with the different commissions (if you are entering a commission position) or committees if you would like to understand those areas more. At the Diocesan level, we have 2 resources of assistance – ldccw.org and do not forget the LDCCW Facebook page. Search for La Crosse Diocesan Council of Catholic Women and it will be at your fingertips. All of these have something of help or interest for you.

NCCW

Please keep a watchful eye out on the NCCW webpage as to any updates. They always have valuable information on a variety of topics!
Human Trafficking Service Support Grant Recipients 2020

by Candace V. McGrath, Service Commission

At the National Council of Catholic Women Conference, in Atlanta, Georgia, last year, they made a point to encourage everyone to spend more time working toward helping the crisis of Human Trafficking. This is a billion-dollar issue worldwide. Our Diocesan President, Lorraine Riedl, is a strong advocate for helping the victims of this issue, whether it be sex slavery or work slavery. She is well educated on this matter and proposed our LDCCW have a $2,000 grant which would be broken down to $1,500 for groups helping victims of Human Trafficking and $500 for groups who inform the public about this travesty which is occurring in our own communities.

With the support of the Executive Board, we awarded three grants to the following organizations, who are fighting human sex slavery:

1. The La Crosse Task Force to End Modern Slavery was awarded $750. They are helping three women who were victims of Human Trafficking while they put their lives back together. One of the victims, given a second chance, has gone back to school. Over the years, they have given over 125 presentations about this issue.

2. The Tomah Deanery Social Ministries Committee received $250 to have a presentation on Human Trafficking. This would cover the speaker’s hotel room, meeting room rental, and refreshments costs. They are in partnership with the Juneau County Coalition against Domestic and Elderly Abuse.

3. The Franciscan Peacemakers were given $1,000. Their organization makes bag lunches and takes them to the streets of Milwaukee where young men and women are being exploited for sex. The lunch is free and sometimes they can make a connection with someone just by giving them something to eat. They have a hospitality center which is open during the day, on week days, which offers food and someone to talk to. If someone reaches out to the group for help, they have a shelter where these victimized individuals can stay. The Franciscan Peacemakers has helped young women get off the streets and with help, beat their addictions to drugs and alcohol and live clean lives.

We should always be striving toward making the world a better and safer place. Human Trafficking attacks the heart, mind, and soul of the person who gives up their freedom to their abuser. These people, most commonly young girls about the age of 14, feel trapped. Let’s support ways for them to feel God’s love and hope.

For more information on the LDCCW Human Trafficking Grant, go to LDCCW.org for application.
LOOKING FOR A NEW HOME FOR OUR COPY MACHINE

The La Crosse Diocesan Council of Catholic Women has no longer needs the copier that we rent. But, we still have two years left of a four year contract. Does anyone know of anyone--school, parish, charity, small business--that is in need of an excellent copier? We are allowed to sell our contract to another.

We will pay for the moving! The monthly payment is $48 / month. There is an $83 / quarter maintenance fee that is optional. We have been paying it, but have never used the service. The machine has only about 8000 on it so far. It has been an excellent copier for the two years we have used it.

Ricoh Aficio MP 301SPF Black and White Laser Multifunction Printer (Printer, Copier, Scanner, Fax)

- Prints up to 31 ppm, copy, scan, fax
- 600x600 dpi max print resolution
- Paper tray holds 250 sheets of paper
- Accommodates 8.5 x 11 standard size paper
- Standard automatic reversing document feeder (ARDF)
- Can be hard-wired or wireless
- Comes with a storage cabinet
Patron Saints

As a Council of Catholic Women, we place ourselves under the patronage of Mary, our mother and the mother of Jesus, using the title of Our Lady of Good Counsel. We also have patron saints; our advocates and intercessors in our lives. At our installation of officers, each of our new officers were placed under the guidance of a patron saint. In your roles within your own councils, include your patron saints in your prayers.

Historian—St. Veronica. She was moved with sympathy when she saw Jesus carrying his cross to Golgotha and gave him her veil that he might wipe his forehead. She is the patron saint of photographers.

Parliamentarian—St Catherine of Siena. As a mystic and Doctor of the Church, St Catherine used her gifts of philosophy and theology to encourage peace.

