

# SODALITY OF CHARITY NEWSLETTER

*In the soul, like sun, reigns Charity alone*

12/2022 December ▪ [www.sodalityofcharity.net](http://www.sodalityofcharity.net)

4900 Rialto Road, West Chester, OH 45069

Dear members and friends of the Sodality of Charity,

We had our traditional Gaudete Sunday St. Lucia procession on December 11. This time we had 15 Lucia girls in the procession. In 2020, the year the Sodality was started, the number of Lucia girls was 7, and in 2021 it was 12. Four of our Sodality girls have taken part in all three processions. Thank you very much to the participants, the Sisters who helped in arranging the event, as well as to some of the mothers of the girls for their help in preparing and purchasing the dresses. It's the events like this which show to the parishioners, and to all Traditional Catholics, that the light of faith is still burning.

St. Lucia processions have been very popular in Sweden and Finland. But in recent years these have celebrated with much more light than faith. In Sweden the St. Lucia processions are more and more stripped from all religious elements. Many parents, usually those who are Muslims or atheist, do not want their children to participate in this tradition, because St. Lucia is associated with Christmas. So more and more, elves and gingerbread men have replaced the Lucia girls, Christmas songs are abolished, and the themes of the feast are light and hope, rather than Christian faith, for which St. Lucia suffered martyrdom. Besides faith, also the Swedish language and culture are disappearing, because every fourth resident in Sweden has a foreign background and every third has at least

one parent born abroad. We might not see Lucia processions there for that long, at least not those celebrating the heroic martyrdom of St. Lucia.

The day previous, on Saturday, December 10, we had the long anticipated White Elephant Gift Exchange. The gifts of the older girls were laid under the blue Advent tree, and the gifts of the younger girls under the white Advent tree. This is a nice way to present a friend a gift, and one

purpose of the Sodality is to offer the girls of our parish a way to stay in contact with their friends.

I looked some statistics how the Americans appreciate the presents they receive. Funny enough, 23% of people labeled their own friends as a source of unwanted gifts. In-laws took the second spot on the list with 14%, and parents come third with 7%.

There's much talk about the commercialization of Christmas, but I don't want to judge it too harshly. It seems that those who themselves lack material goods, are ready to make the biggest sacrifices. How much an average American

spends on Christmas depends mostly on the region he lives in. And surprisingly, it has nothing to do with the median domestic income. Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana top the list with average spending of over \$1,000, despite having some of the lowest average incomes. The "scrooges" live in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, and Missouri. They are stuck at the very bottom of the list, spending an average amount of \$700.



What is more worrying is that 45% of Americans say that they are willing to go into debt to make themselves happy. Also, 41% will do it to make their kids and spouse happy, while 44% will go into debt to make another friend or family member happy. Over half of them (60%) claim they would add their new holiday debt to the debt they already have, which could potentially lead to bankruptcy. That should serve as a lesson for us during Advent, that it is only that sweet Baby of Bethlehem Who can truly make us happy in this world, and especially in the next.

On our website you can see [photos from our December meeting gift exchange](#). One of our members also recorded the girls' procession in and out of the church. You can watch that [video online](#) and see [photos of this event](#) on our website. I also made [a short video](#) which commemorates the big events of our Sodality in 2022.

Christmas is here very soon. What present we can give to Baby Jesus? Bible gives us the answer: "My son, give me thy heart." (Proverbs 23:26) The reason He was born was that the schemes of the devil would be made vain, sin would be defeated, and the gates of Heaven would be opened. I've tried in my Sodality apostolate to tell the young Traditionalists, that as horrible thing that sin is, and we should of course oppose it with zeal, God's love and charity are always much, much greater. St. Peter, who exhorted his hearers to be strong in resisting the evil things of the world, also wrote these beautiful words: "But before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves: for charity covereth a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8) We are meant to live our lives here on this earth loving God, obeying His commandments, and doing acts of charity to our neighbor, so that when we die, we can go to Heaven right away to be with Jesus and Mary.

I want to close this year by reminding everyone, especially our younger readers, that it is perfectly possible to live through one's whole life without ever committing a mortal sin. It's hard, but that's why prayer and the Sacraments of the Church are there, to help and strengthen us to remain faithful. Our Lord tells us: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. 5:48) He would never have given this command to us, had He not also given us the means to its fulfillment, especially the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist. And prayer and

acts of charity are the means we do penance from our sins so that we need not fear even the punishment in Purgatory.

Even if someone has committed many sins, a contrite heart and good confession are able to remove not just the judgment, but the punishment, too. The famous Dominican preacher St. Vincent Ferrer was well-known for his fire and brimstone sermons, warning people that their sins are taking them to hell. Once a man who had stayed away from Church and the Sacraments for years, was moved by one of his sermons to repent. He went to make his confession to St. Vincent, confessed many mortal sins, and knowing the priest's reputation, expected a very harsh penance. But to his astonishment, St. Vincent merely said: "All right, for your penance, fast every Friday for one year." In those times of late Middle Ages, it was not considered a very heavy penance. "But Father," the man objected, "didn't you hear how many and great sins I've done? You can't possibly assign me such a light penance."

