

2016 Sodality Unit Summaries

Christ Child Unit

The Christ Child Unit is one of the original units of the St. Jane de Chantal Sodality, dating back more than 50 years. The membership meets every month at a member's home or at the Seton Center. Since 1998, the group's principal project has involved supporting Centro Tepeyac, an organization dedicated to saving unborn children from abortion by reaching out to pregnant women, one-on-one, to meet their emotional, spiritual, and physical needs. To assist with this important work, the Christ Child Unit collects funds at the monthly meeting for Centro Tepeyac's ongoing needs. In addition, the Christ Child ladies support the mission of S.O.M.E. (So Others Might Eat) to help the homeless of Washington, D.C., by collecting men's white socks and toiletry items that regularly are delivered to S.O.M.E.'s headquarters by one of their members. For 14 years, the unit had hosted the annual General Sodality Christmas Meeting by providing decorations, refreshments, and drinks for this joyous holiday occasion. The unit now supports the St. Jane de Chantal community with its prayers. At each meeting, members pray for the persons on the parish prayer list and all those who have requested their spiritual support. We continue to pray for them during our private prayer. Over the more than the last half-century, the ladies of the Christ Child Unit have been a mainstay of the Sodality.

John Neumann Unit

The John Neumann Unit currently consists of about one dozen active members who regularly support the General Sodality's missions of faith and charity and also meet as a group approximately four times during the Sodality year to share communal prayer and undertake their own charitable projects that serve a wide variety of community needs. Over the years, its members have chaired such major Sodality events as the Anniversary Brunch and the Plant Sale and provided refreshments for the end-of-year May General Sodality Meeting, at which the Sodality scholarship is presented to a Junior Sodalist. The unit's individual charitable projects have assisted programs ranging from the McKenna Center shelter and the Lifeskills Workshop to the Children's Inn at the National Institutes of Health and the National Center for Children and Families. In 2010 and 2011, the unit supported the children's faith formation program at de Chantal's sister parish, the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in Washington, D.C., by donating school supplies, Spanish-language bibles, and standing crucifixes to assist the program's work with approximately 500 children. More recently, John Neumann members assisted Birthright of Montgomery County, the Little Sisters of the Poor, and the families of wounded service members residing at the Fisher House Complex of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center by donating funds or desired supplies to aid these local charities in their missions. In 2015, the unit has continued to support the Fisher Houses and Birthright of Montgomery County, and has added Saint Martin's Ministries on the Eastern Shore and the art program for residents at Bethesda Health and Rehabilitation to the list of charities it supports. The women of the John Neumann Unit treasure the close relationship they share and are thankful to be able assist these very worthwhile programs.

Regina Coeli Unit

The members of the Regina Coeli Unit and the Margaret Mary Unit reunited in 2011 and kept the name of the original unit, Regina Coeli. An experienced unit comprised of members who have served in various leadership positions within the parish over the past 25 years, Regina Coeli members' service includes chairing and supporting various fundraising and outreach efforts such as the parish Giving Tree and the parish Plant Sale. The unit is currently involved in several outreach projects including outreach to former unit members; strengthening the parish relationship with their sister parish, Sacred Heart parish in Washington D.C through collecting and delivering food donations every weekend, and initiating an outreach effort for soldiers during the Christmas holiday season. The unit will also be contributing again to a number of annual projects and programs that are near and dear to unit members, such as serving dinner to Catholic students attending the University of Maryland in support of the Catholic Student Services program at College Park. Attending to unit member's spiritual needs and prayer life is central to the unit's efforts. Meeting three to four times per year as a unit, Regina Coeli held a potluck and home mass last year. Praying the rosary, and attending the monthly sodality mass are other important ways the unit serves the spiritual needs of its members. A very special activity of the unit is a Christmas Tea that is held at Maplewood Park Place with the former members of the original Regina Coeli Unit.

