

Sodality Executive Board Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2019

I. Opening

A. Prefect Kate B. led the board in the *Hail Mary*.

B. Judith S. moved that the minutes of the March 2019 executive board meeting be approved. Ellen L. seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved without objection.

II. Old Business

A. Red Cross Blood Drive wrap-up – St. Monica Unit chair Tracy M. reported via email that the chairs of the event, Diane H. and Debbie R., termed the drive “somewhat of a success.” The goal of the drive was to collect 24 units of blood, but the actual quantity collected was 18 units. There were a few “no shows” among persons who had made appointments, and some people were turned down for donation because they did not meet various Red Cross donation parameters. Overall, however, the Red Cross personnel were very happy with the results, and they noted that even one donation makes a difference.

B. Anniversary Brunch update – Maureen W. reported that all plans were on track for the brunch. Three couples have made reservations to attend. All are celebrating their 40th anniversaries. The brunch will take place on April 28. Maureen suggested that while this event is currently limited to couples celebrating their 25th, 40th, 50th and 60th and above anniversaries, we may want to consider broadening the criteria to include couples celebrating their 30th and 35th anniversaries in order to draw more interest and participation among younger members of the parish.

C. Junior Sodality Essay Contest wrap-up – Tracy and Prefect Kate B. reported that eight eighth-grade Junior Sodalists wrote essays to compete for the Sodality scholarship on April 8. Sodalist Kim F. drafted the question that was selected for the contest. The topic concerned the physician-assisted suicide bill that was narrowly defeated this year in the Maryland legislature. The girls were asked to write about what they would say as Catholic young women to try to convince state legislators who had supported the bill to convince them to vote against it in the event it is proposed again in next year’s legislative session. As of the date of the executive board meeting, the essays were being read and scored (using an established rubric) by a committee including Kate, Kim, Gail Q., and Mary B. The winner will be notified by May 1 so that she may make arrangements to attend the May 8 General Meeting in order to read her essay to the members.

D. Plant Sale update – Colleen H. reported that plans are on track. The large sign advertising the sale is already in place on Old Georgetown Road outside the church. She is finalizing plans with the Boy Scouts to borrow tents for the sale. She also has commitments from all of the drivers she needs to pick up plants on the morning the sale begins. Treasurer Lee M. is coordinating with Colleen to prepare the checks needed to pay the vendors, and Anne S. is working on our plant pricing. This weekend, Colleen will visit the vendors, deliver the checks, and select a Mary garden statue to raffle at the sale. A good number of volunteers have already signed up to work shifts at the sale, but there are still some empty slots. Colleen will send

another volunteer link to the unit chairs to forward to their members; she noted that if a unit chair copies her on a unit group email, she can also send the link directly to the members. Volunteers can also contact Colleen by email or telephone to let her know when they would like to work. She still needs to talk to Molly H. to make arrangements to use the parish credit card machine at the sale.

E. Gabriel Project sign update – Secretary Helen B. reported that she has contacted the coordinators of the Gabriel Project to inform them of the dimensions of the canvas Gabriel Project sign Father Giese has approved for display on the parish campus. She was told that our request would be placed in the queue for the organization’s sign maker and that we will be notified when it is ready.

F. Sodality Retreat – No further planning has been done since the March board meeting.

G. Succession planning for 2019-2020 executive board and unit leadership – No volunteers have come forward as of now to fill the vacant president’s position. The board discussed possible means by which to encourage volunteers to fill the president’s position and other vacancies, including talking up the need for leadership with members of the various units and possibly making a decision to rotate the presidency on a regular basis among the various units so that each unit would be responsible for filling the position in a given year. The board recognized that this last proposal might not be warmly received in some quarters.

