

THE SODALITY
RESPONDING TO
THE NEEDS OF
OUR TIME



OUTLINE

I. The Needs of Our Time

1. Isolation and Loneliness
2. Lack of Mentors
3. Religious Illiteracy & Misconceptions
4. Lack of Moral and Personal Integration

II. The Current Responses in the Church

1. Youth Groups
2. Bible Studies
3. Young Adult Groups
4. Organizations (Knights of Columbus)
5. Devotions Practices (Consecrations, Exodus 90, etc.)

III. The Special Characteristics of the Sodality

- I. Community
- II. Christocentric
- III. Marian
- IV. Formation
- V. Magnanimous

Jean M. Twenge, PhD
author of *Generation Me*

iGen



Why Today's
Super-Connected
Kids Are Growing Up
Less Rebellious, More
Tolerant, Less Happy—
and Completely
Unprepared for
Adulthood*

*and What That Means for the Rest of Us

THE NEEDS OF OUR TIME

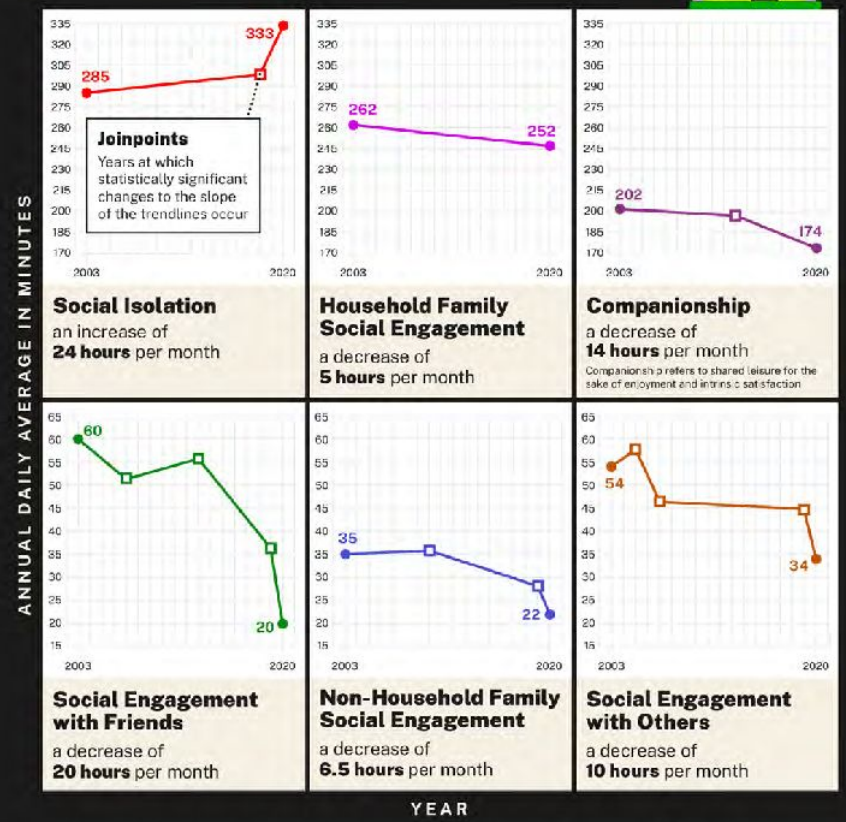
From 2003 to 2020, time spent alone increased, while time spent on in-person social engagement decreased.

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

I. OUR EPIDEMIC OF LONELINESS AND ISOLATION (2023)

National Trends for Social Connection

From 2003 to 2020, time spent alone increased, while time spent on in-person social engagement decreased.



Sources: Adapted from Viji Diane Kannan, Peter J. Vesio, US Trends in Social Isolation, Social Engagement, and Companionship, Nationally and by Age, Sex, Race/Ethnicity, Family Income, and Work Hours, 2003-2020, SSM - Population Health, Volume 21, 2023. The joinpoints are visual approximations.

