

Sodality Executive Board Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2019

I. Opening

A. Prefect Kate B. led the board in the prayer *Hail, Holy Queen*.

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

II. Old Business

A. Fashion Show – The board expressed its sincere thanks to Tracy M. and Karen S. for co-chairing the Fashion Show. Tracy reported that she and Karen believe it was a great success. We had 196 guests in the Columbia Country Club dining room, and another 15 models and facilitators were served in the sunroom. We are still awaiting audited numbers for expenses and income; the receipts for reservations, patron donations, and raffle tickets purchased through Faith Direct have not yet been received (131 reservations were paid by check). There were some glitches with Faith Direct about which Tracy and Karen will follow up with Molly H. The names of a few women who made patron donations were not captured in order to list them in the program, and some women who tried to make late reservations through Faith Direct were unable to input their credit card information, so they sent checks instead. Also, the \$1.50 transaction fee was not automatically added by the credit card machine program when attendees purchased raffle tickets at the luncheon using the credit card machine.

Treasurer Lee M. has sent the final payment of \$2,744.46 to Columbia. We saved some money because we had a larger number of girls attending who ate the children's meal rather than the adult luncheon. Tracy and Karen have a number of suggestions to improve the reservation forms for next year. They suggest that we offer gluten-free and vegetarian meals in addition to the children's meal and that we redesign the reservation form in order to include those options so that attendees can indicate their preferences. They also feel that since we now have so many young girls attending with their mothers, we should include a place on the reservation form where a mother can include her daughter's name and indicate that they are attending as a couple. Tracy and Karen believe that this would assist the person in charge of reservations in planning seat assignments.

They also suggest that in the future, the reservation fliers should be printed on white or a light pastel paper rather than colored paper chosen to match the year's theme colors. We have chosen paper colors to try to match the theme in the past, but sometimes (as was true this year), the color of the paper is simply too dark to make the form easily readable. Moreover, Tracy and Karen suggest that we decrease the number of reservation fliers we order, since we have approximately 480 fliers left over after having distributed 560 fliers to the school families and another 480 fliers to parishioners at church. We sold more ads for this year's program than we did last year, and payments for only four ads were outstanding by the date of the board meeting. The raffle and door prize donations were wonderful and very popular with the attendees. Thank you notes have been sent to all who purchased ads and donated items.

B. Time and Talent Fair – Patty B. reported via email after the board meeting that Sodality's table at the Time and Talent Fair received many visitors. Four women expressed interest in Sodality. Patty has followed up with them all. One woman has decided that she wants to join the St. Gianna Unit; the other three are still deciding what they want to do. Patty noted that the new poster Kate created is quite eye-catching and nicely highlights Sodality activities.

C. Morning of Recollection – Kate talked to Molly H. about possible dates for this event. However, the only Saturdays now available would be April 13 (the date of the de Chantal Dash school fundraiser) or a date in late May, after the Sodality year has ended. The board agreed with her assessment that neither date is workable. Therefore, unfortunately, we will not present a Morning of Recollection before the end of this Sodality year. We hope that the need this serves can be addressed next year.

D. Red Cross blood drive – Diane H. and Debbie R. of the St. Monica Unit have plans well in hand. Caulfield Hall has been booked for April 14. Announcements in the parish bulletin soliciting donors will begin to run this coming weekend, and information about the sign-up link will be available. The website is now live, so donors can make their appointments. Signs will be posted to advertise the event, and Debbie is going to talk to Molly tomorrow about including an announcement about the drive on the electronic signboards in the church gathering space.

E. Anniversary Brunch – The brunch will be held on April 28, and it will again take place in the Seton Center. Gina C. and Maureen W. are making the arrangements. The food will come from Balducci's. Parishioners celebrating their 25th, 40th, or 50th anniversaries and above are invited to attend. The announcement in the parish bulletin will begin to run shortly.

