

HISTORY OF NCCW

The National Council of Catholic Women was founded in March 1920 under the auspices of the U.S. Catholic bishops and in recognition of the widespread influence on church and society already exerted by American Catholic women. NCCW has continued to exert this influence as a result of its members' deeply Christian motivation, appetite and energy for service, and their great numbers.

NCCW was founded at a meeting of Catholic women convened by the U.S. bishops who had witnessed the important work done by Catholic women's organizations during World War I. The bishops hoped to strengthen their effect by uniting these groups, coordinating their efforts, and giving national scope to their work and influence. The meeting culminated with the creation of NCCW and a new manner of approaching problems with a national strength and determination.

The goals of the council were established at that first meeting: to give Catholic women of the country a common voice and an instrument for united action; to ensure proper Catholic representation in national committees and movements; and to stimulate the work of existing Catholic organizations to greater service in meeting the needs of the times.

Bishop Joseph Schrembs, of Toledo, in speaking for the U.S. bishops, challenged this newly united group of Catholic women to ". . . take on the girl problem; take on the child welfare problem; take on the problem of public health, of public morality . . . the thousands and thousands [who seek] the protection of the Stars and Stripes." NCCW continues to take on these issues and more.

Although its programs have changed to meet shifting needs in society, NCCW faithfully adheres to its original mission—responding with Gospel values to the needs of Church and society. Its strength still resides in parish-based women who serve the poor, the elderly, and the forgotten, advocate at state and national legislatures, support one another in the various circumstances of their lives, and join voices in prayer and worship. These are the faces and programs of NCCW.