Office of the U.S. Surgeon General

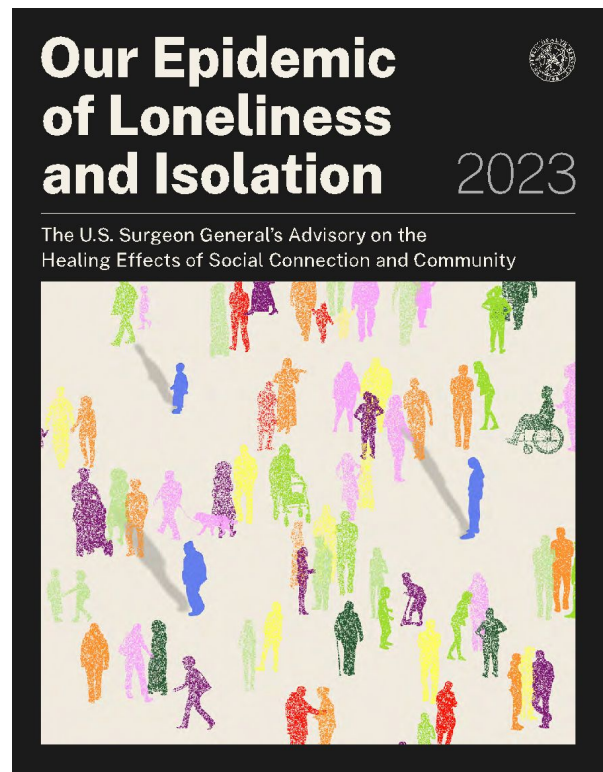


FIGURE 2: National Trends for Social Connection

2.A LACK OF MENTORS

Springtide Institute, *Belonging* (2020)