Pro-Life Liaison —St Gianna Molla. As a wife, mother, and pediatrician, St Gianna used her gifts of great faith and courage even in difficult situations.

Spirituality Commission—St. Therese of Lisieux. She lived each day with an unshakable confidence in God's love.

Service Commission—St Theresa of Calcutta. She served the poorest of the poor while defending God’s law around the world.

Leadership Commission—St. Joan of Arc, a legendary French saint who led her people to victory during the Hundred Years War with faith and courage.

Treasurer—St Teresa of Avila, who was a model of integrity and was trusted by the leaders of the Church in her time.

Secretary—St Paula, who was a companion to St Jerome and helped him in interpreting and translating the Bible.

Vice President—Ruth, of the Old Testament, for her loyalty and fidelity to Naomi was a constant source of strength.

President Elect—St. Clare, who served next to St. Francis in whatever ministries were needed.

President—Priscilla, Church leader, teacher, and woman totally involved in team ministry for the sake of the gospel.

The people of the Diocese of La Crosse—St. Joseph the Worker. In this Year of St. Joseph we turn to him as provider, protector of the family, and peace in times of distress.

YEAR OF ST. JOSEPH
MAY 1, 2020 – MAY 1, 2021

There are many saints to whom God has given the power to assist us in the necessities of life, but the power given to St. Joseph is unlimited: It extends to all our needs, and all those who invoke him with confidence are sure to be heard.

-St. Thomas Aquinas
Dear Members,

After much prayer and discernment, the National Council of Catholic Women, has made an informed decision to postpone our Centennial Convention 2020 until August 25 - 28, 2021, when we are able to celebrate together safely. Our concern for your health and wellbeing as well as that of our partners was the primary reason for this decision.

If you have already registered for the 2020 Convention, an NCCW staff member will be calling you in the next few weeks to discuss your refund. We are ever so grateful for your continued support and we look forward to celebrating together in 2021!!!

May you continue to find good health and many blessings.
In gratitude,

Jean Kelly
President

If you have already made arrangements, don’t forget to cancel the hotel reservations by calling the hotel direct at +1 703-920-3230.

We will be celebrating the 100th in Minneapolis next year!!!
NCCW Membership Form
Be the Voice of Catholic Women

When you join the National Council of Catholic Women, you are part of a national organization that speaks for your Catholic values and supports, empowers and educates all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service.

NCCW Individual members also:
* Are represented at the biannual meetings of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
* Have access to NCCW Spirituality, Leadership and Service Commissions’ programs and resources
* Are invited to serve on NCCW Commission teams and Committees
* Share friendships with other Catholic women from all over the country
* Are represented at the United Nations, The World Union of Catholic Women Organisations (WUCWO), Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, Religious Alliance Against Pornography
* Share in Partnerships and Collaborations with Catholic Relief Services, Cross Catholic Outreach, Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Catholic Climate Covenant
* Can participate in Monthly Advocacy and Leadership Calls
* Access to NCCW website members’ only site (under development)

Please select your membership category:

- [ ] Supporting Member ($100) – Benefits Include:
  * Annual subscription to the quarterly Catholic Woman magazine
  * Annual subscription to the monthly NCCW Connect e-newsletter
  * Eligibility to vote in NCCW elections and at the Annual Business meeting

Exclusive Benefits for Supporting Members Only:
* Supporting Member pin that demonstrates your commitment to NCCW
* Special Supporting Member ribbon at Annual Convention

- [ ] Individual Member ($50) – Benefits Include:
  * Annual subscription to the quarterly Catholic Woman magazine
  * Annual subscription to the monthly NCCW Connect e-newsletter
  * Eligibility to vote in NCCW elections and at the Annual Business meeting

I wish to pay for my membership by:
- [ ] Credit Card
- [ ] Check (enclosed) made payable to NCCW check #

Credit Card Information:
- [ ] MasterCard
- [ ] Visa
- [ ] Discover

Name as it appears on card ____________________________

Credit Card Number ____________________________ Expiration Date ________ Security Code __________

Member Information: Enroll Renew Member # (found on back of magazine) ______

Name ____________________________ Title ____________________________

Address ____________________________ ____________________________

City/State/Zip ____________________________ ____________________________

Phone ____________________________ Email ____________________________

Parish and Diocese Information:
Parish Name ____________________________ Parish City/State ____________________________
My Diocese ____________________________ My Province ____________________________

Please return this application with your check or credit card information to the following address:
Membership Department, National Council of Catholic Women 200 N Glebe Rd, Suite 725
Arlington, VA 22203, Phone: 703.224.0990, Fax: 703.224.0991 membership@nccw.org

JOIN ONLINE AT WWW.NCCW.ORG
Casa Hogar Optical Mission Eye Glass Cases Needed!

