



**A History of Saint Augustine
Blessed Virgin Mary,
Immaculate Queen of Peace Sodality
1892 - 2021**



Saint Augustine's Sodality was organized on June 18, 1892, for the expressed purpose of performing both spiritual and temporal works and to assist the Pastor of the church. In the early years, the Sodality was strongly associated with the Prima Primaria in Rome.

The Sodality seeks to provide a deep spiritual formation to its members and to foster genuine love for Mary and for all humankind. The body encourages Sodalists to seek to live virtuous lives by abiding in the moral teachings of the Church, and to facilitate the sanctification of Sodalists to equip them for the work of building up the Kingdom of God on Earth.

The Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculate Queen of Peace Sodality preserves the rich heritage of St. Augustine as the Mother Church of African Americans in the Nation's Capital by seeking to not only to nourish the spiritual lives of its members but also to reach out in loving response to the needs of its neighbors. The group proclaims themselves as Sodalists of Mary and as her children by promoting devotion to the Rosary, by seeking to intimately know Christ, Jesus through the intercession of his Blessed Mother and by example of their lives.

For several years, the Sodality was considered one of the largest Sodalities in this Archdiocese and its numbers included both men and women. The first Prefect was a man named, Mr. Stewart. Later, Miss Carrie Bloise served as Prefect for fifteen years. In 1947 under the spiritual direction of Father John D. Benson and Mrs. Erma B. Cornish, the Sodality was reorganized to conform to the rules of the Sodality Union of the Archdiocese of Washington DC and Queen's work, the National Headquarters of the Sodality in the United States. At that time Mrs. Cornish was selected Prefect of the newly formed body and a constitution was drafted and approved. During that time, the sole remaining male member had died, and a new chapter was obtained from Rome, thus making the reorganized Sodality, a Woman's Group in March 1952.

This action precipitated an increase in spiritual programs: Sodalists attended Mass and Holy Communion in great numbers; their faith was manifested through the Enthronement

of the Sacred Heart and Night Adoration in the home as well as on special occasions initiated by Mrs. Marguerite Aveille, when she was chairman of the Eucharistic Committee. Inception of new members at that time was done on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception but later was held in the month of May and continues today. A now deceased long time member of the Sodality, Miss Lucinda Dyer, introduced the idea of forming the block Rosary which was prayed in various homes throughout the neighborhood.

As the Sodality developed to a higher level of spirituality, additional Committees were formed under the leadership of the Prefects these committees performed a variety of duties: The membership Committee recruits new members and establishes and maintains accurate records of attendance at meetings (Mrs. Lillie White instructed the new candidates); The Hospitality Committee projects a pleasant and receptive atmosphere thorough planning and implementation of social activities. The Sodality Development Committee serves to enhance the religious life of Sodalists by activities such as Days of Recollection and Retreats; Liturgy and Ecumenism Committee exemplifies the principles and practices of the knowledge of the Scriptures through group discussions and Services; Ways and Means Committee is primarily responsible for preparing the Annual Budget for the Sodality through fund raising projects. The Communication Committee in earlier times, chaired by a then shut in' Mrs. Beatrice Washington was formed to give care to sick and shut-in Sodalists through visits, prayers, and other acts of charity.

This Committee also attends wakes of deceased members and stands Honor Guard at funerals, wakes of deceased members, and stands Honor Guard at funerals as the body enters and exits the Church. The aforementioned Committees and all others have contributed to the growth of the Sodality. During the ensuing years, St. Augustine's Sodality has established ongoing scholarship for students at our school, St. Augustine Catholic School.

Under the leadership of Miss Pauline Johnson (known to us as Mrs. Pauline Jones) increased apostolic activity was begun. On the second Sunday of the month, Sodalists visited the Home of the Aged at Blue Plains and delivered clothing and baskets of food to the needy of the Parish. Every First Friday over two hundred children were served Communion Breakfast in the school. When Teresa Posey became Prefect, she expanded the program to include a Sunday Nursery for Toddlers. The Annual Drive to raise funds for the Church was started by Mrs. Mattee Davis and Mrs. Hattie Farrell, both deceased. The

Drive is still in practice today and the receipt enables the Church to pay some bills that slack off during the summer months when parishioners vacation out of town. Trips to Atlantic City, New York, and Mother Seaton's Shrine in Emmetsburg, Maryland, are a few of the Sodality sponsored events held over the years. Two annual contributions to the Church, due to the tireless efforts of Mrs. Clarisa Wiggins, is the George Washington Day Bingo and Dinner and the September Card Party. Mrs. Wiggins was the first Chair of the St. Augustine's International Committee. Mrs. Ardell Mathew Payne was the youngest Sodalist elected Prefect of the Sodality.

St. Augustine Sodality is constantly growing, and we are blessed with an influx of young women eager to join and serve.

Just a point further, Bob Roeder, Mr. Jerome Daly was joined by Vonulrick Martin in 1985 to boost the presence of the men in the Sodality. So too did Lynne Browning and others increase the tally.

Mrs. Sarah Blackwell organized fundraisers to supply funds to help Father Chris Egbulem train young seminarians in Africa.

Prefect Ardell Payne and the International Affairs committee spearheaded the Sodality's spiritual and financial support of three seminarians who have since been ordained to the priesthood, Father Robert Boxie, III (2016), Father Ebuka Mbanude (2019), and Father Wesbee Victor (2020).

Some Past Prefects:

Helen Reed, Estelle Bannister, Pauline Jones, Louise Briscoe, Esther Robinson, Clarissa Wiggins, Lillie White, Edna Proctor, Sarah Blackwell, Aurora Frifer, Cynthia Wilkins, Ardell Matthews Payne, Mary Harrell Logan, Ruth Robinson, Priscilla Streeter Jamison, Louisa Buadoo-Amoa, Anita Ibbott, Dena Grant, Cynthia Morris, Darlene Jackson, Donna Gaskins Pasteur, and now, Ellissia Price-Fagin.

Over the past 10 years the Sodality has expanded devotion to Mary with monthly Rosary teleconferences that reach beyond the St. Augustine community and encourages daily praying of the Rosary.

***"To Jesus through Mary, this is our call."
We celebrate 129 years of saying "Yes" to God's call.***