Regarding the broader question of how Sodality can promote more active participation and be more welcoming and supportive, the following ideas (in addition to the plan already approved at the last board meeting to submit announcements to the parish bulletin) were proposed for consideration: (1) have members speak at Mass about fellowship and engagement in order to encourage more involvement in Sodality; (2) put less emphasis on the fundraising aspects of events, which are seen as daunting and discourage members from volunteering to take on leadership roles, and instead plan more spiritual activities; and (3) plan a members’ retreat specifically focused on prayerful consideration of how to make Sodality more meaningful in our lives. Another, more drastic, proposal that may warrant consideration is doing away with the current, unit-based structure of Sodality and forming one unitary body that sponsors only one or two projects in which all members engage.

H. Junior Sodality May Crowning – The Junior Sodality chose Audrey K. to serve as the May Queen. Tracy and Kate are working on plans for the May Crowning, which will take place in the Mary Garden following the Sodality Mass on May 5. They will check on the condition of the Mary crown in the Sodality closet, and they plan to have the May queen carry the crown to the garden on a silver platter from the closet. The queen’s court will carry pink roses that they will place in a vase at the foot of the Mary statue at the end of the ceremony.

I. May 8 General Meeting and Mass update – The Mass liturgy will be staffed by the Junior Sodality. Tracy is coordinating the roles to be played by the Junior Sodalists. Katie M. will serve as cantor. Tracy will enlist volunteers to distribute medals and prayer cards and serve as lector and gift bearers. She has one confirmed altar server already and will line up a second server. Bobby S. is confirmed as organist and will rehearse with Katie before Mass. Tracy and Helen will serve as Eucharistic Ministers. The Regina Coeli and St. Gianna Units will provide

refreshments for the meeting and will coordinate their plans. The Junior Sodality essay contest winner will attend the meeting and read her essay to the group.

J. April Sodality Union meeting report – No report was given.

III. New Business

A. May 15 Calendar meeting – The board was reminded that all units must be represented at the May 15 board meeting at which the 2019-2020 Sodality Calendar will be drafted and unit responsibilities will be assigned. If changes will be made in unit leadership for next year, unit representatives attending the meeting must be prepared to discuss their members' preferences for the various responsibilities coming up in the 2019-2020 year.

B. 2019-2020 *Chantacleer* – No editions of the *Chantacleer* were published during the 2018-19 Sodality year. The question was raised as to whether Sodality should continue producing the biannual newsletter for its membership in the 2019-2020 year. Kate opined that given the low level of participation we have experienced over the last several years, it may be more useful to focus our efforts on advertising our activities more broadly through frequent submissions to the parish bulletin and *Our Parish Times*. The board agreed that this approach is worth trying. As noted in the March board minutes, the Junior Sodality will submit a short summary of its activities for one of the May parish bulletins as the first such effort.

C. Submission of articles to *Our Parish Times* for 2019-2020 Sodality year – As noted above, the board agreed that Sodality should make a concerted effort next year to publicize its activities on a regular basis through *Our Parish Times*. Helen will confirm that Sodalist Suzanna C. continues to be the parish's correspondent for the paper.

D. Upcoming Sodality Union responsibilities – The Christ Child Unit will attend the May 4, 2019 meeting to be held at St. Anthony of Padua Church, 1029 Monroe Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20017. Mass will be at 8:00 a.m. followed by the Rosary. Gail Q. will check with her members to see who is available to attend.

E. Upcoming Sodality Sunday Mass responsibilities – The Junior Sodality will staff the May 5, 2019, Sodality Sunday Mass before the May Crowning ceremony. Tracy will distribute medals and prayer cards, and two Junior Sodalists will serve as gift bearers.

F. Passing of Sodalist Mary F. – Longtime, active Sodality Associate Mary F. passed away unexpectedly earlier this week. Her funeral will be held at St. Jane's on April 23. In light of the many leadership roles she held in Sodality over the years and her active participation in the Fashion Show for the last several years as the designer of the Fashion Show logo, Liz S. moved that Sodality send flowers to her family as an expression of condolence. Gail seconded the motion, and it passed without objection. In a related motion, Colleen moved that the board authorize the expenditure of up to \$250 for this purpose. Judith seconded the motion, and it passed without objection. Lee will order an arrangement of white flowers with a blue ribbon reading "Sodality" from Suburban Florist. It was also the consensus of the board that representatives of Sodality should gather at the beginning of the visitation period in the church prior to the funeral to pray the Rosary for the repose of Mary's soul. Helen will send an email to

the unit chairs to forward to the membership announcing that Sodalists who are available should plan to arrive at church at 10:00 a.m. and gather near the Mary statue for recitation of the Rosary before the funeral Mass. Helen will also send a Mass card to Mary's family on behalf of the General Sodality.