We NEED your help! The Casa Hogar Optical Mission's next trip is January 2021 and we never have enough cases so the ones you make are wonderful. We do need to ask the ladies to only use rectangle potholders as the curved ones are difficult to slide the glasses into and may times to small.

You can send the cases to the mission office with any priest going into the diocesan center and they will get them from there to pack in the boxes going down with the mission. They pack things as they come in so bring them in any time!

They also collect used glasses, reading glasses and sunglasses both prescription and non-prescription. All cases new and used and anything else pertaining to eyewear, always in need of lens wipes and lens cloths.

Thank you so much for you help and know that it is very much appreciated, I also do presentations about our mission if you are ever in need of a speaker.

blessings to you all,

Casa Hogar Optical Mission

One method to make cases is here, but be creative! Sew, knit, crochet, quilt !!!!
We are planning for this fall.

Event POSTPONED! Watch for updates for this fall.

Do not be afraid of the journey, for we travel together.

Discover the Camino De Santiago with Deacon Glen Heinzl at the Biennial Convention in La Crosse.

The Camino de Santiago (the Way of St. James) is a large network of ancient pilgrim routes stretching across Europe and coming together at the tomb of St. James (Santiago in Spanish) in Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain.

It is by following the way of the Saints, we learn about ourselves and we learn how we can become more saintly.

La Crosse Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Convention 2020

St. Vincent De Paul
Some closing thoughts from your new president...

Getting Our House In Order
by Melanie Frei
May, 9, 2020

We are now coming out of this unprecedented and unexpected stay-at-home lifestyle. It lasted long enough to fall into normal routines. Long enough to reflect on how the dramatic changes in our daily routines and habits have affected our lives either positively or negatively.

I think almost everyone I know has used some of this time to accomplish home projects that they have put off for years. Perhaps it was sorting piles of photos, redecorating a back bedroom or, I can testify to this, inventorying our pantries and finding products long expired. I did actually bake some chocolate chip cookies (I have not baked cookies for years) with some chips expired in 2012. But the chocolate tasted OK I thought, and the cookies were really a treat!

We have used the time to get our houses in order.

But there is another way I have seen and heard of getting our houses in order. This has been unprecedented time with our families. One mother was exhausted by suddenly having to supervise and teach her children at home, but she was absolutely loving the family dinners and evenings spent together when the schoolwork was done. Another mother who is a very committed and talented church musician said she was able to celebrate Easter with her family for the first time in 15 years—even if she wasn’t at Mass. The total domestic church experience has created memories that would never have happened so intensely without the stay-at-home strictures.

Yes, I have heard that domestic abuse has increased as well. A line from a movie kept running through my head in the first weeks of hibernation. The scene is a tropical island vacation resort. The pilot who brought guests to the island was getting drunk at the bar. He told one of the guests, “People come here expecting to find romance. It’s an island, babe. If you don’t bring it here, you won’t find it here.”

This crisis has challenged us with the opportunity to get our family house in order.

Yet the most important treasure that this crisis has given to us is the time to get our interior houses in order. Time to pray, read, and just think without constant interruptions or noise. A student testified that she couldn’t believe how much more she was learning at home without the distractions of unruly or disruptive classmates. People who never stopped at their parishes to quietly pray the Stations of the Cross or the Rosary or merely to sit and rest in Jesus are suddenly having the time and inclination. I have added several new spiritual exercises to my routine that have drawn me closer to Jesus. I am wondering when my life begins to fill up again with activities—all of them good—if I will choose my newfound and more essential disciplines over returning to the tyrannies of the “urgent”.

Getting our house in order. Our homes, our families, our interior selves. I pray that God has used this corona virus experience in every way to draw us back to Himself.