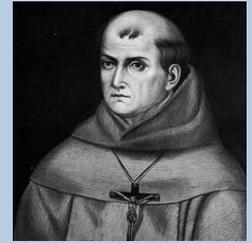




SERRA CLUB OF ORANGE COUNTY



May 2023

Pacific Region

District 79

Charter 438

Newsletter

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

FUTURE EVENTS

April 29-30 - World Day of Prayer for Vocations

May 1 - Religious Brothers Day

May 4 - Club Meeting, Speaker - Father Bruce Patterson

June 1 - Club Meeting

June 10 - Priesthood Ordination - 10am - Christ Cathedral

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



May is upon us. We see that the thread of vocations runs throughout this month.

Sometimes the World Day of Prayer for Vocations is in May. This year it is at the very end of April. As we pray for all vocations on that day, we see that religious brothers have their very own day in May. Religious Brothers Day falls on May 1 - the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker - every year. It is a relatively new celebration, established in 2017 in the United States. It also has expanded to be currently celebrated in Ireland, England, Australia and Canada.



May is the month of Mary. In his 1992 exhortation "Pastores Dabo Vobis" (I Shall Give You Shepherds), St. Pope John Paul II explains why Mary is the model for the priestly vocation:

"Every aspect of priestly formation can be referred to Mary, the human being who has responded better than any other to God's call. Mary became both the servant and the disciple of the Word to the point of conceiving, in her heart and in her flesh, the Word made man, so as to give him to mankind. Mary was called to educate the one Eternal Priest, who became docile and subject to her motherly authority. With her example and intercession, the Blessed Virgin

keeps vigilant watch over the growth of vocations and priestly life in the Church.”

Finally, May is Monsignor Sammon month. Each year we dedicate this month to requests for donations to the Monsignor Sammon Fund. The purpose of the Fund is to advance and support vocations to the Roman Catholic priesthood and the religious life, and in particular for the support of seminarians of the Diocese of Orange. The most recent grants from the fund were to St. John's Seminary, Bishop White Seminary and the Diocese of Orange Vocations Office. Any amount is appreciated. Let us give in memory of our beloved former chaplain and our everlasting inspiration, Msgr. John F. Sammon.

In God's Love,
Catherine Walton

SPEAKER



The luck of the Irish can manifest itself in many ways and for our March meeting we had the unprecedented pleasure of welcoming Fr. Gaston Mendiola, Parochial Vicar at La Purisima. His charm and cheerful manner made it clear to the Serrans as to why he is so loved at his parish. Fr. Gaston's search for truth is what brought him to the priesthood.

Born in Veracruz, Mexico, Fr. Gaston is the middle child of three siblings. Although he was baptized in the Catholic Church as a baby, his parents later became Jehovah's Witnesses. As Jehovah's

Witnesses, young Gaston observed that they were being taught to talk but not to hear. At 14 years of age he wanted the truth and realized he was a failure as a Jehovah's Witness. While still in school, 15-year-old seminarians would visit his town for their mission work and their testimony made him want to be like them, except he liked the work but not the study. Therefore, unbeknownst to his parents, he began attending Catechism classes after school and the Bishop secretly gave him his sacraments.

At the age of 16, Gaston and his family moved to Chihuahua, close to the Texas border. They soon immigrated to the U.S. to work in the fields, cleaning houses and working in factories. For Gaston, the call to serve God still continued. While working in Mexicali at a Rehab Center run by Catholic Missionaries, Gaston was invited to become a priest. His endeavor was to become a lay brother, much like St. Martin de Porres, as he really did not want to study! However, the Bishop insisted and was able to convince him to attend a retreat. At the retreat, Gaston asked for a sign, and as he had a special devotion to Our Lady of Carmel, the sign manifested itself in the homily which the priest gave that day of the Brown Scapular and Our Lady of Carmel. In his heart, he felt that was the sign. As studying was his biggest cross to bear, he accepted God's will and like St. Joseph of Cupertino, he was reluctant to study but thankfully passed all his exams after six years in the Mexicali seminary. Bishop Vann asked him to come to Orange County where in 2018 Fr. Gaston was ordained at St. Vincent de Paul in Huntington Beach where he remained for four years as Parochial Vicar.

I conclude this article with a kicker...Yes, she fought hard, but eventually Fr. Gaston's mother did come to understand that the Catholic Church was started by Christ (although she did not like it), but she was truly moved upon listening to Bishop Vann speak of the Immaculate Conception and she followed by going to Confession. His father is very devoted to the Blessed Mother and prays the Rosary twice daily. Fr. Gaston reminds us to pray for our bishops and seminarians, especially for Hispanic seminarians, as there is great need for more.

