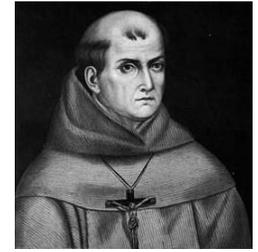




SERRA CLUB OF ORANGE COUNTY



February 2021

Region 11

District 79

Charter 438

Newsletter

OUR MISSION IS TO FOSTER, AFFIRM AND PROMOTE VOCATION TO MINISTRY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

FUTURE EVENTS

Feb 4 - Club Meeting - via Zoom - 1pm.

Speaker: Sister Eymard Flood

Feb 6-7 - World Day for Consecrated Life

Feb 13 - Serra Meets - 9am -Lent and Easter

Wisdom - Bishop Thomas Daly

Feb 27- Lenten Day of Recollection

Mar 4 - Club Meeting - via Zoom - 1pm

Speaker: Father Bruce Patterson

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

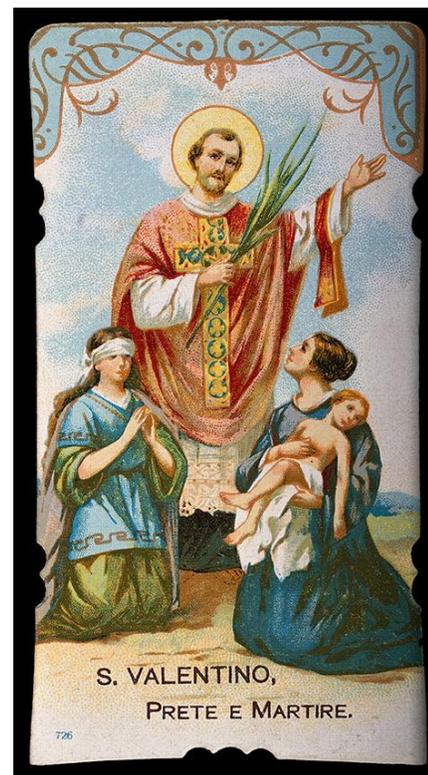


St. Valentine's Day

People usually say "Happy Valentine's Day" instead of "Happy Saint Valentine's Day". But before we say that the modern celebration has nothing to do with the real St. Valentine we should consider this.

While uncertainties revolve around the identity of St. Valentine, he is thought to have been be a priest or bishop (of Terni, Italy) who was martyred in Rome around 269 AD.

To get any connection to the romantic modern celebration of the occasion, we have to go to later embellishments to his story. For instance, a 1260 account says Valentine was imprisoned for refusing to sacrifice to the pagan gods. He healed his jailer's adopted blind daughter and



before his execution sent her a note signed, "from your Valentine".

Another account in 1493 says that he defied the order of the Emperor Claudius and secretly performed Christian marriages allowing the husbands to escape conscription in the pagan army. He was said to have given hearts cut from parchment to these men to remind them of their vows and of God's love.

Even if all we know with some certitude is that he ministered to the faithful amidst the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire, the connection of the day to our Catholic faith is clear. The day retains its Catholic roots. The Feast of St. Valentine has been observed on February 14, the day of Valentine's martyrdom, since 496 AD.

So from now on let's wish everyone a "Happy Saint Valentine's Day".

World Day for Consecrated Life

Remember that in addition to supporting our seminarians and priests, our Serra mission is to encourage and affirm vocations to consecrated religious life. To that end, we have asked our Prayer Team to pray for Joan Patten, Delegate of Consecrated Life for the Diocese of Orange, in addition to Father Brandon Dang. Also, we sent out information about a virtual panel of representatives discussing the various forms of consecrated life. If you didn't catch the livestream, here is a link to the recording of this presentation: <https://fb.watch/3mZSlp2YeV>

Lent

Finally, we have a relatively early Lent this year, with Ash Wednesday occurring on February 17. It seems like the Christmas season just ended. Our Serran Day of Recollection on February 27 is an opportunity to get together in some fashion in person as a Serran group for the first time in awhile. Please make your reservation by February 22. Remember to 'Pray, Fast, Give' in living out your Lent.

In God's Love,
Catherine Walton
President

SPEAKERS



Erin Lyons shared her vocation story with our Serra Club at our December Zoom meeting. Erin heard about Serra Clubs that pray for an increase of religious vocations. She wanted to tell us how we might be able to help her with her desire to become a

nun. She sought us out with the specific objective to not only tell us about her calling to become a nun, but to ask for our financial help as well.

For a good eight years, Erin fell away from the church. It was her mom's silent sacrifices, saying a daily rosary, praying at a grotto, and reading spiritual books asking our Blessed Lord to help Erin to return to the Catholic Church that slowly brought Erin back to church. She witnessed first-hand how strong her mother's faith was and eventually, she returned to Sunday Mass.

Erin soon realized that attending Mass only on Sundays just wasn't enough, and soon after, she started attending Mass every day. Her mother took Erin on a silent retreat where she became immersed in how dedicated the priests were and how deeply devoted they were to God. It was during this retreat that she first felt the presence of God in the Eucharist.

