



SOUTH DAKOTA CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS®

STATE CONVENTION MINUTES

53RD BIENNIAL STATE CONVENTION
HOLIDAY INN CONVENTION CENTRE
SPEARFISH, SOUTH DAKOTA

April 10-13, 2025



*Open Your Heart to God's Love
& Listen to Him*

South Dakota Catholic Daughters of the Americas®
Fifty-Third Biennial State Convention
Holiday Inn Convention Centre
Spearfish, SD
April 10 - 13, 2025

Theme: Open Your Heart to God's Love and Listen to Him

State Officers:

State Regent: Judy Konechne
First Vice State Regent: Michele Sage
Second Vice State Regent: JoAnn Hoffman
State Secretary: Mary Kay Zimmerman
State Treasurer: Carolyn Downs
State Chaplain: Fr. Jim Friedrich

Host Courts: Our Lady of Lourdes #2056 Hot Springs, St. Rita #916 Rapid City, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha #2635 Faith, Immaculate Heart of Mary #2654 Lemmon, Mary Imelda #1014 Winner, St. Frances #547 Gregory, and Our Lady of the Black Hills #2805 Piedmont.

In the interest of presenting as much information as possible for the convention, the following were put in the State Convention Program Book and given out to convention attendees: *the welcome information, the financial information, committee reports and court reports*. This booklet will contain the actual minutes, any reports, and additional information that were received during the convention.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committee meetings were held prior to convention opening.

WORKSHOPS

Thursday, prior to convention, several workshops and roundtable discussions were offered. Workshops on Leadership, Human from Day One, how a convention works and what to expect at convention took place.

PAST REGENTS DINNER

Past Regents met Thursday, April 10, 2025 at 5:00pm at the convention with a themed dinner, "Be a Beacon of Hope, a Light in the Darkness". 80 past regents registered for the dinner. Officers include: President Brenda Anderson of Court St. Katherine Drexel #2516 of Roscoe/Dakota Dunes, Vice President, Barb Wiechmann of Court St Rose of Lima #700 and Secretary/Treasurer, Cindy Larson of Court Holy Heart #163 of Woonsocket. Following dinner, a business meeting was called to order by Brenda Anderson.

Cindy Larson gave the Secretary Report and Treasurer's Report. Because of the lack of current funds, no charitable contribution was made at this meeting. Election of new officers took place. The new officers are: President - Theresa Kocer, Ct Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls; Vice President – Patti Loeffler, Ct Willard #967, Yankton; and Secretary/Treasurer – Caryolyn Downs, Ct Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls. The next meeting will be determined by the new officers. SD State Chaplain, Rev. Jim Friedrich shared closing remarks and led us in prayer.

SPIRITUALITY

Thursday evening, State Chaplain, Fr. Jim Friedrich, led members in a Lenten Prayer Service including a special Stations of the Cross.

CONVENTION OPENING CEREMONY

The 53rd Biennial Convention of the South Dakota State Catholic Daughters of the Americas® was called to order by State Regent Judy Konechne on Friday, April 11, 2025, at 10:00 am at the Holiday Inn Convention Centre in Spearfish, SD.

Reverend Fr. Jim Friedrich, State Chaplain, led an Opening Prayer.

The Color Guard presented the colors. All joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance led by Michele Sage, 1st Vice Regent and singing the first stanza of the National Anthem led by Nicole Fuhrer. Second Vice State Regent, JoAnn Hoffman and State Secretary, Mary Kay Zimmerman led the singing of the Opening Ode.

Rev. Jim Friedrich blessed the convention Marian floor shrine.

Regent, Judy Konechne introduced those seated at the head table. She also recognized and thanked the Past State Regents in attendance.

OFFICIAL GREETINGS

State Regent Judy Konechne introduced special guests.

Councilman Larry Klarenbeek of Spearfish gave an official civic welcome with First Vice State Regent Michele Sage responding from the Catholic Daughters.

Deb DeFries and Julie Hill of Court Our Lady of Lourdes #2056 Hot Springs and Convention Chairs welcomed the delegation on behalf of the host courts: Our Lady of Lourdes #2056 Hot Springs, St. Rita #916 Rapid City, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha #2635 Faith, Immaculate Heart of Mary #2654 Lemmon, Mary Imelda #1014 Winner, St. Frances #547 Gregory, and Our Lady of the Black Hills #2805 Piedmont. State Regent Judy Konechne thanked the host courts.

A short recess was taken at 10:24 am so those who could not remain on the dais to be excused.

At 10:25 am the convention reconvened.

National 2nd Vice Regent/Director Nancy Bambenek from St. Charles, MN brought greetings from the National Board.

State Regent Judy Konechne offered her gratitude to Nancy for attending our State Convention and the National Board for their support.

State Regent Judy Konechne recognized all the State Committee Chairs and thanked them for their service.

State Regent Judy Konechne introduced the District Deputies and thanked them for their service.

Past State Regents in attendance were introduced and State Regent Judy Konechne extended her appreciation to the Past State Regents.

SEATING OF DELEGATES

National 2nd Vice Regent, Nancy Bambenek, briefed the delegates on voting and participation procedures during the meeting using Parliamentary Procedure and Robert's Rules of Order.

State Regent Judy Konechne called for a Roll Call of delegates by State Secretary, Mary Kay Zimmerman.

Roll call was taken and showed there were **33 courts represented and 8 courts** not represented at the convention. State Regent Judy Konechne asked State Secretary, Mary Kay Zimmerman and the Credentials Committee to retire to check credentials so voting strength could be determined.

MINUTES COMMITTEE APPOINTED

The 2025 Convention Minutes Committee was appointed by State Regent Judy Konechne. The members who will read and approve this year's convention minutes are: Tina Roth of Court Sacred Heart #280 Parkston, Marilyn Halgerson Court St Thomas Aquinas #1949 Madison and Diane Schurr Court Katherine Drexel #2516 Roscoe.

CREDENTIALS

The State Secretary Mary Kay Zimmerman returned with the Credentials Committee.

The committee consists of: Chair, Halie Kirwan Court St Rose of Lima #700 Wagner, Vicki Pick Court St Christina #2336 Lennox, Laree Giovannettone Court Mother Teresa #2510 Sioux Falls and National Director Barb Wiechmann.

At 10:45 am a short recess was called by State Regent, Judy Konechne.

The convention was reconvened at 10:55 am.

State Regent Judy Konechne called for the Credentials Report.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

Credentials Report: 10:57am April 11, 2025

Hailey Kirwan, Court St. Rose of Lima #700, Wagner, Chair of the Credentials Committee, gave the Credentials Report. Tina Roth moved that the report be adopted.

	Potential Strength	Actual Delegates Seated
National Rep/Officer	1	1
State Officers	5	5
Immediate Past State Regent	1	1
Past State Regents	6	4
<i>Delegates</i>	<u>117</u>	<u>79</u>
TOTALS	130	90

Majority needed to pass: 66

THE REPORT WAS ADOPTED AND A QUORUM WAS DECLARED BY STATE REGENT JUDY KONECHNE.

CONVENTION STANDING RULES REPORT

Libby Heinemann, Court our Lady of Peace #1708, Flandreau, Chair

Libby Heinemann, Court our Lady of Peace #1708 Flandreau and Chair of the Standing Rules Committee came forward to give the committee report. The proposed standing rules are printed on page 17 of the Convention Program Book and were read in entirety by the Chair with updates as needed. Several members addressed questions from the floor regarding the new officer dress code. All questions were addressed by the National Representative, Nancy Bambenek. The Chair moved for the adoption of the Standing Rules as printed and corrected. A vote was taken in the affirmative.

ADOPTION OF THE PRINTED PROGRAM

First State Vice Regent Michele Sage reported on the printed Convention program. She asked delegates to make the following changes to the living document.

- Carol Grode-Hanks should be listed as the only Parliamentarian on page 16.
- On page 16, Credential committee updated by removing Marlene Haines and adding Barb Wiechmann.

First State Vice Regent Michele Sage moved to adopt the program, a living document as amended. The motion was seconded by MaryAnn Whitman, Court Immaculate Conception #582 Aberdeen, and carried. The Program was adopted as corrected, subject to necessary changes.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Regent, Judy Konechne announced the Committee Appointments for this convention, which are found on page 16 of the printed Program.

Parliamentarian is Carol Grode-Hanks, Court Margaret Mary #2453 Mitchell
Timekeeper for the convention is Tina Roth, Court Sacred Heart # 280 Parkston
Secretary Pro-Tem for the convention is Nicole Fuhrer, Court Margaret Mary #2453 Mitchell
Pages for this convention are our District Deputies.