**One
in
three** 
young people feel completely
alone much of the time.

 **Nearly
40%**
have no one
to talk to and
feel left out.

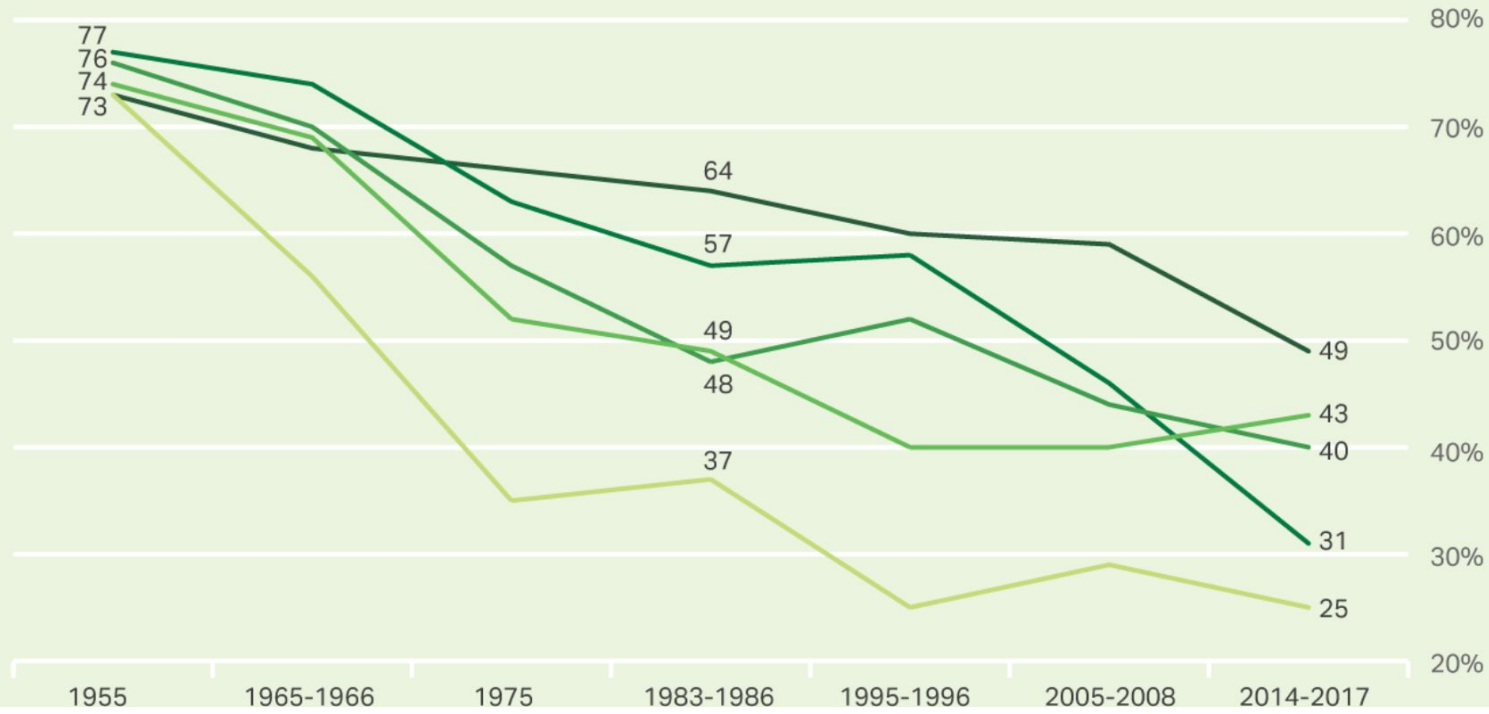
Study on Youth during the Pandemic



Church Attendance Among Catholics, by Age

% Attended church in past seven days

21-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+



3. THE DECLINE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND PRACTICE



RELIGIOUS GENERATION IN US HISTORY

“iGen’ers are less religious and less spiritual, publicly and privately, and strikingly different from previous generations when they were young. The move away from religion is no longer piecemeal, small, or uncertain; it is large and definitive. More young Americans are thoroughly secular, disconnecting completely from religion, spirituality, and the larger questions of life. These complete nonbelievers are still a minority, but their numbers have swelled significantly in a very short period of time. **More iGen’ers than any other living generation are unconnected to religion.**” (p. 132)

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4. LACK OF MORAL AND PERSONAL INTEGRATION



- Many young people today **have ‘unbundled faith and morals’**.
- “Faith Unbundled describes the way young people increasingly construct their faith by combining elements such as beliefs, identity, practices, and community from a variety of religious and nonreligious sources rather than receiving all these things from a single, intact system or tradition.” (p. 87)
- SpringTide Institute (2021), *Navigating Uncertainty*



THE CURRENT MINISTRIES IN THE CHURCH MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR TIME



YOUTH GROUPS

Main Features

- Strong Small Group Community
- Mentoring
- Spiritual Formation
- Prayer and Sacraments
- Sometimes service

What's Missing?

- Consistent Service
- A Spirituality
- Corporate Identity
- Long-term continuity



BIBLE STUDIES

Main Features

- Strong Small Group Community
- Mentoring
- Spiritual Formation
- Prayer

What's Missing?

- Service
- A Spirituality
- Long-term continuity
- Intellectual Formation



YOUNG ADULT GROUPS

Main Features

- Strong Small Group Communities
- Prayer and Sacraments
- Spiritual Formation

What's Missing?

- Service
- Corporate Identity
- A Spirituality
- Long-Term Continuity



OTHER MOVEMENTS, SUCH AS THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Features

- Strong Small Group Community
- Corporate Identity
- Long-term continuity
- Service

What's Missing?