IV. Reports

A. Prefect – Kate had nothing to report in addition to her matters that were covered during earlier points in the meeting (see above).

B. Treasurer – Lee reported that the balance in the Sodality treasury as of the date of the executive board meeting is \$37,424.20. We received a check for \$3,710 from the parish office for Fashion Show payments made by credit card and through Faith Direct. To date, the profit from the Fashion Show is \$8,391.18. However, Lee understands that there are still a couple of outstanding items of revenue and expense yet to be submitted. As of the date of the board meeting, we have not paid a deposit to Columbia Country Club for next year's Fashion Show. Lee has called Columbia about this so that the club will send Gail the form she needs to sign to hold next year's date.

C. Units

1. Christ Child – The unit met before the March board meeting and has not met since. It has nothing new to report. One of their active original members has had serious medical problems but is getting better.

2. John Neumann – The unit met on April 9. Its charitable project for the meeting involved collecting monetary donations for the Gabriel Project of Montgomery County Cluster. The members discussed the response to the unit's Fashion Show raffle offerings and will take that information into account in deciding next year's donations. They also decided what responsibilities the unit wishes to fulfill for the new Sodality year so that they may be expressed at the May calendar meeting. In addition, the group discussed succession planning issues for the new Sodality year. They endorsed Sodality's plan to submit paragraphs to the parish bulletin in an effort to share information about what Sodality is doing. They also made the following suggestions: encourage women whom members know in various units to serve on the executive board; talk to mothers of school-age children about the benefits of joining Sodality; invite Sodalists to participate in a brain-storming session and put out a Doodle Poll to collect ideas; and rotate the presidency of Sodality among the various units so that the responsibility will be broadly shared. Finally, the unit planned its leadership roles and charitable projects for next year.

3. Regina Coeli – The unit is preparing for the Anniversary Brunch (see above). Unit chairs Maureen and Gina C. suggested that Sodality consider hosting a morning coffee/information session at the beginning of the school year for mothers dropping children off for school at St. Jane's in order to share information about Sodality and encourage interest in joining. They noted that this kind of session could also be planned during afternoon carpool or that an information table could be set up during that time period to invite school mothers to join.

4. St. Monica – The unit is in the process of scheduling the date with Father Keith for the home Mass they plan to have in late May or June. The group is scheduled to serve dinner at the University of Maryland Catholic Student Center on May 8, which is the same date as the May General Meeting. Accordingly, their members will be engaged in several activities that night – some will be cooking for the dinner, others will be serving it at the university, and still others will be attending the General Meeting.

5. St. Gianna – No report. It was noted that the unit needs to turn in its dues for this year to Lee.

6. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton – The unit had a great meeting and enjoyed a delightful dinner on April 14 at a member's home. They engaged in a lively discussion about the culture of death in our society. They plan to help with the Plant Sale and attend the May General Meeting. Several members are planning informally to attend "The Pilgrim's Progress" movie based on John Bunyan's book this coming weekend.

7. Associates – A prospective new member has expressed interest in joining the group. Ellen will send a Mass card to Mary F.'s family on behalf of the Associates.

8. Junior Sodality – On April 5, 22 Junior Sodalists helped to clean up the Mary Garden under the supervision of their leaders. They were grateful to have in addition the guidance of Ellen and Jackie V. Gail could not attend but sent along some guidelines for the project. She will also let Colleen know what new plants are needed to fill in the garden. The girls are looking forward to planting the new plants.

V. Closing Prayer

The board ended the meeting with a prayer.