2023 CONVENTION MINUTES COMMITTEE

Elsie Baye, Court St Thomas #1533, Humboldt, Chair

The Minutes Committee reviewed and approved the 2023 South Dakota 52nd Biennial State Convention minutes. The minutes were submitted, published, and distributed to all local courts and all South Dakota Board members. Chairs of the Committee, Elsie Baye, asked the floor for any corrections to the 2023 convention minutes. Hearing there were no corrections, Elsie Baye moved to accept the minutes as published for the 2023 South Dakota 52nd Biennial Convention. The motion was seconded by Casey Schmidt, Court Madonna #1952, Plankinton. The motion was adopted.

State Regent, Judy Konechne thanked Elsie and the committee of Jessica Lewis, Court Our Lady of Peace #1708, Flandreau and Mary Mayclin, Court Madonna #1952, Plankinton for their service.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Bonnie Hosek, Court St James #2757, Chamberlain, Chair

Bonnie Hosek, the Nominating Committee Chair, gave the report of the nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee met on March 3, at 7:02pm by conference call with the paperwork received by deadline.

They presented the following Slate of Officers.

State Regent: Michele Sage, Ct. St. Agnes #618, Brookings

1st Vice State Regent: JoAnn Hoffman, Ct. Sacred Heart #280, Parkston

2nd Vice State Regent: No nominations submitted

State Secretary: Mary Kay Zimmerman, Ct. St Agnes #687, Vermillion

State Treasurer: No nominations submitted

The committee consisted of:

Bonnie Hosek, Court St James #2757, Chamberlain - Nominating Committee Chair

Mary Althoff, Court St Patricia #271, Sioux Falls

Elizabeth Sampson, Court Madonna #1952, Plankinton

Cindy Riddle, Court Margaret Mary #2453, Mitchell

Karol Kocer, Court St Rose of Lima #700, Wagner

The State Regent asked for nominations for the State Officers from the floor.

State Regent stated that Michele Sage was nominated for the office of State Regent.

State Regent called for any other nominations from the floor. There were no other nominations.

The Chair declared nominations closed.

State Regent called for a vote and Michele Sage was elected by a majority vote.

State Regent stated that JoAnn Hoffman was nominated for the office of First Vice State Regent.

State Regent called for any other nominations from the floor. There were no other nominations.

The Chair declared nominations closed.

State Regent called for a vote and JoAnn Hoffman was elected by a majority vote.

State Regent stated that there were no nominations for the office of Second Vice State Regent.

State Regent called for nominations from the floor.

Tony Weber, Court St Rita #916 of Rapid City nominated Jan Evans of Court St Rita #916 or Rapid City.

There were no other nominations.

The Chair declared nominations closed.

State Regent called for a vote and Jan Evans was elected by a majority vote.

State Regent stated that Mary Kay Zimmerman was nominated for the office of State Secretary.

State Regent called for any other nominations from the floor. There were no other nominations.

The Chair declared nominations closed.

State Regent called for a vote and Mary Kay Zimmerman was elected by a majority vote.

State Regent stated that there were no nominations for the office of State Treasurer

State Regent called for nominations from the floor.

Elsie Baye, Court St Thomas #1433 nominated Cheryl Schaefers or Court Our Lady of Fatima #1518.

There were no other nominations.

The Chair declared nominations closed.

State Regent called for a vote and Cheryl Schaefers was elected by a majority vote.

State Regent Judy Konechne presented and congratulated the newly elected State Officers:

Michele Sage, State Regent

JoAnn Hoffman, 1st Vice State Regent

Jan Evans, 2nd Vice State Regent

Mary Kay Zimmerman, State Secretary

Cheryl Schaefers, State Treasurer

The new officers came forward to be recognized.

State Regent Judy Konechne thanked the outgoing Nominating Committee.

State Regent Judy Konechne opened the floor for nominations to the 2025 Nominating Committee, reminding delegates that a minimum of eight nominations are needed.

The following nominations were made from the floor:

Mary Althoff nominated Anita Manning, Court St. Patricia #271, Sioux Falls

Tina Roth nominated Janice Stainbrook, Court Sacred Heart #280, Parkston

Hailey Kirwan nominated Karol Kocer, Court St. Rose of Lima #700, Wagner

Cheryl Shafers nominated Donna Runge, Court St Joseph, #2754, Miller

Elsie Baye nominated Jackie Lofswold, Court St Thomas #1533,

Jo Larson nominated Casey Schmidt, Court Madonna #1952, Plankinton

Bonnie Hiberdson nominated Carol Nygaard, Court St Teresa of Avila # 2325, Beresford

Laree Giovannettone nominated Joy Saffel, Court Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls

Diane Schuer nominated Geralyn Malsom, Court St Katherine Drexel #2516, Roscoe

Bonnie Hosek nominated Mary Beth Friedel Court St James #2757, Chamberlain

The Chair asked for any further nominations from the floor. There being none, the chair declared nominations closed for the 2025 Nominating Committee. The Chair asked the nominees to come forward and be recognized. Delegates will get acquainted with the nominees during lunch when they will each be given two minutes to speak or take questions. Voting will take place Saturday morning.

State Regent, Judy Konechne called for recess for lunch at 11:49am.

FRIDAY LUNCHEON

The Luncheon was emceed by State Regent, Judy Konechne.

The theme was "Cherish the Past...Embrace the Future.

The State Regent introduced additional clergy present: Deacon Craig Pierson of Hot Springs and Deacon Phil Carlson of Brookings.

State Chaplain, Fr Jim Friedrich led a meal prayer.

During the luncheon, reports were given for State Website, State Newsletter, State Membership.

STATE NEWSLETTER

Carol Grode-Hanks, Court Margaret Mary #2453, Chair

Carol announced that she would be stepping down as Newsletter Chair. She also reminded and encouraged the delegation that anyone can send in news for the newsletter. Email information to: sdcda1918news@gmail.com. It was suggested in the subject line to add "CDA Circulation".

STATE WEBSITE

Amanda Konechne Court St. Patrick #1699, Kimball - State Website Designer/Editor

Her report can be found on page 33 of the Convention Program Book.

The State Regent took notes of suggested items from members.

STATE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Cheryl Schaefers, Ct. Our Lady of Fatima #1518, Orient/Polo

Deb DeFries, Ct St. Rita #534, Watertown; Co-Chairs

The full membership report can be found on page 31 of the convention book.

There is always good news and bad news in the membership report. We started two new courts since the last convention. We welcome Court Our Lady of Wisdom #2799 on the SDSU campus in Brookings and Court Our Lady of the Black Hills #2805 in Piedmont to their first convention. We welcomed 45 new members in those two courts. We will try to start a few more this next year. But we would really like to work on gaining new members in each court. If you look at the membership totals in the program booklet, we added almost 200 members, which is fabulous. We had 12 courts who increased their membership while losing a few members. We recognize five courts today.

Court Joan of Arc #846 in Milbank increased their membership by 16 %.

Court Sancta Maria # 368 Dell Rapids increased their membership by 11%.

Court St. James #2757 Chamberlain increased their membership by 8%.

Court Our Lady of the Rosary #2560, Dakota Dunes increased their membership by 7.5%.

Court Margaret Mary #2453 Mitchell increased their membership by 6%.

We award these courts a certificate of excellence. Congratulations to these courts. Let's take a moment to ask these Excellence award winners to share the secrets of growing membership.

OH, BUT we lost 233 members, that is 36 more members than we gained. That is 12% of our total membership. We lost 93 ladies to death, which we will honor at the memorial Mass today. We had 105 members resign their membership and 29 forfeited their membership. Are we asking those ladies why they are leaving? Don't leave new membership to the officers of your courts, or to the membership Chair. She needs your help. Membership starts with all of us. We would like to focus on welcoming new members into our courts for the next two years. Watch for information on a Membership Challenge in the next newsletter. It may be hard to keep asking women to join, but we learned some great talking points yesterday. Remember as women and mothers we go through many stages in our lives. Just because it didn't work 2 years ago, that same woman may be looking to deepen her faith today. Keep asking. Be respectful of their no, but be persistent. Have you asked 70 times 7 times?? We are all called to be disciples of Christ and spread our faith. Look around at Mass in your parish. It seems that so many of the faithful are either members of Catholic Daughters or Knights of Columbus. Think of those who are teaching religion to the youth. Many of those are also CDA members. And what would be better than turning a "Christer" family into a family that never misses Mass. Think of how that multiplies from mother to entire families. We are much older than the speakers from yesterday, happily in our 70's. But I know that we need the young women to join and fearlessly lead us into THIS century. They are knowledgeable about how to accomplish the mission of Catholic Daughters in a better, more efficient way. We need to let them take the reins of our courts, support their new ideas, and be their biggest cheerleaders. If we only did things the way we always did, we would still be in corsets and using a horse and buggy to get around, like they did when the Catholic Daughters were instituted in 1903! As Brenda will say: "Let's take a bite out of that elephant". As Judy says "Open your Heart to God's Love and Listen to Him".