- Prayer
- Formation



**Knights of
Columbus®**

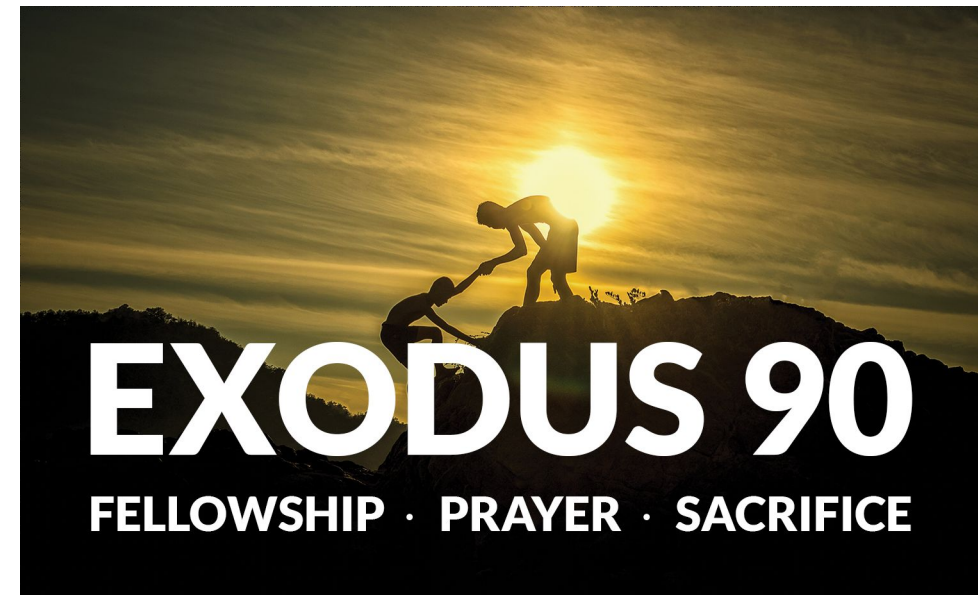
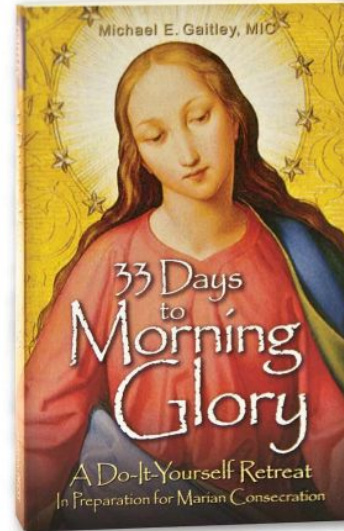
DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES

Features

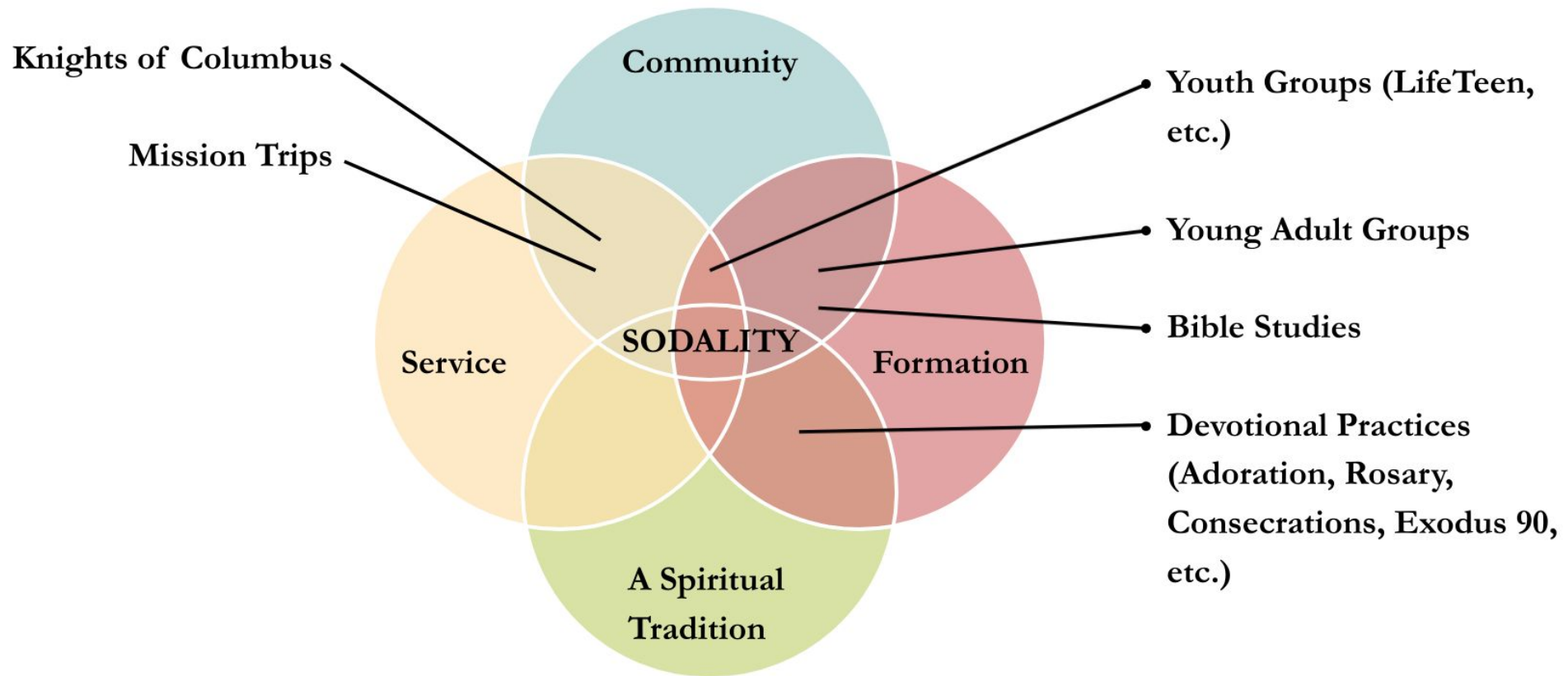
- Prayer
- Structure
- A theology of grace/spirituality
- Specific Graces

