

## Introduction/History

At the Orlando Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Fall Board Meeting in 2020, newly elected President, Ginny Hagan established a Committee for Diversity of Membership at the request of our Spiritual Advisor, Father Miguel Gonzalez. Aimed at recruiting a more diverse membership, the Committee was to look at tools for attracting younger members, women of different racial backgrounds, and women who are not affiliated with a specific parish. The Diversity Committee became a subcommittee of the Membership Committee; Fran Clark-Fiorentino, Diane Druker, Ann Fivie, Georgette Hopperbrouwer, Mary Matheus, Linda Molica, Nanette Paratto-Wagner, and Rosi Schuhmacher volunteered to serve on this committee. Several people were asked or requested to speak to the group; after the second meeting, Marlene Braganza, Lisa Gill and Toya Martin joined the Committee. All meetings were held via Zoom.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines diversity as ‘*the fact of there being people of many different groups in society, within an organization*’. To the purpose of this committee, diversity includes age, culture, disabilities, location, and socio-economic backgrounds.

We need look no further than Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for the best example of how to attract a diverse group of women. He who welcomed the stranger, gathered around him as disciples a rather motley crew – from tax collectors to fishermen, men of strong will to those who doubted and questioned. He formed them and taught them, leading by example and educating them. As He did, so should we: inviting *all* women, and then supporting, empowering and educating them in spirituality, leadership and service to respond with Gospel values to the needs of the Church and society in the modern world. This is the mission of the National Council of Catholic Women – and our mission as well.

Please accept these, our humble offerings of prayers, activities and resources to help you and your affiliations reach out to all women of your parish. We welcome your feedback on your affiliations adaptations of any of these ideas; please use the contact form link (<https://www.odccw.com/contact-us>) and direct your form to Linda Molica.

May God bless your efforts, and may Our Lady of Good Counsel guide you.

Cathy Petroff

ODCCW Membership/Diversity Committee Chair 2020-2022

## **A Spiritual Understanding of Diversity**

There is great diversity among human beings. Physically we differ from each other in things such as size, body structure, skin color, and facial features. We also differ from one another mentally, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually.

One of the greatest challenges of a healthy spirituality is learning to tolerate the differences we find in one another and not to view these differences as threats to ourselves.

Moreover, a healthy spirituality should lead us to celebrate our differences and to see them as a reflection of God's beneficence and creativity.

Xavier University

*Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak;  
Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.  
Winston Churchill*

*An entire sea of water can't sink a ship unless it gets  
inside the ship.  
Similarly, the negativity of the world can't put you down  
unless you allow it to get inside you...*