State Regent, Judy Konechne reconvened the business meeting at 1:38pm.

She asked all the newly nominated members for the Nominating Committee to come forward and be recognized. The nominees were given a moment to introduce themselves.

RESOLUTIONS & BY-LAWS

Mary Althoff, Court St. Patricia #271, Sioux Falls, Chair

Mary Althoff stated the committee had not received any proposed resolutions and only one by-law change for discussion or review. The by-law change was received from Court Our Lady of Wisdom #279, Brookings, SD as follows:

Article XIV Campus Court

Section 2. Officers

Current Wording:

- B. Nominations for court officers are made from the floor at the first business meeting of the fall semester.
- C. Elections are conducted by voice vote or ballot at the first meeting of the fall semester.

Proposed Change:

- B. Nominations for court officers are made **during the campus school year, in either the spring or fall semester, when the court deems fit.**
- C. Elections are conducted by voice vote or ballot, **one business meeting after nominations are made.**

Rationale: This allows more flexibility for campus courts to hold elections at a time that works for them and ultimately what's best for the court. With Courts across the country, there are various school schedules and expectations at the start of a new semester.

A motion was made by Mary Althoff, Court St. Patricia #271, Sioux Falls to pass this by-law change. A second was received. A vote was taken and it passed. This will be submitted to the National Convention for consideration.

REPORTS OF STATE BOARD OFFICERS

Report of the State Regent, Judy Konechne

Judy's full report is printed in the convention book on page 23.

Judy expressed many blessings to all that worked hard to put this convention together. I am not going to read my full report, it is in the program book and you are welcome to ask me any questions throughout this weekend that you may have. Please, mingle around and sit with different CDA sisters at meals to learn what others do for projects to give you something new to try. That is how we learn and expand to new projects and put the name of CDA out into the public. Remember who you visited with if you should do one of the projects and if you have questions, I am sure you can contact them with questions

I want to talk a little bit about leadership. We have had many courts that are struggling to find officers. I hope that many of you were able to attend the leadership workshop Thursday and took away a great deal of information. As I think about the struggling Courts, I think back to when I first became a court Regent. I was so nervous. I am sure they could hear my knees knocking but deep down in my heart, I told myself I can do this. I pray and asked the Lord to bless me and give me the words I needed to carry out my duties as the members had put their trust in me. I was not a speaker and even today, to say I am comfortable up here is an understatement. As I work to be the best leader I can, I continue to ask the Lord for blessings and he holds me up and says 'good job my faithful servant'. All of you are capable of being a leader. You just need to ask for God's assistance and he will be there to guide you.

Report of the 1st Vice State Regent, Michele Sage

Michele's full report can be found in the convention program book on page 23-24.

She announced her theme for her term as Regent will be, "I Can Do All Things Through Christ Who Strengthens Me", Philippians 4:13

State Chair Campus Court Report - can be found on page 30 of the convention program book.

Michele reported that her goal for the last ten years, to establish a campus court was finally completed. She shared that as she moves up to Regent, she will be seeking a new District Deputy for their court.

State Chair Circulation Report - can be found on page 34-35 of the convention program book.

Michele reminded courts to request their membership list from National and make updates on a regular basis.

Report of the 2nd Vice State Regent, JoAnn Hoffman

JoAnn's full report can be found on page 24 of the convention booklet.

JoAnn reminded members to wear CDA purple proudly in the community, and to please consider serving as a District Deputy. She read a reflection, "She decided....she did."

District Deputy Supervisor Report- can be found on page 26 of the convention program booklet.

Report of the State Treasurer, Carolyn Downs

Carolyn's full report can be found on pages 24- 25 of the convention booklet.

Balance sheets and financials can be found in the printed convention program book on pages 71 and 72. Carolyn asked all to please refer to the written report for the State Treasurer in the Program book, but I would like to thank each of you for the privilege of serving as your State Treasurer. I have learned so much about the workings of our organization by serving in this capacity and worked in collaboration with a great team. I also want to commend each court for their generosity in the area of charitable contributions. As I read the many donations that have been made over and above the list of charities that CDA has designated, I was amazed by the giving from your treasuries on a local basis. Keep up your great work, CDA members, in Unity and Charity. I also want to thank Camille Dunnick publicly for her heroic efforts at the 2023 State Convention when I couldn't be there to help make things run smoothly. God bless you all!

The State Regent thanked the State Secretary and Treasurer for their great collaboration. She asked for any questions from the floor. None were received.

Report of the State Secretary, Mary Kay Zimmerman

Mary Kay's full report can be found on page 24 of the convention booklet.

Mary Kay shared that the State Court bills dues based on the information National has for each court. She asked courts to send any membership updates to National and State, and to include complete member information. Membership forms need to be legible. Courts can use 1 form and make needed copies.

Mary Kay reported the charitable contributions financial report.

The full report can be found on pages 62-68 of the convention program.

Total Charitable Contributions (reported by courts)

Local	\$100,417.27
State	\$37,222.23
National	<u>\$13,889.00</u>
TOTAL	\$151,528.50

State Regent Judy Konechne inserted that South Dakota was ranked number three in donations sent to National, only behind Texas and Pennsylvania. We need to be proud of our contributions.

A discussion was held about our state charities. A request was made to add the Carmelite Covent in Alexandria, SD to the list of state charities. After discussion, the State Regent asked to lay the discussion to rest. She encouraged local courts to make any donations to charities of their choice. Information about the convent will be included in the next newsletter for courts to learn more.

WEBSITE CONTEST/PUBLIC RELATIONS

Kim Euker, Court Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls, Chair

In Kim's absence, State Regent Judy Konechne awarded 1st place to Our Lady of Wisdom #2799 - Brookings SDSU Campus Court for their online facebook and website presence

State Regent Judy Konechne gave final instructions for the Memorial Mass and "Enjoying God's Creation" banquet. She also instructed voting delegates to report in the morning at 8:15 am for seating of the delegates. After making announcements, Judy Konechne, State Regent called the convention to stand in recess at 2:43pm.

MEMORIAL MASS

Memorial Mass for deceased CDA members was held on Friday, April 11, 2025 at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Spearfish, SD at 4:30pm with Most Reverend Bishop Scott Bullock as celebrant. Priests assisting included Fr. Jim Friedrich, State Chaplain and Deacon Phil Carlson. National and State Officers and all local court Regents were in proper attire at the Memorial Mass.

FRIDAY NIGHT BANQUET

"Enjoying God's Creation"

Convention attendees gathered Friday evening in the convention center. Second Vice State Regent JoAnn Hoffman was emcee for the evening. Most Reverend Bishop Scott Bullock of the Rapid City Diocese was the keynote speaker for the evening.

STATE ABUSE PROJECT

Carol Kling, Court Immaculate Heart of Mary #2654, Lemmon, State Chair

The State Courts in South Dakota have raised \$20,703.23 since our last convention. A check was presented to Grant Sasse of Catholic Social Services of the Rapid City Diocese for half of the proceeds. The same amount will be divided between abuse projects in the Sioux Falls Diocese.

The goal of the Lifesavers Abuse Project is to raise money to be used exclusively for abuse victims. But our secondary goal is to educate the public about what is happening around them.

I want to recognize 2 courts that went over and above in this area.

- Court Holy Heart #163 of Woonsocket, population of only 648, held a sausage pizza breakfast and raised \$570.

- Court St. Rita #534 of Watertown is awarded for their innovation by creating a poster that they hung around their community. Their success in raising \$2,683.30 is attributed to early announcements from their priest to the congregation giving information as to where the funds will be used and instructions to “bring your purses and wallets filled with cash to give to the victims of abuse”. Another key was that they prayed the Rosary for victims as they stuffed the baggies with LifeSavers and information. The last key, it was in their bulletin for 3 weeks prior to their project.