What's Missing?

- A Community
- A Long-term plan
- Service



UNIQUENESS OF THE SODALITY: INTEGRATION OF 4 DIMENSIONS



THE UNIQUENESS OF THE SODALITY: 4 MAIN ACTIVITIES

Community
Life

Formation

Prayer

Service

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE SODALITY:

Robust Spirituality

- Spiritual Exercises
- Marian Consecration
- 450+ Years of Tradition
- Prayer that leads to Service

Intergenerational, Long-Term Continuity





THE MARKS OF THE SODALITY

ECCLESIAL-COMMUNAL



The Sodalists are, *“companions of Christian life and of apostolic endeavour.”*

Pope Pius XII, *Bis Saeculari, Art. X*

“You have pledged yourselves to defend the Church of Jesus Christ. The Church knows this and counts on you just as in the past she has counted on generations of Sodalists who have preceded you. She has never been disappointed in her expectations; for, with great generosity your predecessors have cleared and marked the road for you.”

Pope Pius XII, *To the Sodality*



CHRISTOCENTRIC

“The Sodality should verify that fundamental law of all spiritual life within the Church: in proportion to the degree to which a man **puts himself at the disposal of Christ the King with a joyful life and heartfelt intimacy** does he become fit to be a witness, to give testimony for the living, the demanding, the fighting Christ. He is ready, alert enough to take his place in the line of battle wheresoever he may be needed, with the strong, sure hands which only they possess who have first sacrificed their hearts.”

Hugo Rahner, SJ, *The Source of the Sodality Spirit*

MARIAN



“each Sodalist makes a profession of special devotion to the Mother of God and dedicates himself to her by a total consecration, under-taking, though not under the pain of sin, to strive by every means and under the standards of the Blessed Virgin for his own perfection and eternal salvation, as well as for that of his neighbours.”

Pope Pius XII, *Bis Saeculari*, Art. VIII

FORMATION



“The first aim of a Sodality must be the cultivation of a *more* perfect life like to the life of Christ.”

