

South Dakota Catholic Daughter Court Award Nomination for 2023-2025

Court Madonna #1952 currently has 25 members. We gained one new member between 3/1/23 and 2/15/25 as a renewal and lost one member who transferred out to her new parish family in Mitchell.

We are thankful that we have some very active members that do not miss a meeting as well as the prayer warriors who keep our court and our projects in their prayers. Even though our meetings are not as well attended as I would like, as the regent I am very thankful for member participation in our various activities during the year. I am still hopeful that our membership will grow and we continue to encourage all women of our parish to join us. Every year on National CDA Sunday we make an announcement at mass and have handouts to share with all women who are potential members. Our current members are not shy when it comes to encouraging others to join us all year long. Who knows... maybe sometime we will get a "YES" for an answer.

The Catholic Daughters have so much to offer to our members and non-members when it comes to our two-fold purpose of spirituality and service. We gather to pray the rosary every weekend before mass. There are currently six different ladies that volunteer their time and talent to lead the rosary and of those six, five are Catholic Daughters. Number six has been asked and encouraged to join us and I am hopeful that will happen soon. Three members are lectors, six are greeters with their families, two are eucharistic ministers, one is an organist and the director of religion education and our youth leader is a member of Court Madonna #1952.

Court Madonna #1952 was organized January 16, 1966. Every January we gather for our winter party which involves a meal and some type of spiritual program. The 2024 program was on Holy Water and this year was the Jubilee year "Pilgrims of Hope".

February always finds us encouraging participation in the annual education contest. We average around twenty entries. Last year we had 4 CDA members enter and this year we had 2. Hopefully next year will be better.

We continue to start off the season of Lent with our Ash Wednesday Fish Fry. The Catholic Daughters also host a parish celebration after First Communion as well as a special mass for the seniors.

Every year we also participate in Abuse Awareness Month with our Lifesaver Project. Information is placed in the bulletin a couple weeks before we hand out the lifesavers and some educational material for a free will offering. In 2024 we collected a total of \$554 and \$470 in 2023. There are 6 to 7 members that help after mass to hand out the lifesavers and collect the free will offering to help abuse victims.

At our meeting in April and November we fill boxes of goodies for our college students and active military members. The boxes of snacks and religious items are then hand delivered or mailed to the recipients for some nourishment and for a spiritual boost.

We participated in a cemetery clean-up with the youth on April 13, 2024. This is an ongoing project where 5 to 8 members have participated in the past.

The National Day of Prayer is an annual observance held on the first Thursday of May inviting people to pray for the nation. This annual event used to happen in our community but was stopped because of lack of involvement. With the approval of our priest we started this again in 2023 and co-hosted this event with the United Methodist Church. The 2024 National Day of Prayer was better attended than the one in 2023 and we are hopeful that this trend will continue. Our goal is to unite all people through faith and peace. We encourage families, individuals, neighbors, students and friends to join together to pray for our Nation. We get people involved in the program as greeters, prayer leaders, music leaders and those that host the time of food and fellowship after the pray service. Last year we had eight of our members involved in the National Day of Prayer.

May crowning is a traditional Catholic ritual held during May and Court Madonna #1952 has been instrumental in starting this tradition once again at St. Johns to honor Mary. Students in kindergarten thru grade 6 are taught that May is a special month to celebrate the "Queen of Heaven and Earth." The Catholic Daughters invite families to bring a bouquet of flowers to place at the feet of Mary and all children are also invited to join in a procession at the beginning of mass to carry up flowers thanks to donations from our local flower shop. Students are also taught the chorus to "Bring Flowers of the Rarest," a widely used Marian hymn for May Crowning. Two first grade students along with the help of their parents volunteered to create a beautiful crown of flowers for Mary. Every year we have approximately twenty children participate in the procession.

We are also thankful to a couple members that place a purple Catholic Daughter flag on the grave site of our deceased members every Memorial Day.

During the month of July we hold our annual Salad Supper where members bring a couple salads and guests. The evening always includes a short program of some kind. The 2023 theme was "From Figs to Furs and Fashion" with thirteen different models showing off the latest fashion. The theme for 2024 was "Tea Time with God".

July also has us working with the Kimball CDA Court to help serve a meal at the Love Feast Soup Kitchen in Mitchell. Our court furnishes the milk and ingredients for root beer floats as well as furnish some door prizes. This usually involves 5 or 6 members from Court Madonna that help the Kimball court set up, serve and clean up. Every year we also donate to the Aurora County Food Pantry as well as the local "Backpack Blessing Program" which sends home food for the weekend.

