



**The Serra Club of Arlington**  
*Minutes for Tuesday 05 March 2024 | Luncheon Meeting*  
*Army Navy Country Club | Arlington, Virginia*



### **Guest Speaker**

Sister Diedre “Dede” Byrne, Little Workers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Washington, D.C.

### **GUEST SPEAKER – SISTER DEIDRE “DEDE” BYRNE – LITTLE WORKERS OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Sister Dede grew up in McLean, VA in a devout Catholic family, one of eight children. She attended Langley High School, Virginia Tech for undergraduate studies, and then Georgetown School of Medicine. With finances tight, she joined the U.S. Army in 1978 with a military medical scholarship.

Sister Dede was on active duty from 1978-1989 including time in the Sinai Peninsula and Korea; and in the Army Reserve from 1989 until her retirement in 2009 achieving the rank of Colonel. In 1989 she spent a year performing missionary medicine in India, did her surgical training at Georgetown, and eventually completed her board certification in 2000, the same year she started to discern joining the Little Workers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Sister took her formal formation in 2002 and completed her first religious vows in 2004. Her religious life was interrupted when the Army brought her back as a reservist in 2003 serving at Walter Reed Medical Center, Fort Carson in Colorado, and Afghanistan until 2009. She professed her final vows two years later.

**Highlights:** Sister Dede had many thoughts, insights and prayerful reflections respective to her vocation, military, medical paths, on her devotion to Christ, and on her pro-life positions. In somewhat random order, given her hour-long talk:

- Cares for the uninsured and poor
- Allowed to see human suffering. Considers this strengthening of the “Spiritual muscle.”
- God allowed her the experience of going to the September 11<sup>th</sup> building crash scene.
- Another example of Spiritual muscle was an order given by the Mother General to “go to Haiti as that’s what we do.”
- Noted that pro-life people are prisoners in Alexandria, while a 3<sup>rd</sup> term abortionist, Dr San Angelo, is free. Noted that pro-life people were arrested for praying in front of his clinic and received prison terms of 10 to 44 years.
- There is love of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament
- Sister Dede came from a family of eight children. Her father was a surgeon, devote Catholic, and never missed Mass. The family was a Faithful community.
- Witnessed human suffering in both the spiritual and physical.
- Jesus is the door to pure love, and Mary is the doorknob.
- We are walking tabernacles.
- Witnessed a miracle when being flown in a C130 plane from South Korea escorting an unconscious patient back to the U.S. She was blessing the patient with Lourdes water when

suddenly the patient woke up!

- Satan is jealous and trying to destroy Jesus.
- The family unit is under attack from cradle to grave. E.g. euthanasia, transgender, etc.
- Happened on a girl in the streets of DC still under anesthesia from her abortion and provided her assistance.
- Only 30 percent of Catholics believe in “His” presence.
- Mother Theresa had daily adorations and prayed for vocations.
- Advice from Cardinal Hickey (Archdiocese of Washington DC): as heart surgeon, witnessed patience’s heart beat. Recalled how Cardinal Hickey knew the value of Eucharistic Adoration and suggested to Sister to spend a half day as a surgeon and a half day in prayers.
- In Sister’s travels to Haiti, Sudan and Kenya, she found them a “difficult place” and under attack. Spoke of having the Eucharist in the trunk of a car so they would have Adoration.
- Noted that “R232” is a chemical abortion and is also dangerous to the mother.
- When in DC, Sister Dede goes to Adoration three times per day.
- Noted that “unless you’re under attack by the Devil, you’re going the wrong way.”
- Eucharistic Revival also means “Confessional Revival.”
- Public officials are under Spiritual mortal danger.
- During the Covid period, conveyed her experience finding it difficult finding a priest. Eventually finding a priest, they convinced him to say a traditional Latin Mass in the hospital closet.
- Noted that “without the Eucharist, then we are a stone-cold tomb.”
- Recalled a time in Vietnam when a priest, in solitary confinement, tricked a guard to provide him wine and bread given his “upset stomach” condition. He would then consecrate the bread put pieces of the now consecrated bread in his pocket for Adoration.
- Recalled a time in Afghanistan, isolated within a group of five people, with a dearth of priests and no Mass for weeks. Eventually, a priest was found and convinced to hold Mass on the base whereby the attending group swelled to over a 100 people and Mass was celebrated with more frequency.