Carol reminded courts to participate by giving a minimum of \$50 to this project, even if a fundraiser is not held.

State Regent Judy Konechne presented The Bishop’s Burse, in the amount of \$10,351.62 to Bishop Scott Bullock of the Rapid City Diocese. The same amount will be given to Bishop Donald DeGrood of the Sioux Falls Diocese.

SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 2023

Prior to the business meeting, Fr. Jim Friedrich, State Chaplain, led Morning Meditation and Prayers. Father invited all to visit the adoration chapel, anytime throughout convention.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:18am am by State Regent Judy Konechne. Delegates were seated for voting and the doors were secured for voting.

State Secretary Mary Kay Zimmerman called Roll.

Following Roll Call, State Secretary Mary Kay Zimmerman and the Credentials Committee were excused to confirm the report.

The Opening Ode was sung.

While awaiting the credentials report, the State Regent shared information regarding a donation made from Lifesavers Against Abuse at the last convention. The Lourdes Center from the Sioux Falls Diocese returned the donation given to them, as they did not feel they served the mission meant for the donation. The State Board will research abuse shelters in the diocese and disburse the donation among them.

State Regent Judy Konechne called for the Credentials Report.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

Credentials Report: 8:30 am April 12, 2025

Halie Kirwan Court St Rose of Lima #700 Wagner, chair of the Credentials committee, gave the Credentials Report.

	Potential Strength	Actual Delegates Seated
National Rep/Officer	1	1
State Officers	5	5
Immediate Past State Regent	1	1
Past State Regents	6	4
Delegates	<u>117</u>	<u>78</u>
TOTALS:	130	89

Majority needed to pass: 66

Halie Kirwan Court St Rose of Lima #700 Wagner moved that the report be adopted.

THE REPORT WAS ADOPTED AND A QUORUM WAS DECLARED BY STATE REGENT JUDY KONECHNE.

Nancy Bambenek, 2nd Vice National Regent, gave instructions for the election procedures.

Paper ballots were distributed and voting took place for the Nominating Committee. Ballots were collected and counted by the Election Committee.

State Regent thanked everyone for complying so well with the election instructions and procedures and opened the convention doors for other attendees to re-enter.

State Regent, Judy Konechne instructed the Election committee to exit and tally the voting results.

The State Regent called for a short recess at 8:46 AM while the ballots were counted.

State Regent Judy Konechne called the convention to resume at 9:05am and instructed all to enter with proper credentials.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Patricia Raasch, Court Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls,

The State Financial Review was held on March 29, 2025 in Sioux Falls, SD at the Carolyn Downs residence. Book Officer Carolyn Downs, State Treasurer and Mary Kay Zimmerman were present along with the audit committee of Patricia Raasch, Ct. Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls; Kathi Lindquist, Ct. Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls; and Elsie Baye, Ct St. Thomas #1533, Humbolt. The Review Committee found the books of both the State Secretary and State Treasurer in good order.

Motion was made by Patricia to accept the Financial Review. Motion carried.

STATE MILITARY

Joy Saffel, Court Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls, State Chair

Joy reported that funds from 2023 Charitable Contributions were distributed to the VA in Ft Meade for a Peace/Healing Garden for hospice patients \$1,485.42. She continued to share that there are around 1400 homeless people in the Sioux Falls area on any single night, and in Rapid City approx. 1500, of which over 15% are veterans. The Barakah House in Sioux Falls, has a bedding for emergency situations specifically for homeless veterans. These veterans are not just in need of housing, but they have an opportunity to continue on with the project and take communication classes and learn how to interact with people in a social setting. Most importantly, they help find jobs and basic life skills, such as Conflict Resolution that they may have lost while they were out in the field; serving our country. I myself am a graduate from the Barakah House. With the partnership of the Veterans Administration, I received the much needed social and communication skills that I have to use today. I have gone on to be able to secure housing, fall in love with the man of my dreams, and marry all within the past 8 years.

I propose that we donate \$1800 to the Barakah House, so that they continue the mission of no veteran to ever be homeless.

ELECTION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mary Mayclin, Ct. Madonna #1952, Plankinton, chair of the Election Committee, gave the election report.

Those elected to the Nominating Committee are:

Mary Beth Freidel, Ct. St. James #2757, Chamberlain - 68 votes, chair
Casey Schmidt, Ct. Madonna #1992, Plankinton - 51 votes
Carol Nygaard, Ct. St Teresa of Avila # 2325, Beresford - 46 votes
Janice Stainbrook, Ct. Sacred Heart #280, Parkston - 44 votes
Joy Saffel, Ct. Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls - 42 votes.

Alternates are: Rita Kocer, Ct. St. Rose of Lima#700, Wagner - 41 votes. Donna Runge, Ct. St. Joseph #2754, Miller; Jackie Lofswold, Ct. St Thomas # 1533, Humboldt; Geralyn Malsom, Ct. St. Katharine Drexel # 2516, Rosco - all with 38 votes, and Anita Manning, Ct. St. Patricia #271, Sioux Falls - 32 votes. Donna Runge will serve as the 2nd Alternate as Jackie Lofswold and Geralyn Malson relinquished their nomination.

The results indicate that Mary Beth Freidel, having received the most votes, becomes the chairperson of the nominating committee.

State Regent Judy Konechne read the names of those elected to the Nominating Committee.

National Representative, Nancy Bambenek gave the charge to the 2025 State Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee signed their commission.

CIRCLE OF LOVE - LEADERSHIP

Aisha Talley, Court St Thomas Aquinas, #1949, Madison, Chair

Full Report is on page 31 of the Convention Program Book.

The following awards were announced.

First place: Court Madonna, #1952, Plankinton

Project: St. John's Centennial Celebration

Summary: St. John's was in need of volunteers to plan its centennial celebration. Court Madonna Regent Mary Mayclin put a call out for volunteers who would be interested in planning the event. Fourteen people attended the first planning meeting in June 2024, including nine CDA members. The 14 broke into committees that would plan the decorations, history, invitations, publicity, program, hospitality and reception for the estimated 300 guests including Bishop DeGrood, Fr. Richard Fox and Fr. Randy Phillips. The September 2024 celebration included mass, a meal, musical selections, memories from parishioners, and recognition of the youngest and oldest members of the parish. Decorations included display boards illustrating the history of the parish and information about the stained-glass windows.

Second place: Court St. Rose of Lima, #700, Wagner

Project: Joy for JCDA

Summary: The Court wanted to revive its JCDA program, which had been at a standstill since Covid. The group held a sign-up meeting in March 2024. A lot of religious education students attended the meeting, and seven joined JCDA at that event with five more joining later. Since that time, the JCDA members have created a video about the Eucharist and the proper way to receive communion, completed a cemetery project for prayers for the deceased, compiled a list of nuns in South Dakota for whom to pray, made rosaries for children, held a play and pray event, created prayer books, and held a Saint Wax Museum

event and Walk for Life event. Two CDA members are the JCDA leaders, but the leaders also include three other mothers who have volunteered to provide food or supplies for the meetings. Other CDA members also provide support where needed.

Third place: Court Saint Patrick, #1699, Kimball

Project: Summer VBS Wilderness Adventure

Summary: The Court and its members wanted to offer children an opportunity to continue their religious education with a weeklong summer Vacation Bible School. "Wilderness Adventure" took 48 children through the seven sacraments. About 15 CDA members participated as coordinators, teachers, snack coordinators, decorators, game leaders, craft coordinators and music coordinators. Daily activities included a daily virtue demonstration, a skit, a visit from a member who played the part of a saint, lessons, and music, crafts and snacks that coordinated with the day's featured sacrament. For instance, the snack for Holy Orders was to make fishing poles out of pretzels, rope licorice and gummy fish to represent our priests as "fishers of men." There were about 10-15 religious education students from grades 7-12 served as student helpers.

Honorable Mention: Court Our Lady of Lourdes, #2056, Hot Springs

Project: Being Informed Matters

Summary: The Court sent two delegates to the National Convention in New Orleans despite initial concerns that doing so would be too expensive for the Court to afford. Members decided that they would benefit from having representatives at the convention because those representatives could share all they had learned at the convention upon their return. The Court's goal was to continue to grow in Unity and Charity. The national convention would help them do that because it's a time for learning, sharing and networking with other CDA Courts. To help get their delegates to New Orleans, the Court gave each delegate \$600 to help defray costs. They held fundraisers (including a fall rummage sale) to help. The delegates brought back ideas and were also able to vote on key issues such as new national leadership boards, by-laws and new dress standards for officers as the use of robes is discontinued.

CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Deb DeFries, Court St. Rita #534, Watertown; Co-Chair

Deb DeFries, Convention Registration Co-Chair gave her report. There were 91 registered delegates, 27 alternates, 12 non-voting members. There were 28 first-time attendees. There were 134 registered for Friday lunch, 139 registered for Friday evening banquet, 129 registered for Saturday lunch, and 139 registered for the Saturday evening banquet.

CIRCLE OF LOVE - FAMILY

Bernice Cizadlo, Court Joan of Arc #846, Milbank, State Chair

In Bernice's absence, Regent Judy Konechne reported for the Circle of Love, Family state committee.

I received 23 reports for the Family spoke of the Circle of Love.

So many good reports made it difficult to select the winners of the awards.

First Place: #1708 Ct. Our Lady of Peace (for Sts. Simon and Jude Feast Day Celebration)

Second Place: #2757 Ct. St. James (for Welcome Summer-Family Movie Night)

Third Place: #1121 Ct. St. Ann (Mother's Day Bake Sale so we Teach Think Human from Day One.)

Honorable Mentions: #534 Ct. St. Rita (You Got This God) and #1584 St. Maria Goretti (Bingo Night)

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all the members who I'm sure enjoyed doing these projects.

Thank you, Judy, and all the state officers and all the committee members, as well as all the members for all they do for CDA.

CIRCLE OF LOVE - LEGISLATION

Mary Ellen Aamot, Court St Agnes #618, Brookings, State Chair

Mary Ellen's full report can be found on page 31 of the convention program book.

Awards given:

3rd place:	Court Madonna #1952, Plankinton for hosting a "Respect for Life" Gathering with guest speaker Dr. Patti Giebink to inform voters about Amendment G.
2nd place:	Court Our Lady of Peace #1708, Flandreau for hosting a fundraiser to defeat Amendment G.
1st place:	Court Sancta Maria #368 of Dell Rapids for hosting "Donuts for Life" to Defeat Amendment G.

The Regent called the convention to recess at 9:43 AM for a 15 minute break.

Convention was reconvened by the Regent at 10:10 AM.

CIRCLE OF LOVE - QUALITY OF LIFE

Gloria Bauske, Court St. Agnes #618, Brookings, State Chair

The report can be found in the State Convention Program Book on page 32 including a list of all the courts who turned in a report.

Gloria received reports from 30 local courts. These courts were recognized for their activity:

First place:	CDA Court St Thomas Aquinas #1949, Madison
Second place:	CDA Court St. Agnes #618, Brookings
Third place:	CDA Court Our Lady of Peace #1708, Flandreau

CIRCLE OF LOVE - SPIRITUAL ENHANCEMENT

Joan Krause & Diane Ange, Court St. Rita #916, Rapid City, State Co-Chairs

The report can be found on pages 33 of the Convention Program book.

Those courts receiving certificates at the State Convention for their entries in the Spiritual Enhancement Spoke of the Circle of Love for February 1, 2024- February 1, 2025 were as follows:

First Place: Court St. Ann #1121, Pierre, SD for their Befriender Ministry. This was a program where court members visited residents of the Nursing Home weekly for the entire year. They prayed with them and enjoyed getting to know the residents.

Second Place: St. Katharine Drexel #2516 of Bowdle-Roscoe-Hosmer, SD for their THINK prayer cards. They handed out the THINK prayer cards in their parishes suggesting that the prayer "Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let the perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed through the Mercy of God rest in peace. Amen" be said whenever a THINK sign was spotted on our highways.

Third Place: Our Lady of Lourdes #2056, Hot Springs, SD for the placement of a stained glass window of Jesus kneeling "In the Agony in the Garden" put into a beautiful wooden frame which was placed on the front door of their church inside a cross opening.

Honorable Mention: Our Lady of Fatima #1518, Orient, SD for their Seminarian Support for two brothers (grandsons and great grandsons of past members) on their journey. They send money for their missionary works, letters of encouragement and prayers. Each month two members are assigned to write to each of them.

For the year February 1, 2023-February 1, 2024 the following certificates were given:

First Place: Immaculate Heart of Mary #2654, Lemmon, SD for their River of Prayer. The prayers are written – found - or created by Sara Paige each month to cover those in need. She sends them out to each member electronically to unite them in prayer.

Second Place: Margaret Mary #2453, Mitchell, SD for their Spiritual Warfare by Rosary. They pray the rosary half hour before each monthly meeting plus at least 6 of their Court members visit EVERY nursing home or assisted living center in Mitchell to lead the rosary at least once a month and sometimes weekly.

Third Place: Mary Imelda #1014, Winner, SD, for their Rosary Mission. They place Rosaries in each pew of the church and have a cheat sheet in the back of the church for those who are unsure of how to pray the Rosary. Also all youth receiving First Communion, Confirmation and Graduating receive a Rosary. The Rosary is led before each Mass by a CDA member and KC member.

Also for the year February 1, 2023-February 1, 2024 we asked all Courts to list as many of the Marian Apparitions as they could with descriptions of the setting, who was involved and what was said or promised at each. With over 500+ apparitions to choose from we hoped to get a variety of answers. We had limited participation.

First Place: Court St. Rita #534, Watertown, SD. They listed more than a dozen with good descriptions of each.

Second Place: Court St. Katharine Drexel #2516, Bowdle-Roscoe-Hosmer, SD listed half a dozen apparitions.

CIRCLE OF LOVE - YOUTH & JCDA

Theresa Kocer, Court Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls, State Chair

Her report is found on page 30 of the Convention program book.

Recognition was given to three courts:

1st place St Rose of Lima #700, Wagner for starting their JCDA program. They have 7 to 12 girls participating to become an official JCDA court. They meet monthly.

2nd place St James #2757 Chamberlain for their Advent program with forty, K-8th grade students participating

3rd place St Mary #1423 Redfield for their pilgrimage to the Abbey of the Hills, open to all grades and they took a bus and if not full, adults were invited. Toured and said a rosary and had a sack lunch.

The State Regent Judy Konechne asked the two South Dakota National representatives to share their journey from serving on a local court to the national court. Brenda Anderson, the current National Secretary Treasurer and Barb Wiechmann, National Director both shared their stories and encourage all members to consider taking a local, state or national office.

State Regent, Judy Konechne called the convention to recess for lunch at 11:26 AM.

SATURDAY LUNCHEON

State Regent, Judy Konechne, was the Emcee for the luncheon, "Cherish the Past...Embrace the Future" held at Noon at the Convention Centre. This is geared for the youth.

Fr. Jim Friedrich led a prayer before the meal and the luncheon served.

Lunch was served before the following reports were given.

CIRCLE OF LOVE - EDUCATION

Susan Urban, Court Madonna #1952, Plankinton, State Chair

State Education Chair, Susan Urban gave the Education Committee report and announced the 2025 CDA Education Winners for the State of South Dakota.

1st Place - Court St. Thomas #1533 Humboldt – Support of our Seminarians

2nd Place - Court Our Lady of Lourdes # 2056 Hot Springs – Book & Bible Study

3rd Place - Court St. Rita #916 Rapid City – Supporting Veterans & New Moms/Babies

Education Circle of Love reports were received from 27 Courts

Court St. Katherine Drexel #2516 Roscoe – Seminarian Education & Support

Court St. Teresa of Avila #2325 Beresford – CDA Guest Night

Court Sancta Maria #368 Dell Rapids – Human Trafficking Is Not for the Big Cities

Court St. Patrick #1699 Kimball – Support Youth for Vocations Camp

Court St. Rita #534 Watertown – Feeding Children of the Plains

Court St. Joseph #2754 Miller – Forgive

Court Little Flower #1054 Highmore – Feeding Education

Court St. Frances #547 Gregory – Enhancing Young Minds & Souper Sunday

Court St. Ann #1121 Pierre – Educating About the Catholic Vote & Current Issues

Court Sacred Heart #280 Parkston – High School Scholarships

Court Our Lady of Peace #1708 Flandreau – Education through our Monthly Newsletter

