

Chattanooga Deanery 2012 Convention Report

The year 2011/2012 brought with it many successes and challenges for the Chattanooga Deanery. I wish to highlight three of these below.

First, we had two new affiliates: Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Soddy Daisy (new) and Saint Augustine on Signal Mountain (returning). Both of these affiliates have strong leadership and interest in making the Council of Catholic Women a part of the life and mission of their parish. Our deanery moderator, Msgr. Al Humbrecht, pastors Holy Spirit while Rev. Joseph Kuzhupil pastors St. Augustine; both of these dedicated priests are committed to supporting the mission of CCW in these parishes.

Secondly, CYCW (Council of Young Catholic Women) is going strong at Notre Dame High School in Chattanooga. Fourteen young women-to-be have participated in this CCW mentorship program designed as an introduction to CCW for high-school girls. CYCW has focused primarily on pro-life activity/fund-raising together with an in-depth, monthly study on the nature and dignity of women. It also had a very successful overnight retreat at a lake-house shared by a friend of CYCW. CYCW parallels "Fraternus" a Catholic young men's virtue-training group also developing at NDHS. It is projected that the two groups will collaborate on a limited basis next year.

Thirdly, our deanery faces many challenges which I believe can best be summarized in reference to the social justice principle of *subsidiarity*, a teaching which affirms the primacy of local governance and defines centralized authority as having a subsidiary function in the life of an organization. While Chattanooga affiliates govern themselves and rightly conduct their activities as they see fit, there has been *a tension between deanery initiatives and local affiliate plans and activities*. With the current economic and social demands on 21st century women, there is less time, money and energy available for CCW. Once a woman meets the basic obligations of her family and professional life, the next rightful claim to her time belongs to the local parish community. Getting involved in deanery or diocesan initiatives is one or two steps removed from this, and often there just isn't any more time and energy left. As such, high-quality programming notwithstanding, participation in deanery events continues to be low. One affiliate practically refuses to participate in deanery or diocesan events and initiatives. What is this message? This president believes that the issue needs exploring. For the remainder of this leadership term, our deanery board will focus on how to be a resource for CCW affiliates without competing for the time and energy of the women in their affiliates. This president recommends replacing deanery projects with visits to local affiliates in direct support of *their* projects and mission within the local church community.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa D. Tuggle, Chattanooga Deanery CCW President, 2011 - 2013