Gabriella Negrete

VOCATIONS REPORT



The seminarian who received the gift card for April, donated by Cathy Walton, is Tyler Alt. Tyler is in Pre-Theology 1 at Mt. Angel Seminary. He is from St. Joseph Parish in Placentia.

The seminarian who received the gift card for May, donated by June Craig, is Thomas Andrews. Thomas is Madrienne Peters adopted seminarian. Thomas is in College 2 at Mt. Angel Seminary. He is from St. Kilian Parish.

Our Club received a thank-you note from Rev. Benjamin Nguyen. Rev. Benjamin is grateful for our prayers and support. He asks God to bless the Serra members and their families. Rev. Benjamin is Lil Hanson's adopted seminarian. Rev. Benjamin, Rev. Ian Gaston and Rev. David Moreno, will be ordained to the Priesthood by Bishop Kevin Vann on June 10th at Ten O'clock at Christ Cathedral in Garden Grove. Our Diocese of Orange is blessed to have three new priests.

Seminarian Cody Schurter, who entered St. John's Seminary in September, is my adopted seminarian. We share the same birthday, February 15th. Cody is from St. Martin de Porres Parish in Yorba Linda. Cody especially appreciates the prayers and support of the Serra Club members in his first year of seminary formation. Cody's parents, Brett and Kathleen, now make their home in Pittsburgh. An interesting development, Cody's father has been ordained to the Diaconate. Following his Ordination, Deacon Brett and Kathleen were able to visit St. Martin's. Deacon Brett preached at the Mass and Cody served. How very special to have Father and Son serving together at Mass.

On March 11th J Serra High School celebrated an

Adelante Fest which featured a Mass, activities and keynote speaker Father Mike Schmitz. Father Brandon Dang, our Director of Vocations and Father Peter Adrian, a Norbertine, concelebrated Mass with Father Mike. St. Serra's credo was "Siempre Adelante, Nunca Atras," which means, "Always forward, never backward." They wanted to take forward the gifts that St. Junipero Serra gave us two hundred and fifty years ago. They want to carry it forward to this generation. Building community through faith matches the philosophy of St. Junipero Serra.

Any questions concerning discernment, contact our Vocations Director, Father Brandon Dang, at 714-282-3036 or bdang@rcbo.org Father's assistant, Elizabeth Sandoval, can be reached at esandoval@rcbo.org

VOCATIONS PRAYER: God our Father, we thank you for calling men and women to serve in your Son's Kingdom as priests, deacons, and consecrated persons. Send your Holy Spirit to help others to respond generously and courageously to your call. May our community of faith support vocations of sacrificial love in our youth and young adults. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Mary Brockschmidt
Vice President, Vocations

**SERRAN BIRTHDAYS IN MAY
SARAH ADAMO
AND
MAUREEN KOSINSKI**



MEMBER PROFILE

We welcome our new member
Jeanne Bullington



Though born in Illinois, I've lived nearly all my life in California. Orange County has been my home for the last 54 years. My Catholic School education was in Illinois and ended at the fifth grade. In California I attended Catechism classes through High School. I graduated from the University of Irvine in 1973 with a Bachelors of Arts in English Literature. It's a great degree for pondering the beauty of language, but not so great for making a living. So, after college I worked in the banking world for several years before ending up as an Escrow Officer. My last 36 working years were at First American Title providing computer services to escrow officers. Work and my husband were my whole life. God never gave us the blessing of children; however, he did teach me "unconditional" love through my mother. She lived with us for 10 years steadily declining from dementia and died a beautiful death in her own bedroom. I retired from First American Title in 2021, the year God with one hand took His gift of my husband back and with His other hand gave me a new gift - lots of "un-scheduled time."

In October of 2022, I met Sophia Wickson Smith at my first WINGS group meeting. Sophia invited me to visit the Serra Club as her guest. That invitation was another gift from God. You will never know how deeply her offer of friendship and invitation to the Serra Club moved my soul. Let me say simply, it was the first time in my life I both understood and felt what it is to receive that Gift of the Spirit we name the "Fear of the Lord." After Sophia and I parted that morning, I rushed into the church. I cried

and told God how frightened I was at how good He is to me. Thank you, God. Thank you, Sophia. Like you, every morning, I have prayed for the re-unification of all Christians into Christ's One Church. We need more priests and consecrated religious in the Church Militant that can be wise voices, watchful eyes, with tuned-in ears, to work in the Holy Spirit as the Body of Christ here on earth. I want to do anything I can to increase their numbers.