Manuale Sodalitatis of 1601

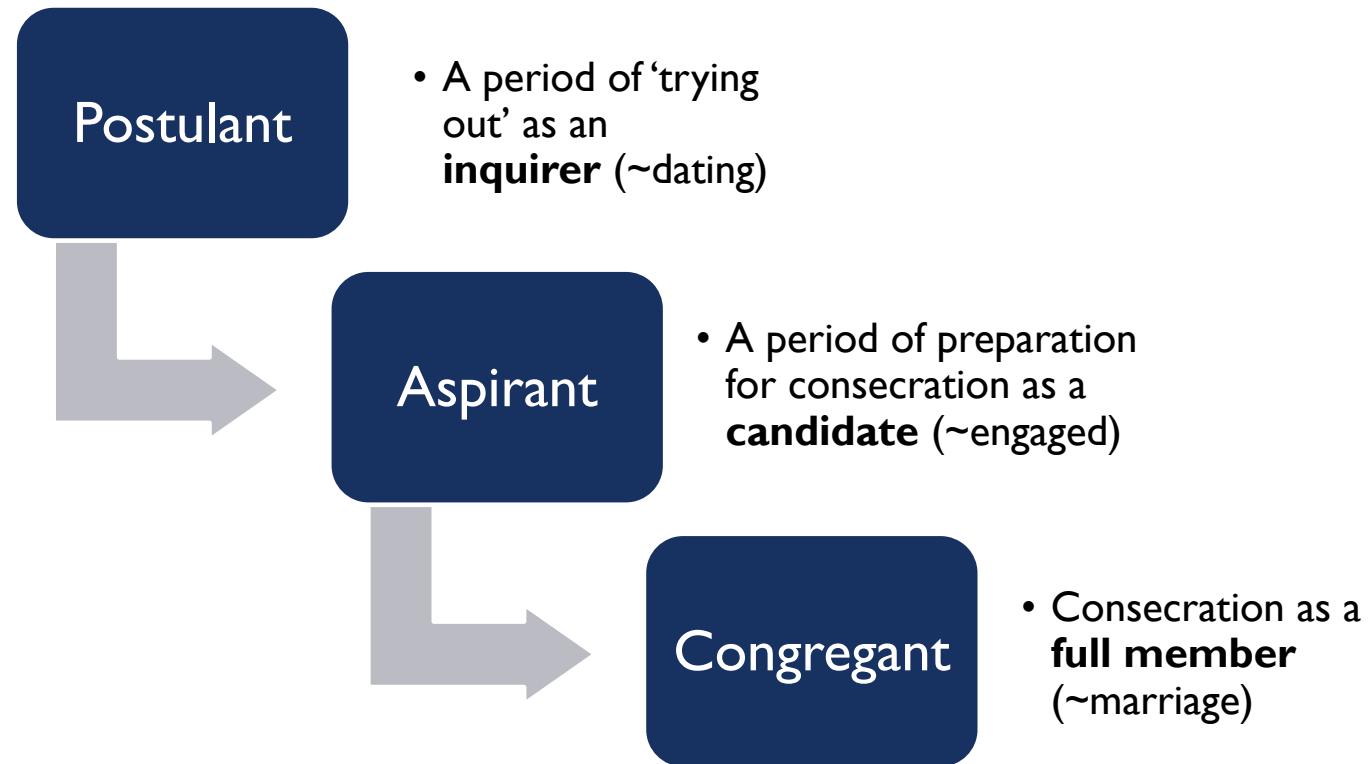
MAGNANIMOUS

“Without doubt, it is characteristic of a youthful attitude of soul to be always more receptive to that which is greater, to remain forever one who grows (since God is never attained), never to say ‘it is enough’. For all those moulded in the spirit of the Exercises that one word *more*, so full of youthful energy, is the criterion of genuineness. What is common to all Sodalities at all levels is Christian ‘growing’. This is a tending toward a state of life unattained; it is, in simple Christian terms, the striving for the fullness of Christ, a maturing grace.”

■ Hugo Rahner, SJ, *The Source of the Sodality Spirit*



THREE STAGES OF BECOMING A SODALIST



STRATEGIC VISION: SPIRITUAL RENEWAL IN THE CHURCH IN OUR TIME

“All of these helps [of the Sodality life] tend to fan those flames of divine love in the Sodalists of Our Lady and to nourish and strengthen that interior life which is so necessary in our times when – as with sorry We have given warning elsewhere – such vast numbers of men are afflicted ‘with barrenness of soul and grave spiritual need.’” Pope Pius XII, *Bis Saeculari*, 5



UNIQUE ELEMENTS OF THE SODALITY IN THE CHURCH TODAY



- Corporate Identity with a 461 Year History
- Animated by the Spiritual Exercises
- Ordered Marian Devotion
- Generous Commitments
- Combines community, formation, prayer, and service.
- Long-Term Continuity and Intergenerational