

Salt Lake City Diocese Council of Catholic Women

President's Report

June 7, 2025

I would be remiss, if I did not first thank everyone who made our 96th Annual DCCW Convention such a success. Kudos to my fellow officers, directors of meeting, advisory board, board members, commission chairs/co-chairs, the numerous committee members and all attendees. At times I had my doubts, but everyone assured me that the Holy Spirit would be guiding us and that was indeed the case. As you hear the reports of all those who worked so hard, I hope you will be inspired to attend the 2026 Convention. Of course, there are always things that could have been different or better. As my dad always said, "Hindsight is 20/20".

The big news is that we have a new Pope – an American born cardinal, Robert Prevost, who took the name Pope Leo XIV. It was exciting to hear that one of his first visits was to visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Genazzano, Italy. Since our founding, we have prayed for Our Blessed Mother Mary to intercede for us, to guide and inspire us. What a blessing to have a Pope who shares our devotion.

If you are not a member of NCCW, you should really consider a membership as a gift to yourself. You will not regret it. In reading the NCCW President's Pen, I was touched by our National Spiritual Advisor, Father Tom Washburn's comments about following our new pope and wanted to share some of them with you.

*When the white smoke rose above the Sistine Chapel and the words "Habemus Papam" echoed through St. Peter's Square, the Church rejoiced. The election of **Pope Leo XIV**, the first pope from the United States, marks a historic moment and opens a new chapter in the life of our Church.*

But, sadly, already, the polarizing questions that are so much a part of our world today have begun: "What kind of pope will he be?" "Is he conservative or progressive?" "Where does he stand on this or that issue?"

We are called to discipleship, unity, and trust in the Church Christ founded. We must resist the temptation to treat the Holy Father the way the world treats political leaders—evaluating him through ideological filters or personal preferences. That is not the

language of faithful Catholic women; in fact, it is not the language of the Catholic faith at all.

This is not about blind loyalty. It's about **ecclesial trust**, rooted in the promise Jesus made to Peter when He said: "Upon this rock I will build my Church." The Holy Spirit chose this Pope for this moment in time—not the media, not political parties, and certainly not our social media feeds.

Pope Leo XIV is not meant to fit in a box. He is not "left" or "right"—he is **Catholic**, and the very meaning of that word is "universal." His ministry, like that of every pope, is not to reflect our opinions but to shepherd the whole Church in truth and charity; to lead us where we are supposed to go.

That doesn't mean we never struggle or wrestle with what a pope teaches. But as women of faith, we are called to struggle **with reverence**, with humility, and with prayer—not with suspicion or hostility.

Let us be clear: the unity of the Church depends on this. In today's noisy culture, it is far too easy to let others do the interpreting for us. We hear the pope through headlines, soundbites, and memes. But the invitation to us, as women rooted in Gospel values, is to **go to the source**: read his encyclicals, listen to his homilies, hear his heart. And most of all—pray for him.

The **National Council of Catholic Women** has always stood for unity, fidelity, and communion with the Church. Let us now model a new way forward: one of love for the papacy, trust in the Holy Spirit, and deep commitment to your identity as women of the Church.

Pope Leo XIV is our pope. He is Peter. And **where Peter is, there is the Church**.

Submitted by: Annette Pressley, President SLCDCCW, June 4, 2025