St. Monica Unit

The St. Monica Unit assists St. Jane de Chantal Church and the surrounding community in many ways. The unit has worked with the Shady Grove Pregnancy Center, which hosts several meetings per month for young, single mothers in order to provide them with valuable information about their health and the health of their unborn babies. St. Monica members have prepared and delivered healthy, well-balanced lunches or dinners to be served at the meetings. Unit members and their children have also reached out to the elderly by visiting the Little Sisters of the Poor senior facility to play bingo and socialize with the facility's residents. In addition, the St. Monica Unit has donated many children's gifts to the Anacostia Health Services facility in Washington, D.C., which hosts a party for poor families whose children face many challenges growing up in their Anacostia neighborhood. The St. Monica Unit is equally involved in the activities of the General Sodality. For several years in the recent past, the unit provided refreshments and organized the Christmas craft activity for the December General Sodality meeting. The busy ladies of the St. Monica Unit enjoy working together to help the community. The group is enthusiastic about working on new service projects this year.

St. Gianna Unit

The St. Gianna Unit is an active unit comprised primarily of mothers with young and school-aged children. One key mission of the St. Gianna Unit is to help address the many needs of pregnant women, young mothers, children, and families in our community. This year we will be holding fund raisers and collections to support Crossway Community, a non-profit organization located in Kensington that provides women and children in need with housing, support and education. The education provided focuses on early childhood development paired with cultivating personal and profession skills for the women. The members of the St. Gianna Unit meet monthly to pray, to share their challenges and triumphs, and to organize their charitable activities. In addition, the St. Gianna Unit provides meals to its members and other parish families when extra support is needed. The unit recognizes that the spiritual and material needs of mothers and young families are profound, and its members strive through their charitable efforts and through prayer to address these needs with the guidance and blessings of St. Gianna and the Virgin Mary.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Unit

The St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Unit aims to bring female professionals, single and married - together for faith, fellowship, and fun, and for deepening its devotion to the Blessed Mother. The unit takes its name from the Seton Center, where the first meetings were held. Soon after, its members made a spiritual retreat to Emmitsburg, Maryland, home of the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, to visit the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, who was the first native-born citizen of the United States to be canonized a saint. For the past two years, the unit has organized the Anniversary Mass and hosted the Anniversary Brunch. The participation of couples for the brunches has been the largest in the parish's memory! With its member base growing, the unit is looking to perform service projects and to elevate their faith through prayer. To strengthen the spiritual growth of its members, the unit also incorporates an annual book club selection ("Rediscovering Catholicism" and "Breaking Through: Catholic Women Speak for Themselves") to encourage contemplation and to explore and understand different aspects of our faith. The unit membership also enjoys and engages in the events of the General Sodality.

Sodality Associates

The Associates unit consists of 125 prayerful and generous Sodalists who support the projects of the General Sodality and donate an annual gift to the parish. Associate members can always be found at the Fashion Show, General Sodality meetings, and other social Sodality events supporting the parish. This year, the Associates paid for the regilding of the tabernacle. Last year, they contributed to the purchase of our new hymnals. The year before, they helped to

purchase the security system for the school. Their generosity helped defray the cost of our new pipe organ. In past years, donations by the Associates contributed to a new sign for the driveway entrance to the church and the improved church audio system, and provided the outdoor statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, new stage curtains for Caulfield Hall, a beautifully woven banner of St. Jane de Chantal, flower stands for the altar as well as new vestments and new altar linens. The lifetime of service the Associates have provided to the parish and the community stands as a model for all Sodalists to emulate.

Junior Sodality

The Junior Sodality is an enthusiastic group of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade girls of St. Jane de Chantal School and Parish who seek to emulate the Blessed Mother and, in doing so, reach out to others through prayer and deeds. Each meeting is opened with the Sodalist's Prayer so the girls can reflect on what it means to be in Sodality. This past October, the girls served the meal and drinks at the opening Sodality meeting. This was a great opportunity for the girls to meet the women of the parish. In November, Junior Sodality participated in the Investiture Ceremony. As the holiday season approached, the Junior Sodalists visited Maplewood Assisted Living facility and sang Christmas carols for the residents and collected non-perishable food items for the Shrine of the Sacred Heart Food Pantry. In the new year, they will make decorations for Children's National Medical Center, visit Picturing Mary: Woman, Mother, Idea at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and help at the annual Sodality Plant Sale. The eighth graders have earned the privilege to assist at the Fashion Show, participate in the annual Sodality essay contest in hopes of earning a scholarship toward tuition at a local Catholic high school, and finally lead the annual May Crowning ceremony to honor the Blessed Mother. Through their prayers and many works of mercy, the Junior Sodalists are building a spiritual foundation that will help them become Catholic women who are strong in their faith.