Erin was a nurse, but she was never fully satisfied being a nurse. She worked in ER and loved it, but something was missing. She obtained a Spiritual Director. On her vacation, she went on a pilgrimage to Fatima and Lourdes. While she was at the 9th Station of the Cross, it was as if Jesus was looking up at her and said, "Follow me." At this point, she began her discernment. God was asking her to walk by faith. She returned home and quit her job. She started searching different religious orders to consider which one was best suited to what she would be doing long term. Sisters of the Holy Cross won her heart. Erin had to let go and say yes to God. Finding out that she could not enter the convent owing a student loan debt, Erin joined the Labouré Society to pay off her student loans. Labouré helps aspiring candidates fundraise to pay off their student loans, and they teach aspirants to share their stories to fundraise. During this process of telling their story, the girls learn if God really wants them to become a nun, they will find a way to fundraise and pay off their loans.

The system used at Labouré is that each Aspirant is asked to raise the average Labouré Aspirant student loan debt of \$60,000. If you pay off your student loans, any money left over can be used to help others pay off their student loans. If for some reason, an aspirant decides not to enter the convent, they get their student loan debt back.

Erin can enter the convent when she is finished fundraising. She will spend her first two years in Carrolton, Ohio then complete her studies in

Portugal. Erin thought that she would like to work in Africa or Austria to work in an infirmary. Our Serra Club wishes Erin Lyons well, and we will be praying for her success as a religious. Our Serra Club is making a contribution of \$200 towards her student loan debt, and hopefully many of our members will make a personal donation towards it as well.

Virginia Mort



Newly ordained in June 2020, Father Michael Rizzo, is now the Parochial Vicar at Sts. Simon & Jude Church in Huntington Beach, CA. Father Mike, our January speaker, told his interesting story that he was previously married and now widowed. In his previous life, he was a successful attorney. He and his wife were parents to one son.

Father Mike asked his son what would he think about his dad becoming a priest. His son said, “I think it is a great idea.” Having been married and now serving as a priest, Father Mike truly understands the joys and dilemmas of married life.

A top priority for Fr. Mike is trying to meet parishioners and to form good relationships with them; however, this is difficult without Masses in church. Sts. Simon & Jude created a church in a tent, but it isn’t quite the same as having Mass in the church.

Father Mike loves everything about being a priest. He loves to preach, connect with people, anointing people in their homes and in care facilities. He especially likes helping people dealing with difficulties. He used the example of how he connects with his parishioners by often starting a homily relating stories of his wife and son, then moving on to stories about the daily life we all live each day. The parishioners perhaps never gave a thought that a priest was once married, and has the experience of being a parent. They find this life experience of Fr. Mike is quite positive.

Working with the parish school kids and the principal is especially enjoyable for Fr. Mike. He is very proud that since he came to Sts. Simon & Jude, the school has increased its school population with 35 new students. He loves to engage with the kids,

hear their confessions, and works diligently to bring in the young dads to participate with the church. Father talked about his many busy days that are always different.

Father highlighted the book, “The Joys of the Priesthood” that has been very helpful to him. The book deals with two views of the Church. One view is about rules, and the other view is about new relationships. You can’t say you love God and not love the person sitting beside you. Father related eight goals that he is currently working on.

- Settle in being a Diocesan priest
- Become more comfortable doing Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals
- Become more open about relationships
- Hold events to bring in school parents and engage them in church activities
- Wants to teach a class
- Wants to reach out to the OC Fire Department
- Create a strong youth program engaging them in the church community
- Help young people see the importance of receiving Jesus in Holy Communion

Looking at all these goals, Father Mike will be very busy for a very long time. Father’s closing words to us were, “It is a tremendous joy to be a priest!”

Virginia Mort



Serra Foundation Board member Pat Manzo presented a \$25,000 check to Los Angeles Archbishop Gomez in December 2020. Funds were donated from Serra Clubs throughout the world to help repair the fire damaged Mission San Gabriel.

VOCATIONS REPORT



Ivan Lopez received the gift card for January, donated by Virginia Mort. Ivan is in College 4 at Bishop White Seminary. He is from St. Polycarp parish in Stanton. Ivan is Sue Silvestri's adopted seminarian. Matthew Leung, who received the gift card for December, especially appreciates our Club's prayers and kind words. He said the card came just in time for him to begin his Christmas shopping. He also commented that our generosity will not go unrewarded.

Members of Prayer Team: Sara Adamo, Sue Silvestri, Mary Brockschmidt, Rose Falbo, Cathy Walton, Virginia Mort, Mary Horan, have committed to praying one hour a week for our Vocations Director, Father Brandon Dang. In addition it has been requested that they also pray for Joan Patten, AO, Apostolic Oblates, a secular institute. Joan is the Diocese of Orange Delegate for Consecrated Life.

Any questions regarding discernment, contact Father Brandon at 714-282-3036 or bdang@rcbo.org.

VOCATION PRAYER: Loving God, in every generation you provide ministers of Christ and the Church. We come before you now, asking that you call forth more priests to serve our church. Give us priests who will lead and guide your holy people gathered by Word and Sacrament. Bless us with priestly vocations so that we can continue to be a truly Eucharistic Church, strengthened in our discipleship of Jesus Christ, your only son. Amen

Mary Brockschmidt
Vocations



"Hi, I'm St. Valentine. I was brutally beaten and beheaded in the year 269 A.D. I just wanted to thank you for remembering me on this day of romantic love. Enjoy your dinner!"

SERRAN BIRTHDAYS IN FEBRUARY MARY BROCKSCHMIDT AND BRUCE JUNOR



Therese Celine McNamara McAndrew
12/27/1928 - 1/10/2021

