**Leadership** L. Riedl January 2024

***Have we forgotten who we are and our mission?***

In praying with my nativity scene this year, I reflected upon this 800th anniversary of St Francis of Assisi’s beginning of this tradition. He heard the message, “Rebuild my Church.” Today, our church once again needs to be rebuilt. We need to be reminded of our covenant faith. We are all God’s special creation. We are made to be in eternal relationship with HIM! Unfortunately, much of the world today is unevangelized. In fact, we are no longer in Christendom; we need to go back to Apostolic Mission.

Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” MT 28:18-20

We exist for mission! We are to Go: We cannot just stay within our little circle. We must go out to the peripheries and find those who are not with us and invite them to join in. Make Disciples: Disciple really means “learner”. We must never stop learning – it is a life long endeavor. Our faith is not a puzzle to be solved, but a mystery to discover. Baptize: More and more there are people in our midst who have never been in a church or heard the good news of the Gospel. It is our mission to introduce them to Jesus. Show them the relationship you have with the person of Jesus. Teach: Pope Paul VI indicated this poignantly: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” We all give witness to the Gospel by our lives.

Evangelization is the supreme duty of the Church – the entire body of Christ. Councils of Catholic Women are a wonderful evangelizing tool!

Mission: The National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) acts through its membership 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.

* Be Intentionally Invitational – begin with relationships you already have. Pray for them. Pray for courage. Ask them and ask them again.
* Help Overcome their FEARS – many people do not want to come out of fear of not fitting in, fear of discomfort, fear of commitment, fear of being used as slave labor.
* Listen and Be Open to Change – Anyone coming to our meetings needs to get something out of them. We need to listen to their needs and their ideas and we need to be open to change. What we have always done is no longer working. Everyone needs a sense of belonging and a sense of being loved and appreciated.
* Share your Experiences – we all have experiences and stories to tell. Not all of the stories are of “unicorns and rainbows” and that’s ok. We are a hospital for sinners, not a museum of saints. We need to welcome people with open arms, no matter their current belief or situation.

“There is a famine on earth. Not for bread or water, but for hearing the Word of the Lord.” Amos 8:11

Councils and leaders need to be vulnerable. We need to go into those “scary places” of change. We need to rebuild. We need to realize we cannot do it alone. We need a well-rounded team around us. And always remember that Jesus promised to be with us until the end of the age (Mt 28:20) As Councils of Catholic Women, we need to pray about what God wants us to do, and not just “please Lord, bless my agenda.” We need to seriously ask ourselves:

**Are we bringing people closer to God?**

**Nominations Committee**

We are in need of a secretary and a treasurer for the next two-year term that begins in April of 2024. We need to have the application paperwork submitted as soon as possible. Please don’t worry that you are not qualified. **Remember, God doesn’t always call the qualified, he equips the called.**  We have plenty of people that will work with you to help you out.

We are also in need of commission and committee chairs, so if you have any interest in these positions, please let any of our current officers know.