MEMBER PROFILE

We welcome our new member
Margot Ang



My name is Margarita "Margot Macapagal-Ang. I was born in the Philippines. I was a retired nurse, married, blessed and gifted to have a wonderful husband and two boys. Like me, both of my sons were nurses, but God had a special plan for my eldest son, Francis, since He called him to become a priest. Presently, he is a seminarian for the diocese of Orange and a 2nd Theologian at St John Seminary in Camarillo, Ca.

I considered myself as a cradle Catholic. I was born, raised and educated in Catholic school. My mother was my first teacher in Catechism. My parents and ancestors were devout Catholic. I grew up in a home where the Catholic faith was alive and practiced. I belonged to a big happy family of 12. We always made it a joke when people were surprised how big my family was, we always would say because my parents were truly Catholic and they literally followed God's instruction to go and multiply.

When I was growing up, Church was my second home. All our activities were involved in the church, since my mother devoted herself to church ministry. My parents always had a desire that one of their sons would become a priest, so some of my brothers entered the seminary but unfortunately none of them became a priest. However, my parents continued to become benefactors and supporters of vocations. I remembered my father taught young seminarians in our local town how to farm and raise livestock for them to become self sufficient. Throughout my life, priests, bishops and seminarians have become family friends and brothers in Christ.

One day, my son told me that his Serra mom, Virginia Mort, was inviting me to join Serra club. She called me and talked to me about it. It was perfect timing because during that time, I was looking to join an organization or club as a way of giving back the blessing that I received to retire early. I asked what's the requirement of being a member and she said, you just have to attend a monthly mass meeting to foster vocations and adopt a seminarian, pray and support them. One Sunday, I met Bishop Tim Freyer and he heard that I was joining the club. He said I was a perfect match for Serra club and he assured me that I would enjoy it.

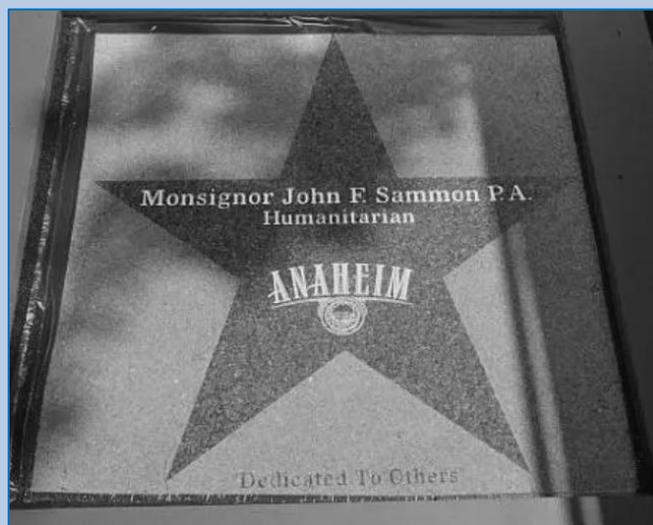
He also said that his mother enjoyed being a member for a long time.

I didn't believe I had special talents, but in my heart I knew I always loved praying and loved those people who dedicated themselves to be used to spread and share God's mission. Even before I became a member of Serra club, I already had an adopted son, a seminarian by the name of Jorge, my son's friend. My house is opened to all my son's friends, priests and seminarians alike. It is always a blessing to welcome them into my home and see them having good times together. I want to continue my parents' legacy to offer their lives in supporting, loving, praying and being good friends with priests and seminarians. I love the Eucharist, for I know Jesus is truly present there, but I also know that only through the consecrated hands of a priest can I receive such a gift in my life. I also am firmly aware of the words of Jesus when He said "the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few; pray therefore that the Lord sends laborers into His harvest." I also believe that each one of us is called for a vocation and being a Serran will lead me to the road of holiness. I'm so humbled and grateful to be one.

Monsignor Sammon's star placed in 2008 on the Anaheim/Orange County Walk of Stars on Harbor just in front of Disneyland.

[Walk of Stars - Monsignor John F. Sammon - YouTube](#)

This gives you an idea of the dedication he showed as chaplain of fire and police departments as he did as chaplain of our club.





Installation of our newest members
Left to right: President Catherine Walton, Father Gaston,
Membership Chair Virginia Mort, Margot Ang,
Membership Chair Sophia Wickson,
Jeanne Bullington