Court St. Rose of Lima #700 Wagner – Backpack Blessing

Court Our Lady of the Black Hills #2805 Piedmont – National Education Contest

Court St. Kateri Tekakwitha #2635 Faith – Seminarian

Court Madonna #1952 Plankinton – Co-Host Reception for National Officers

Court St. Mary #1423 Redfield – Study Abroad in Rome

Court St. Monica #1436 Faulkton – Prayers with Religious Education Youth
 Court Mother Teresa #2510 Sioux Falls – CDA Scholarship
 Court St. Patricia #271 Sioux Falls – Nazareth House
 Court Mary Imelda #1014 Winner – Scholarship
 Court Holy Heart #163 Woonsocket – Red Rope Server
 Court St. Agnes #687 Vermillion – Education Contest & Scholarship
 Court St. Elizabeth #1362 Colman – Right to Life Breakfast

State Education Contest Winners

DIVISION 1			
ART			
1st Place	Celeste Meyer	#1708 Our Lady of Grace	Flandreau
2nd Place	Everly Haines	#1121 St Ann	Pierre
3rd Place	Kallie Zirbel	#1827 Pope Pius X	Webster
POETRY			
1st Place	Shaylee Zens	#2453 Margaret Mary	Mitchell
2nd Place	Caroline Zilverberg	#1121 St Ann	Pierre
3rd Place	Mary Clare Purcell	#2336 St Christina	Lennox
ESSAY			
1st Place	Gage Rezac	#2453 Margaret Mary	Mitchell
2nd Place	Haylee Kramer	#582 Immaculate Conception	Aberdeen
3rd Place	Jackson Hamiel	#916 St Rita	Rapid City
COMPUTER ART			
1st Place	Rhea Diegel	#1121 St Ann	Pierre
2nd Place	Finley Templeton	#916 St Rita	Rapid City
DIVISION 2			
ART			
1st Place	Camdyn Cox	#2510 Mother Teresa	Sioux Falls
2nd Place	Elizabeth Strand	#1952 Madonna	Plankinton
3rd Place	Hope Skoog	#2805 Lady of The Black Hills	Piedmont
POETRY			
1st Place	Elliot Huxford	#916 St Rita	Rapid City
2nd Place	Jeren Scheff	#1533 St Thomas	Humboldt
3rd Place	Hope Skoog	#2805 Lady of the Black Hills	Piedmont
ESSAY			
1st Place	Sawyer Goeden	#2510 Mother Teresa	Sioux Falls

2nd Place	Mafanta Koroma	#534 St Rita	Watertown
3rd Place	Jeren Scheff	#1533 St Thomas	Humboldt
COMPUTER ART			
1st Place	Michael Picbrel	#534 St Rita	Watertown
2nd Place	Madison Brown	#2510 Mother Teresa	Sioux Falls
3rd Place	Ty Konechne	#1699 St Patrick	Kimball
PHOTOGRAPHY			
1st Place	Brady Sage	#916 St Rita	Rapid City
2nd Place	Hudson Strand	#1952 Madonna	Plankinton
3rd Place	Jeren Scheff	#1533 St Thomas	Humboldt
DIVISION 3			
ART			
1st Place	Kennedy Brown	#2510 Mother Teresa	Sioux Falls
2nd Place	Logan Kontz	#1708 Our Lady of Peace	Flandreau
3rd Place	Grace Skoog	#2805 Our Lady of Black Hills	Piedmont
POETRY			
1st Place	Madison Brown	#2510 Mother Teresa	Sioux Falls
2nd Place	Jaxon Scheff	#1533 St Thomas	Humboldt
3rd Place	Logan Strand	#1952 Madonna	Plankinton
ESSAY			
1st Place	Megan Geraets	#368 Sancta Maria	Dell Rapids
2nd Place	Kelsey Fischer	#1827 Pope Pius X	Webster
3rd Place	Ally Gibson	#2754 St Joseph	Miller
MUSIC			
1st Place	Sabrina Strand	#1952 Madonna	Plankinton
PHOTOGRAPHY			
1st Place	Jaxon Scheff	#1533 St Thomas	Humboldt
2nd Place	Bailey Brueggeman	#2754 St Joseph	Miller
3rd Place	Julianna Gaspar	#1708 Lady of Peace	Flandreau
DIVISION 4			
ART			
1st Place	Laura Mayclin	#1952 Madonna	Plankinton
2nd Place	Amanda Konechne	#1699 St Patrick	Kimball

3rd Place	Jeanne Kirsch	#916 St Rita	Rapid City
POETRY			
1st Place	Mary Mayclin	#1952 Madonna	Plankinton
2nd Place	Carol Grode-Hanks	#2453 Margaret Mary	Mitchell
3rd Place	Rene Brand	#916 St Rita	Rapid City
PHOTOGRAPHY			
1st Place	Jeanne Kirsch	#916 St Rita	Rapid City
2nd Place	Irma Fees	#2056 Our Lady of Lourdes	Hot Springs
3rd Place	Vicki Munson	#2336 St Christina	Lennox

CDA STATE SCHOLARSHIP

Susan Gunn, Court Immaculate Heart of Mary #2654, Lemmon, Chair

The Scholarship Chairman, Susan Gunn, gave a brief report. For the second year in a row, a Rapid City girl, Emma Blum received the scholarship from Mount Marty. It was significantly higher than in the past because the scholarship funds at Presentation College in Aberdeen has closed and the scholarship fund was transferred to Mount Marty College in Yankton in the amount of \$12,945.90 bringing the total amount at Mount Marty College of \$34,375.59. When a scholarship is awarded, there is 4-5% of the total used but the principal is not used. In the future, the recipient will be a South Dakota Catholic Lady Student. were transferred to the Mount Marty Foundation.

Susan shared their court's successful fundraiser - Rhubarb Sunday. It was held after church on a Sunday in June. CDA members brought baked goods made with rhubarb for a free will donation. Over \$700 was raised for local scholarships.

The lunch recess expired and at 1:32 pm State Regent, Judy Konechne reconvened the SD 53rd Biennial State Conventions.

SPIRITUALITY

Saturday afternoon, State Chaplain, Fr. Jim Friedrich, shared a special reflection called "Little Signs", recognizing special moments of grace that become visible. He encouraged members to look for these signs and thank the Lord for the reminders of His love.

NEWSLETTER/SCRAPBOOK

Rene Brand, Court St Rita #916, Rapid City, Chair

Both the Newsletter and Scrapbook judging require 3 non CDA members to score the entries and I thank all six of these judges for their time and effort!

Seven entries were included in the newsletter contest this year. Thanks to all who entered as we had some excellent creative newsletters with a lot of work put into them. They had to meet the criteria set

forth to qualify. (Please access the requirements and score sheet for the newsletter on the State CDA website for future reference). All seven entries were in Category I (100 court members or less).

Winners:

Division I (1-4 newsletters issued/year)

1st Place Court St Rita #534 Watertown

2nd Place St Rose of Lima #700 Wagner

Division II (5 or more newsletters issued/year)

1st Place Sancta Maria #368 Dell Rapids

2nd Place Court Mother Teresa #2510 Sioux Falls

3rd Place Our Lady of Peace #1708 Flandreau

Eight entries were in the Scrapbook Contest judging for 2023-2025. The 1st place scrapbook was again a digitalized scrapbook entry. Many hours of work were evident in the scrapbook entries and I hope these courts are able to display their scrapbook for others in their parishes to view.

Winners:

1st Place Court St Mother Theresa #2510 Sioux Falls

2nd Place Court Our Lady of Peace #1708 Flandreau

Rene reminded courts that this is a good way to keep the history of the court alive.

NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE MESSAGE

Nancy Bambenek, 2nd Vice National Regent and National Representative

Be a Beacon of Hope, A Light in the Darkness

Good afternoon! It is an honor and a privilege to attend the South Dakota State Convention. I bring each of you greetings from our National Regent Susan Moné, our 28th National Regent and members of the entire board. I congratulate you on your 53rd Biennial State Convention. Your theme, "Open Your Heart to God's Love and Listen to Him", is most fitting based on your agenda. I see you plan to demonstrate and reflect on your theme through all the activities planned for this convention.

For the last 122 years, we as Catholic Daughters have served God, our parish, those in the community and each other. We have every reason to be proud of our great organization. Have you checked out the many directions for service? It started during World War I. Catholic Daughters rolled bandages for our troops, worked in soup kitchens to provide food to feed the hungry, worked clothing drives to cloth (clothe) the naked, supported pro-life rallies to protect the unborn and those unable to protect themselves, supported the church and clergy, held parties for the servicemen, volunteered as nurses and clerks, conducted sewing and knitting classes for the Red Cross and assisted the mentally and physically handicapped children and unwed mothers.