F. Junior Sodality Essay Contest – Kate and Tracy reported that the essay contest will take place from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in Caulfield Hall on April 8. Because Easter is so late this year, we cannot delay holding the contest until after Easter break. Eighth grade girls who have been members of Junior Sodality for at least two years are eligible to compete; there are 13 girls who meet this requirement. Junior Sodality co-chair Amy K. will not proctor the contest because her daughter is competing. Kate is considering possible topics for the essay question, and is working on putting together the slate of reviewers. They will follow a scoring rubric as they did last year. Tracy suggested that perhaps a question concerning the dignity of life might be a good choice since it is very timely due to the state legislature's consideration of the assisted suicide bill.

G. Plant Sale – Colleen H. submitted a written report. The plants have been ordered, including a 33-flat pre-order submitted by one of our parishioners. Once we receive final invoices with prices, we will be able to send checks to the vendors. New signs advertising the sale have been made and delivered, and materials to refurbish and update the large wooden sign have been purchased. Colleen has advised Molly of the May 3-5 sale dates and requested a bulletin announcement. The de Chantal maintenance crew is also aware of the sale dates and our set-up needs. Colleen will shortly be sending a SignUpGenius link to the unit chairs to solicit volunteers to help with the sale. The remaining tasks include reserving the credit card machine with Molly, contacting the Scouts or the CYO for tents, asking eighth grade teachers if some students can assist with the plant unloading on the day of delivery, requesting the Sodality cash

box from Lee, selecting and purchasing a Mary statue from Sun Nursery to raffle at the sale, and coordinating pricing and tags with Anne S. Colleen asks that we pray for good weather on the weekend of the sale.

H. Sodality Retreat – Kate talked to Father Giese about our desire to hold a Sodality retreat on September 22, 2019, at Our Lady of Bethesda Retreat Center (OLOB). While supportive of the idea of a retreat, Father indicated that he wanted it to be held on the parish campus and be open to all women of the parish, the way the recent men’s retreat was. The executive board discussion of this matter noted that in the past, Sodality has held its retreats away from the parish (*i.e.*, at the Dominican Retreat Center in McLean, VA before it closed), and that the desire for a fall retreat was prompted by the growing concern that our Sodality is at a crossroad due to declining engagement of the members and widespread lack of members’ willingness to serve in leadership positions. It was noted that it is important that Sodalists have an opportunity to discuss whether Sodality is still relevant to their lives and how it can be made more meaningful to them. Moreover, among the reasons why OLOB is a good venue are the facts that it is geographically close and convenient and its staff has expertise in facilitating retreats and arranging for good speakers and retreat leaders. Kate will talk to Father Giese again about these concerns and will form a retreat planning committee. In the meantime, however, OLOB has scheduled another group to fill its September 22 date (the only opening it had for the rest of 2019), so we will need to look for other venues (possibly the Washington Retreat House) or ask OLOB whether it has had any cancellations. It was also suggested that perhaps Sodality could hold a retreat for all women of the parish on the parish campus in the spring in lieu of the 2020 Morning of Recollection in order to address Father’s concerns.

I. Gabriel Project sign update – Helen reported that she has obtained from Ed B. the dimensions of the sign (130” wide by 35” high) that Father Giese wishes to have the Gabriel Project provide for the parish to display. She will contact the Gabriel Project representatives to advise them of this information.

III. New Business

A. Succession Planning – The board discussed the pressing issue of how to lead Sodality in the 2019-2020 year. It was agreed that the current situation – in which the prefect, secretary, and treasurer split the responsibilities of the president in addition to performing their regular tasks – is untenable for the long term, and that it is extremely important to find a volunteer to serve as president in order to fill all four of the officer positions next year. It appears that the problem we face is not so much a question of numbers that can be addressed through recruitment of new members, but rather the fact that there is a significant imbalance in the level of participation across Sodality’s existing membership. It was decided that we need to find ways to make Sodality more appealing by improving our marketing so as to encourage more participation by the members. The board agreed that one way to start that process would be to submit a regular announcement for the church bulletin to publicize what the units are doing and invite women to participate. It was decided that the units will rotate the responsibility to submit a short write-up of their current activities so that such announcements may be included in the bulletin on a monthly basis. Since May is the month of Our Lady and the Junior Sodality is participating in a number of projects that month, Tracy offered to prepare the announcement for a May bulletin

summarizing what the Junior Sodality is doing. The subsequent assignments will be included in the unit responsibility calendar to be prepared at the May calendar meeting.