A big project that many Catholic Daughters were involved in was the planning and carrying out of the Centennial Celebration of St. John's Parish in September 2024. St. Johns was in need of volunteers to plan the centennial celebration. The cornerstone

says 1923 and with the pastorate changes nothing had been planned. Mary Mayclin, the regent of Court Madonna #1952, invited all interested individuals to a planning meeting June 23, 2024 following mass. Fourteen people attended that first planning meeting and nine of them were Catholic Daughters. Committees were formed for decorations, history, invitations, publicity, program, hospitality and reception. It took many people working together to pull this off successfully. First we had to set the date with the bishop's office and our priests. Once the date was set, the committees got to work. Invitations were prepared and mailed to all current and inactive parish members and past priests. One of the Catholic Daughters ordered a big banner to display in front of the church to help advertise the big event. Every week for ten weeks before the September 14th celebration a piece of church history was included in the church bulletin. There was a lot of history in 100 years and with the help of three main individuals (one being a Catholic Daughter), the history was compiled and put into a wonderful keepsake that was available to all for a \$5 donation. Part of the history came from interviews that the Catholic Daughters had with elderly members of St. Johns. They were asked questions such as: what is your earliest memory of coming to church at St. Johns, if you could change one thing what would it be, how has the church changed over the years (the church service and/or the building itself), do you have any funny memories to share about a priest or during mass and what advice do you give to the young members.

St. Johns also has beautiful stained glass windows. A couple Catholic Daughters researched the lives of the saints and the symbols in the stained glass. Youth from the parish were then available to give tours after mass the day of our celebration and teach all those interested about the saints. Some Catholic Daughters helped prepare display boards illustrating much of the history of our beautiful parish. A Catholic Daughter prepared a program to share with all immediately following the 5:00 mass with Bishop Donald DeGrood, Fr. Richard Fox and Father Randy Phillips. The program included two musical selections, memories shared and recognition of the youngest and oldest parish members.

Following the program a meal was served outside on the church lawn. This 100 year anniversary was an opportunity to celebrate the lives and works of all who have worshipped at St. Johns. By coming together in worship and celebration, this was an opportunity to strengthen the bonds of fellowship. It reminded everyone of the unique roll they play in the ongoing story of our church's journey. We planned for 300 guests and had a wonderful turnout. There were fourteen of the Catholic Daughters that had a part in planning and carrying out this big parish event.

During October we join the children in praying a Living Rosary for Respect Life Sunday before mass. Every fall we also participate in WRAP week. One member prepares the white ribbons and 4 or 5 members help hand them out before mass.

Court Madonna #1952 along with St. Katharine Drexel #2526, Roscoe and St. Rose of Lima #700, Wagner hosted a reception for the two national officers from South Dakota on Saturday, October 5th from 2 to 4. Approximately 40 people attended and learned

about the duties and responsibilities of the national secretary/treasurer, Brenda Anderson, and the national director, Barb Weichmann. It was a very uplifting day for the Catholic Daughters. Court Madonna had 6 members that helped with the decorations, set-up, the program and the clean-up.

November has us remembering our deceased members with a mass and prayer service. This past November we also hosted 2 guest speakers; Luke Mauer from Bitter Funeral Home on funeral preplanning and Lori Jones with Rausch Granite Monuments on headstone selection. All members of our pastorate were invited to join as for the guest speakers after our monthly meeting. Food and Fellowship followed.

December has us coordinating a gift giving project for all the residents of the Aurora Bruce Nursing Home in White Lake. Parish members buy the gifts and then have them wrapped and ready for the children to deliver. The children also entertain the residents with Christmas carols. This project involves the majority of our members and we are also thankful to one member that decorates a Catholic Daughter tree for the annual Parade of Trees at our local court house.

This December we also gifted all altar servers with a cash gift along with some homemade treats and a thank you for their service.

December is our big fund raiser which involves a quilt raffle and silent auction. Every year artistic members create a beautiful baby quilt which is then raffled off. We coordinate this with the Church Christmas Program and CYO meal. Once again the majority of our members help with this project.

The Catholic Daughters also help out during the year by leading the rosary when needed at a wake service at St. John's after which we serve refreshments. We are also fortunate to have creative members that make baptismal bibs and prayer quilts that are distributed throughout the year when needed.

Twice a year the Catholic Daughters host a blood drive thanks to a member who is the local coordinator and others that supply refreshments. Every monthly meeting has us drawing for a new prayer partner who we remember in prayer for the month. The first communion class is another opportunity for us to have prayer partners every year.

I believe Court Madonna #1952 does a good job with our two-fold purpose of spirituality and service. Thanks to our successful fundraisers we are able to contribute to the state and national projects. We are thankful for the members we have and continue to try to increase our membership and help those in need in our community.

Mary Mayclin
Regent Court Madonna #1952
St. Johns Plankinton