In 1925, when the Knights decided to no longer be affiliated with the Catholic Daughters, Mary Duffy answered the call and said yes to lead the Catholic Daughters from 1923 to 1950. She made sure the excellent work provided for those in need continued. Today, Catholic Daughters continue through love and compassion, to immerse in events and issues that affect our troops, women, children, and families.

We should take pride as members of Catholic Daughters knowing the differences we have made in the lives of others throughout the USA and the world.

Over the years, not only have we served those in need, but we have also evangelized and helped others to grow in their faith and to hear God's calling to come closer to him. When our CDA sister's heart is too heavy to pray, members help each other heal by keeping them in daily prayers. It is so important that we continue to lift each other up in prayer. As Catholic Daughters, we share in a special organization where members pray together, work together, laugh together and even cry together. We are truly a unique group of women working in unity and charity. You are here today because you share a love for Catholic Daughters and share with women our Catholic faith with a desire to grow spiritually and help to make the world a better place.

As we all know, since 2012 our membership has been declining. Is there no better time than now for us to come together to make this an area of focus? How do we do this? The answer is by sharing what is working well within your court to retain, and recruit members. Another way is to reach out to your Priest for permission to do talks after each Mass monthly. Plan a Meet and Greet after Masses once a month. There is no better way to let people know about us than by word of mouth. Have you tried holding a Membership Contest within your court?

Let's make sure at our meetings, we pray the Rosary or schedule a spiritual activity, meetings are scheduled with an agenda and are started on time, have members to share ideals, when speaking, speak clearly, create a Court Calendar, celebrate special moments, acknowledge all members and keep members engaged. One most important recruiting method is to have a regular meeting and open it to all interested women. It is also important to have a local membership team in place.

Each year, courts have questions on the number of members in their court. It only takes a minute to request a roster from the National Office. Just send an email to cdaroster@aol.com. Once the roster arrives, check it out with your membership books. This will help you understand your origins and future direction. If you have not done so, please review the Membership Survey results obtained from our members. The survey can be found in the Fall 2024 issue of the SHARE Magazine and on our CDA Website. Our main goal should be to retain the members we already have as well as to recruit new members. We must agree that members' expectations are different and changing daily. Remember, if some form of communication or action is not taken members will lose interest in CDA. So do not wait and see. Let us take the guess work out of engagement and retention and give all members the content they need and crave. Just think, there is no better way to do this than to Be a Beacon of Hope, A light in the Darkness. Remember, when a member leaves, they do not leave the organization, they leave the members.

A Membership Contest was rolled out on April 1st. The contest will run quarterly. The first three local courts with the most increase in membership for the quarter will be rewarded. Our Office Manager Martha will run the numbers at the end of each quarter.

- First prize \$100.00
- Second Prize \$75.00
- Third Prize \$50.00

Have you thought about why members leave, CDA or courts ending up in trouble or even disbanding? Let us look at a few reasons: officers experiencing difficulties in collaboration and mutual support, members complaining to others (especially in a meeting after the meeting), members not feeling included, or there is a lack of communication or no communication at all, officers/members do not collaborate effectively.

My dear sisters, as we always say, we are on this journey together. We must remember that God is in the center of our courts. Each member has skills, concerns, suggestions, and ideals. We must learn to listen to each other. When listening, please take a moment to listen carefully.

Let us talk for a moment about the Circle of Love. Is your court participating in the Circle of Love? The Circle of Love can give us ideals to utilize within our courts. For instance:

1. Education: Education is a key ingredient which significantly impacts the long-term success of our organization. Education helps us to fulfill and helps attitudes. The CDA Scholarship and Education Contest are also a part of the educational spoke.
2. Legislation – Our obligation is to become better informed on public issues, addressing the morale and human dimension, while supporting church teachings on human life, human rights, justice, and peace.
3. Family – Courts should continue to strengthen family relations by interacting with families. Projects for families should include programs or activities that assist and support the family. Families praying together, working together, and playing together will fully encompass the Circle of Love Program.
4. Quality of Life – We should continue to minister to the needs of all people. We are called to reach out with compassion and support, to be helping hands where there is pain, sorrow, and sickness.
5. Leadership – Throughout the past century, our organization has demonstrated consistent leadership. You as a CDA member can learn the skills and techniques of leadership and implement your talents as a future leader. Have you thought about becoming a leader in CDA?
6. Youth – Every CDA member can help fulfill goals of our youth program by committing themselves to sponsor, participate in, and/or support at least one activity. It is important that we continue to support our juniors. They are our future leaders.
7. Spirituality – Through the Spiritual Program in each local and state court, we help our members to nourish and develop their relationship with God. Out of those developing relationships come the realization of God's love and everlasting mercy.

We thank you for your continuous support of our National Projects and Charities. Our National Projects are: Holy Cross Family Ministry (Fr. Peyton Rosary), Laboure Society, Habitat for Humanity, National Center on Sexual Exploitation, and SOAR – (Supporting Our Aging Religious)

Our National Charities are: Apostleship of the Sea, Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Catholic Extension, Catholic Relief Services, Disaster Relief Fund, Human Life International, Missionaries of Charity (The Sisters of Mother Teresa) and North American College.

Each court is asked by National to donate at least \$20.00 to each of the National Projects and Charities. You are welcome at any time to give more. This year, we can honestly say, this amount is insignificant compared to the price of eggs. Based on your donations, Catholic Daughters have and will continue to make a significant impact on the lives of those in need.

Thank you for answering the call. Our National Regent Susan Mone requested disaster donations for the victims of Hurricane Helene in Western Asheville, NC, and Hurricane Milton in Tampa, FL. Thank you for your generous donations in the amount of \$84,000.00. Based on your donation, we were able to send a check in the amount of \$42,000.00 to the Dioceses of Charlotte, North Carolina and \$42,000.00 to the Diocese of St. Petersburg, FL. In addition, \$5,000 was sent immediately for each of these disasters from our National Disaster Fund. And do not forget your donations to the LA Fires. We have stayed true to our motto "Unity and Charity."

We have had so many questions on how to dispose of the robes. We are now turning to each of you for your help. We are asking you to share your thoughts on what to do with the robes. I am happy to take your suggestion back with me to our Executive Board.

Your National Regent and our National Chaplain invite you to join them on a twelve Day Pilgrimage following in the Footsteps of St. Paul in Greece and Turkey.

Please continue to share the magnificent work that you do individually and as a group within your courts. We take pleasure in reading about your accomplishments in your Newsletter and in the SHARE Magazine. Thank you for all you do and for sharing with us.

Please take a moment at your first meeting after convention to share information with your members who were unable to attend. Share the many amazing ideas you learned and what a wonderful time you and the other attendees had. Hopefully, sharing it will encourage them to think about attending the next convention.

It is important that we encourage members to utilize the various CDA tools to learn all they can about Catholic Daughters. Such as: The Quarterly Newsletter, SHARE Magazine, Facebook, Website, By-Laws, Daily Divine Mercy Chaplet online, Advent and Lenten Readings online.

In speaking about Facebook, if you have not signed up to be a member, please request to become a member of the private group. You must answer the three questions prior to approval. Thank you to our CDA Public Relations, Tom Panas for keeping us updated with added information on our CDA Website and assisting with the SHARE Magazine.

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to attend your state convention. I deeply appreciate you allowing me to fellowship with you. Always remember, you are the most valuable resource within our organization.

In Closing, let us be reminded of our Motto and Mission Statement. We have truly shown our commitment to others through our "Unity and Charity" by giving to those in need. Through our spirituality, we have strived to embrace the principle of faith working through love in the promotion of justice, equality, and the advancement of human rights and human dignity for all. We deeply feel that sharing love, compassion and respect is essential. Be that bright star that draws others to our organization.

Let us remain faithful in all we do. Be a faithful member of Catholic Daughters. It is important that we support our local courts by attending meetings, training, and volunteering at events.

Thank you for all you do for CDA, your parish, in your communities, for your time, energy, stewardship, hearts, and finances to help others in the service of Christ. May you continue to be blessed as you follow the theme of our National Regent Susan Moné, "Be A Beacon of Hope, A Light in the Darkness"

Nancy shared some additional items about our convention she was impressed with. She applauded the beautiful display of court banners, our respectful voting process, the exciting addition of our first campus court and JCDA being started. She also invited us to participate in the annual March for Life and the National Convention being held in July of 2026 in Coralville, Iowa; even suggesting we take a bus to each event. After allowing time for questions from the floor she applauded our delegation and shared her favorite memory which will be the beautiful faces she met here in South Dakota.