B. Junior Sodality May Crowning – This ceremony will be held in the Mary Garden immediately after the May 5 Sodality Sunday Mass at 10:00 a.m. Kate, Tracy, and Amy are organizing the ceremony. The Junior Sodalists will select the May Queen at their meeting on April 5. The crown for the ceremony should be in the Sodality closet. The girls in the court will carry flowers. We will need to coordinate with the new parish Director of Liturgy and Music.

C. May 8 General Meeting and Mass – The final meeting of the General Sodality year will be Wednesday, May 8. The Junior Sodality is staffing the Mass liturgy and will participate as altar servers, lector, cantor, and gift bearers, and will distribute medals and prayer cards before Mass. Tracy and Helen volunteered to serve as Eucharistic Ministers at the Mass. Helen will contact organist Bobby S. to coordinate the music for the liturgy. Refreshments for the meeting after the Mass will be provided by the St. Gianna and Regina Coeli units. The Junior Sodalist who wins the essay contest will read her essay at the meeting, and we will thank the Sodalists who served as event chairs during the year.

D. Upcoming Sodality Union responsibilities –

1. April 6, 2019 meeting – St. Gianna Unit will attend. The meeting is to be held at St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church, 1908 North Capitol Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20002. Time to be announced.
2. May 4, 2019 meeting – Christ Child Unit will attend. The meeting is to be held at St. Anthony of Padua Church, 1029 Monroe Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20017. Time to be announced.

E. Upcoming Sodality Sunday Mass responsibilities –

1. The executive board staffs the April 7, 2019 Sodality Sunday Mass. Gina C., Ellen L., and Judith S. volunteered to distribute medals and prayer cards and serve as gift bearers.
2. The Junior Sodality staffs the May 5, 2019 Sodality Sunday Mass. Tracy will distribute medals and prayer cards, and two Junior Sodalists will serve as gift bearers.

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 current balance in the Sodality treasury is \$33,479.95. She delivered a check for \$970 representing the Associates' gift to the parish to Father Giese. It will pay for red dalmatics for the deacons. She has received \$95 in dues from the Junior Sodality.

C. Units

1. Christ Child – The unit had nothing new to report.
2. John Neumann – The unit has not met since the February executive board meeting and had nothing new to report.
3. Regina Coeli – The unit was unable to serve its planned dinner at the University of Maryland Catholic Student Center on February 20 due to inclement weather. The food the members prepared was donated instead to Bethesda Cares. Gina and Maureen are working on the Anniversary Brunch. The unit held a St. Patrick's Day party at Maureen's house on the evening of March 16.
4. St. Monica – Father Keith will celebrate a home Mass for the unit in May. The members plan to serve dinner at the University of Maryland Catholic Student Center on May 8 (because this is also the night of the last General Sodality meeting, only a few of the unit members will serve the dinner). The unit had a good turnout at the Fashion Show and filled an entire table.
5. St. Gianna – No report.
6. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton – Liz S. reported by email. The unit has not met since the last executive board meeting. They had a good turnout at the Fashion Show – nine members and their guests attended. The following day, March 3, three members of the unit staffed the Sodality Sunday Mass. The group will meet again on April 14.
7. Associates – The group had nothing new to report.
8. Junior Sodality – The group had a good turnout at the Fashion Show and filled an entire table. Their next meeting will take place on April 5, and they hope to start the clean-up of the Mary Garden that day. While they will make the garden tidier, they will not weed until they have received direction from the gardeners as to what specific items should be pulled. The eighth-grade girls are looking forward to the essay contest.

V. Closing Prayer

The board prayed *The Hail Mary* to close the meeting.