



COURT ST. CECELIA #283

HOW DO WE DO IT?

HOW WE ARE "GROWING OUR COURT"

I am deeply blessed I feel to be one of the Iowa women nominated and selected for my dedication to the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, to receive the coveted *St. Faustina Award for 2018*. I will continue to lead with my heart in my Court and represent our great state in this nation. And now in the words of the 2018-19 theme selected by our national regent, "*Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.*" (1 Samuel 3:9) I now wish to express to you how our Court St. Cecelia has continued to grow from 2012 to 2018.

As mentioned, I am a member of Court St. Cecelia #283 of Algona, IA. I am Past Regent from 2012-2016, and currently a State District Deputy representing Our Lady of Good Counsel 216 of Fort Dodge, IA. I admire this court and received some good advice from a dear court member and State Officer, Rita Carlson in my first year as Regent. I love being a Catholic Daughter... I am now going on 16 years with my court. When I was installed as Regent, our court was in dire need of revitalization... we needed new life and to be rejuvenated. Like Father Girres preached and preached to our whole parish, "*Stir into flame the gift of God's love within you!*" That was my goal, to "*fire up and grow*" our court. We had National CDA member roster of 81, and of that we could hardly get 25 members to attend a meeting; we had few young members, and as our older members passed on, we were not gaining new members at all. It seemed we all knew we were not growing or going anywhere. Having been blessed with a great team of officers who had bought into my enthusiasm, we together began our mission, to grow our Court. We met and discussed strategies. We became familiar with each other and our strengths and set some goals. Ok... first year we wanted 12 new members. Here we go. (We gained 11!) I can happily say our meetings have now grown to average 45-50 women per month. Blessed!

So I met with Father Ed, of whom I had developed a good relationship, and he supported our dream to grow. I asked him if I could somehow get a list of all the women of the parish, with names and phone numbers and emails if they had them. *Wah lah!* He made it happen. So we took the list, had a great round table officers meeting and divided up the parish women's names. We began contacting the ladies of the parish and invited them to come to one of our meetings and consider joining Catholic Daughters! This was a big project. We had a lot of women in our parish. This was our FIRST recruiting effort. Once we completed this project... I asked Father if we could create a brochure (something like National has) and personalize it to promote our local Court St. Cecelia; share what we were all about, AND what it MEANS TO BE A CATHOLIC DAUGHTER! He loved the idea... and of course, he said smiling, *"so why don't you draft something up and I will take a look at what you come up with."* Well we got our letter approved and Father personally signed the letter! We completed our first brochure and printed them and the letters off. The letter was tucked into the brochure. (NOTE: I have provided you with our first letter and brochure which will show you the contents and invitation letter to attend our fall social, have a meal, and sit in on a meeting -- to "check us out!" AND I have also provided our current 2018 guest night invitation letter and brochure. *We have evolved!*) On the CDA recruitment weekend, typically held the last weekend of August or the first weekend in September, we have CDA members volunteer to give a testimonial at the beginning of each Mass; and then after mass, our members stand at each door to personally greet and offer the brochure to all the women in our parish! We do this every year. We feel a personal interaction is VERY important in making CDA aware! As you will see they are invited to attend one of two meeting nights. There is a signup/return section provided to complete and return to any current member or put in the collection basket. Many will just choose to contact a member and "come along" with a friend. We continue to do this every year. We have modified the letter as times and people change. We open it up to suggestions each year as to what will be our theme, create a plan of action and do it all over again. It is fun and at the event we have membership applications and various court information available for those interested. Some even join before they leave! This has now continued through 2018. Every year we hear a different testimonial from a different member and each one touches someone in our

parish. We are continuing to grow. Our current Regent, Julie Norland took the gavel from me and she has our Court St. Cecelia *"on FIRE!"*

Over the last 5-1/2 years we have held initiations that have welcomed over 38 new members and we are looking forward to our new year and more new members! I believe our total national register is now up to 98 members. Keep in mind, we have also said goodbye to nearly 10 ladies of the court over the last 5 years and a couple moved or dropped for one reason or another. That is life. But, we never give up! We are fired up and once again will welcome and initiate new members in 2018-19!!

It is not just about recruitment that brings a court new members. We must *never* ever neglect to *"Do small things with great love."* (St. Teresa of Calcutta) Each one of us is a visible, prayerful woman of our own parish. We must convey ourselves to others honestly and spiritually... why not let it be you who makes the first move... reach out, invite someone to become a Catholic Daughter.

Angel Blessings to all,

In Unity and Charity,

Denise Schreiber

Denise Schreiber, Past Regent*

Court St. Cecelia #283

District Deputy-State of Iowa

**Your Sister in Christ.*