State Regent Judy Konechne responded to her message and thanked Nancy for her inspiring words.

Announcements were made before adjourning. An anonymous donor gave enough quilts to be donated to each court in the state, to use as they wish for a project fundraiser. Delegates were asked to choose and take one home.

At 2:25pm, after singing the Closing Ode, Regent Judy Konechne called for a recess to prepare for the Installation Mass and Banquet.

SATURDAY EVENING INSTALLATION MASS

The installation Mass was held at the Holiday Inn Convention Centre at 4:00 pm with State Chaplain, Fr. Jim Friedrich presided with assistance from Deacon Phil Carlson for the Palm Sunday Liturgy. National, State and Local court officers processed in for the Installation Mass.

State officers installed by the 2nd Vice National Regent, Nancy Bambenek were: State Regent Michele Sage; First Vice State Regent JoAnn Hoffman; Second Vice State Regent Jan Evans; State Secretary Mary Kay Zimmerman; and State Treasurer Cheryl Schaefers. Following Mass, the delegation moved to the reception hall at the convention center to prepare for the Social Hour and Banquet.

SATURDAY EVENING STATE BANQUET "BLESSED MOTHER, PILGRIM OF HOPE"

Saturday evening following the Installation Mass, the State Banquet was held at the Holiday Inn Convention Centre. First Vice State Regent, Michele Sage was the Emcee. Prior to dinner, State Regent, Judy Konechne announced and awarded the CDA Member Achievement to Halie Kirwan, Court St Rose of Lima #700 Wagner and the CDA Court of the Year to Court Madonna #1952 of Plankinton. Music was provided during dinner by Jacob Schwab. The keynote speaker for the evening was Sr. Jacque Schroeder, from the order of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Immaculate Conception. She offers Spiritual Direction at Terra Sancta Retreat Center and is a former Pastoral Ministry on Standing Rock Reservation, South Dakota at Diocese of Rapid City.

STATE FUNDRAISING

Jessica Lewis, Court Our Lady of Peace #1708, Flandreau, State Chair

Her report can be found on page 34 of the State Convention Program Book.

Jessica reported that the grocery raffle was selected once again as the main fundraiser for the state due to past success. Lucky Bucks, 50/50 raffle was held throughout the convention as well as the popular Silent Auction baskets donated by each court. The CDA Store was open during the convention with a few new items to purchase.

There were total sales of \$4,667.76 from the CDA Store. Many items in the CDA store were on consignment from the National CDA Store.

There were total sales of \$2,764.00 from the Basket Silent Auction Raffles.

There were total sales of \$741.00 from the Lucky Bucks 50/50 raffle sales.

There was a total of \$3,554.00 raised from the grocery raffle.

Winners of the grocery raffle were:

\$1200 – Abby Schiley - Rapid City

\$100 - (3 names) Diane Schurr - Roscoe, Dayle Blasius - Kimball, Cindy Riddle - Mitchell

Michele Sage, State First Vice Regent thanked Jessica for serving as our fundraising chair for the past 2 years and commended her on a job well done.

SUNDAY, APRIL 13, 2025

At 8:19am Regent Judy Konechne reconvened the business session of the 52nd Biennial State Convention.

The delegation sang the Opening Ode.

The 2nd Vice National Regent, Nancy Bambenek conducted the “Passing of the Medallion” ceremony for outgoing and incoming State Officers.

State Regent, Judy Konechne shared remarks of appreciation and presented a gift to the National Representative, Nancy Bambenek.

State Regent, Judy Konechne ordered that the ballots from this convention be destroyed.

State Regent Judy Konechne thanked the outgoing State Treasurer, Carolyn Downs. Carolyn gave her remarks after she was thanked for her service and a gift presented to her by the state board.

The new State Chaplain, Deacon Phil Carlson was introduced. He shared a spiritual message and his vocation story. He then proceeded to inform members about Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a non-profit organization with a mission that “No Child Sleeps on the Floor”. They build beds to donate to families in need, along with bedding. The next build will be May 10th, with a goal of building 120 beds, May 17th in Brookings with a goal to build 40 beds and another build later in Huron or Woonsocket with a goal to build another 40 beds. He encouraged courts to get involved in this great cause.

DISTRICT DEPUTY SUPERVISOR

JoAnn Hoffman, 2nd Vice State Regent, Chair

Pins were presented to outgoing District Deputies: Jan Evans, Ct. St Rita #916 Rapid City; Jan Kristensen Ct. Margaret Mary #2453, Mitchell; Janet Lynch, Ct. Pius X #1827, Waubay/Webster; Maureen Wernsmann, Ct. St. Monica #1436, Faulkton; Michelle Hulm Ct. St Kateri Tekakwitha #2635, Faith. The new deputies are: Mary Ann Whitman, Ct. Immaculate Conception #582, Aberdeen; Carolyn Downs, Ct. Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls; Lila Fisher, Ct. St. Kateri Tekakwitha #2635, Faith; Cindy Riddle, Ct. Margaret Mary #2453, Mitchell; Kathy Feuerhelm, Ct. Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls; Kristine Engelhardt, Ct. St. Rita #916, Rapid City; Tina Roth, Ct. Sacred Heart #280, Parkston.

STATE CHAIR SUPERVISOR

Michele Sage, 1st State Vice Regent, Court St. Agnes #916 Brookings

First State Vice Regent and State Chair Supervisor, Michele Sage recognized the State Chair. She presented them with gifts of appreciation and all outgoing Chair with a pin.

Outgoing State Chairs: Abuse - Carol Kling, Ct. Immaculate Heart of Mary #2654, Lemmon; Campus Court - Michele Sage, Ct. St. Agnes #618, Brookings; Fundraising – Jessica Lewis, Ct. Our Lady of Peace, #1708, Flandreau; Membership – Cheryl Schaefers, Ct. Our Lady of Fatima #1518, Orient/Polo; State Newsletter - Carol Grode-Hanks, Ct. Margaret Mary #2453, Mitchell; Parliamentarian – Joan Schueller, Ct. St. Ann #1121, Pierre; Newsletter Contest – Rene Brand, Ct. St. Rita, #916, Rapid City; COL-Family – Bernice Cizadlo, Ct. Joan of Arc #846, Milbank; COL-Legislation – MaryEllen Aamot, Ct. St. Agnes #618, Brookings; COL-Spiritual Enhancement – Joan Krause and Diane Ange, Ct. St. Rita #916, Rapid City.

New State Chairs: Abuse - Diane Baumiller, Ct. Sacred Heart #280, Parkston; Fundraising – Elsie Baye and Jackie Lofswold, Ct. St. Thomas #1533, Humboldt; State Newsletter – Laree Giovannettone, Ct. Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls; Parliamentarian – Carol Grode-Hanks, Ct. Margaret Mary #2453, Mitchell; COL-Family – Carolyn Downs, Ct. Mother Teresa #2510, Sioux Falls; COL-Legislation – Joan Schueller, Ct. St Ann #1121, Pierre; COL-Spiritual Enhancement – Sr. Maribeth Wentzlaff, Ct. St. Rose of Lima #700, Wagner.

The State Regent, Judy Konechne thanked the host courts and convention chairs for a wonderful convention.

State Regent Judy Konechne thanked the current state officers and Chaplain Fr. Friedrich for their service and leadership and presented them with gifts of appreciation.

State Regent Elect, Michele Sage presented the Immediate Past State Regent, Judy Konechne with gifts of appreciation from the State Board and local courts. The delegation gave her a standing ovation. Judy shared her response.

CONVENTION 2027

On behalf of Court Margaret Mary #2453 of Mitchell, Carol Grode-Hanks (with a special appearance by the Corn Palace mascot, Cornelius) invited members to Mitchell for the 2027, 54th biennial State Convention to be held April 15-18, 2027 at the Highland Conference Center.

The State Regent asked if there were any bids to host the 2029, 55th Biennial State Convention. Bids may be submitted to the State Board. Redfield, Woonsocket, Miller, Pierre, Orient/Polo, Kimball, and Chamberlain came forward to host the convention at Chamberlain.

Seeing there was no further business to come before the assembly, the colors were retired by the color guard.

A closing prayer was led by Deacon Phil Carlson and the Closing ode was sung.

State Regent, Judy Konechne adjourned the 2025 South Dakota Catholic Daughters of the Americas 53rd Biennial State Convention at 9:57 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Fuhrer, Convention Secretary Pro-Tem
Court Margaret Mary #2453, Mitchell