"In that case," St. Vincent replied, "I'll make it even lighter. Instead, for your penance, recite the seven penitential Psalms." When the man still tried to raise objections, the Saint kindly reproached him: "You my son need to start to trust to the great mercy and clemency of Our Lord." And then he pronounced the final sentence: "Your penance shall be one *Our Father*, one *Hail Mary*, and one *Glory be*." And on that very same night, the man died, and St. Vincent saw him being taken straight to Heaven, without even going to Purgatory. His true and perfect contrition was all it took to defeat sin and punishment, and like the good thief, he got to hear the words of Jesus: "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43) If we can with our little acts of charity show to people, how love of God has defeated sin, then the apostolate of our Sodality has done some good.

I said the monthly Mass for our Sodalists on December 1, and an extra Mass in thanksgiving to St. Joseph for protecting our Sodality and its members in 2022 on Ember Saturday, December 17. Have a blessed and merry Christmas, and if you please, say a little extra prayer to St. Joseph in thanksgiving of this year.

Yours in Christ and Mary,

*Fr. Lehtoranta*

# St. Nino of Georgia

December 15

There was a time when a simple slave-girl, like an Apostle, converted a whole country to the Catholic Faith. That country was Caucasian Iberia, nowadays known as Georgia, or *Gruziya* in Russian. The scholars have concluded that the country's name most likely comes from a Persian (Iranian) word which means "wolf." The Persians referred the Caspian region as *Gorgan*, or "the land of wolves."

St. Nino was a Catholic girl who was captured and carried off to Georgia as a slave in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century. Georgia was a pagan country, and her Christian charity and purity made a great impression on the people. They noticed how much she prayed, and asked her about her religion. The simple answer she gave them was that she adored Jesus Christ Who is God.

One day, whose child was sick, brought the child to St. Nino, asking her to suggest a cure. The Saint wrapped the baby in her old cloak, and told the mother that Jesus can cure even the worst sicknesses. Then St. Nino handed the child back and the mother saw that the child was completely cured.

The Queen of Georgia learned of this miracle. Since she herself was sick, she went to St. Nino, looking for a cure, and she was likewise cured. The grateful Queen tried to thank St. Nino. But her only reply was: "It is Christ's work, not mine. And He is the Son of God Who made the world."

The Queen told the King the whole story of

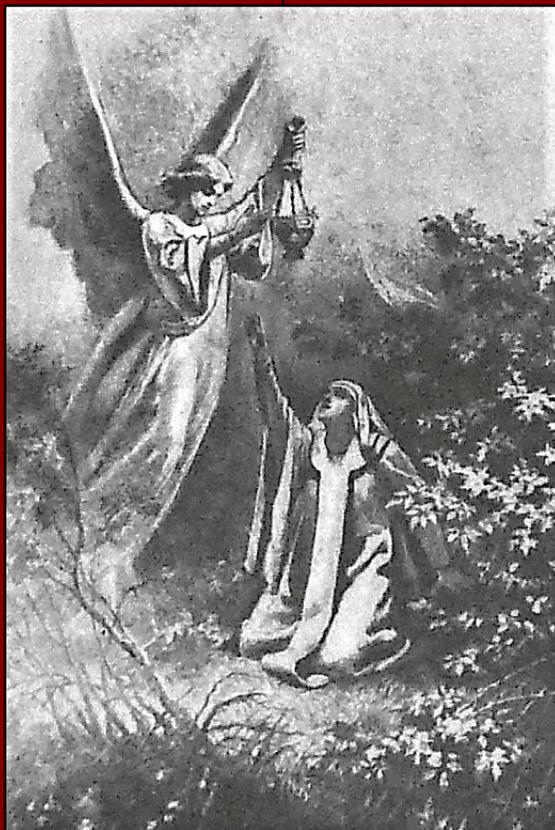
her cure, and also repeated what the slave-girl had said of Jesus Christ. Shortly after this, the King got lost in a fog while he was out hunting. The King then remembered what the Queen had told him. He said to Jesus that if He would lead him safely home, he would believe in Him. At once, the fog disappeared, and the King was true to his promise.

St. Nino taught the King and Queen the

truths of the holy Catholic Faith. She was also given permission to teach the people of Georgia, too. Meanwhile the King began building a church. He sent messengers to Emperor Constantine, who had recently stopped the persecutions of Catholics. The King told the Emperor of his conversion and asked for Bishops and priests. In 326 the King made Catholicism the state religion of his kingdom, making Georgia the second Christian state after Armenia.

So this was how a simple slave-girl brought a whole country into the Catholic Church.

After being for a long time under the rule of the Russian Empire, Georgia gained her independence in 1918, adopted St. George as her patron and put him in the country's coat of arms. The Democratic Republic of Georgia was also one of the first countries in Europe to grant women the right to vote, which was unusual in most European countries at the time. In 1921 the country was annexed to the Soviet (Communist) Russia, until it became independent again in 1991.



# SODALITY DECEMBER MONTHLY MEETING WITH THE WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT EXCHANGE





# St. Lucia Procession







**The group of the Lucia girls of 2022: Clara Young, Ursula Gunsher, Tanya Kolenich, Philippa Gunsher, Lucia McConnell, Lucia Constantino, Abigail McClorey, Claire McConnell, Anastasia Brueggemann, Claire Smith, Maria McConnell, Cecilia Brueggemann, Katherine Ball, Cecilia Gunsher, and Agnes Gunsher. Of the 15 of this year's Lucia girls, four of them, i.e. the three McConnell sisters and Tanya Kolenich, have taken part in all three SGG St. Lucia processions.**

