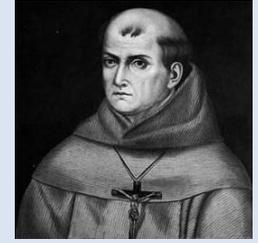




SERRA CLUB OF ORANGE COUNTY



July 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

July 1 - Feast Day of St. Junipero Serra

**July 6 - Club Meeting, Speaker: Rev. Pascal
Nguyen, O. Praem.**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The month of July began with St. Junipero Serra's Feast Day. It is so good to see him defended more nowadays.

The Priest Ordination occurred on June 10. It is a great celebration for Serrans to attend, especially if your adopted seminarian is being ordained.

Priests and Seminarians competed in the All Star Basketball Game at Mater Dei on June 16. Instead of pitting the priests against the seminarians, teams were divided into North vs. South County this year. The South County team won a close one - 57-55. The proceeds from this event go to support the OC Diocesan Vocations Office.



Maureen Kosinski saw her adopted seminarian, Cole Buzon, ordained a deacon on June 24 at Christ Cathedral.

Pat Manzo managed to make the trip to Thailand for the 80th Serra International Convention. She provides us with a report in this newsletter. Next year the International Convention is August 8-11 in New Orleans. You can get the international flavor without having to travel too far. I hope many of you will be there.

And on a final, sad note, we lost our long-time Serran, Dick Peters. A member since 1998, he dedicated himself to Serra, including fifteen years as Treasurer and a decade as Newsletter Editor. Please pray for him and his fellow Serran wife, Madrienne, and their family.

In God's Love,
Catherine Walton

SPEAKER



“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ”. (Isaiah 10:17) True words lived and followed by this month’s guest speaker, Fr. Juan Navarro, Parochial Vicar at Christ Cathedral Parish. His inspiring vocation story is truly one of self-sacrifice, faith and obedience to God’s call.

Born Juan Bernardo Navarro-Sanchez in Colombia, young Juan had no intention of ever becoming a priest. His one and only ambition was to follow in his father’s footsteps becoming a Colombian Air Force pilot. While attending the Air Force Academy in Colombia, his life path halted at a fork in the road when his father became sick and lost both of his kidneys. Once a man of vigor and strength, his father was gradually weakening and required a new kidney. The only member of the family who was a compatible donor was Juan. Yet donating his kidney meant the end of a career as an Air Force pilot. His father was adamant he should continue in the Air Force in order to provide for his mother and sisters. While wandering among parts where planes were made, he began to pray to God and ask if should keep his kidney or give it to his father. He gave up his dream of the Air Force and did what God wanted him to do.

The surgery was postponed four times and a month later, Juan had no idea of what career path to pursue. Two months followed considering several professions but nothing matched the level of excitement of the Air Force. All he could feel was a total disconnect between his career plans and his

inclination to pursue them. Then one night he had a dream where he was looking at himself lying down and a brother gripped his hand saying, “God is calling you to become a priest.” Juan awoke to exclaim “NEVER!! Never in my life!” and went back to sleep.

A month later, Juan’s father confided to a Bishop friend that he was worried about Juan’s lack of direction. The Bishop offered Juan a job in a Catholic school workshop where he would interview 11th graders regarding their needs and communicate back to the Diocese. The position also provided housing which was in a building in which priests and the Sisters of Charity also resided. The nuns and priests saw the potential in him and asked him if he would consider becoming a priest, to which he responded with an unwavering “NO!” He had always believed these religious led rather dull and sad lives but was captivated and inspired to hear their testimony and service to God. They were happy and enjoyed life, and in time he began to accept the possibility of becoming a priest.

The Sisters of Charity had a Spiritual Director whom they wanted Juan to meet. His name was Fr. Querubin (in English translates as Cherubim). Juan heard him speak and he was on fire! Juan had the experience of seeing all that Fr. Querubin said. Two months later, Juan had the opportunity to meet Fr. Querubin again and so Juan asked to join Fr. Querubin’s order, but the priest suggested he enter a seminary. Juan’s Bishop agreed to give him his job back should he not like the seminary. Although excited, Juan could not accept this was all due to the dream he had. He required affirmation from God.

After Holy Week of that year, his Seminary Director saw that Juan was not interested and furthermore, gave off bad vibes to the other seminarians. Therefore, he gave Juan a period of one week to confirm his vocation. The Sisters quickly stepped in and offered Juan their time to help him with discernment. After four grueling days, the Sisters were exhausted and suggested they all go to the Chapel. Before the Blessed Sacrament, one of the Sisters began to talk out loud to Jesus telling Him of all the events done for Juan ending with the words, “Lord, now please listen to Juan.” Juan said, “Lord, you know what I need” to which the Lord responded,

“Yes, I am calling you.” At first, Juan felt so ashamed but soon afterward he felt at peace and filled with joy and asserted to the Lord with: “Well, Lord, here I am.” Fr. Juan often returns to that moment for reassurance.

Fr. Juan is grateful for all the Serran prayers which are very necessary to bring more young men into the priesthood.

Gabriella Negrete

SERRA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION REPORT



Chiang Mai Thailand
Convention June 2023

The convention lasted 2 days, which included Mass each day. Several cardinals spoke about locations in the world where vocations are on the rise or on the decline. Cardinal Bo said that vocations are on the rise in Asian countries, especially in Vietnam, Laos and Thailand. Nigerian vocations are on the rise and Kevin Obasi, a Serran from Nigeria, talked about the role of parents in their children’s vocation choices. Indian vocations are also on the rise. Vocations in the Americas are on the decline, in part related to changes in family structure and couples having smaller families.

During the convention we also heard one Thai

woman tell her inspiring story about her journey to convert from being Buddhist to Catholic.

Cardinal Bo, who is the president of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference, gave a talk on vocations. He talked about the role of poverty, migration, and political instability. When there is rapid economic development, you see a decline in vocations. He also touched on the role of technology and the digital revolution, which can be both a blessing and a curse.

Cardinal Ouellet from Montreal, Canada, who just retired, spoke about working daily over the last 10 years side by side with Pope Francis. He talked about the Pope’s accomplishments as well as how kind he is in how he treats people every day.

The convention was live streamed and archived if anyone would like to view it

There was a Serra International Board meeting on the day before and again on the day after the convention. I was appointed by the new Serra International President Kurt Metyko of Houston to the Serra International Board at these meetings. I represent the Serra International Foundation on the Serra International Board.

In all, there were 500 Serrans from at least 12 countries attending the convention. It was so special to greet my old Serran friends from all over the United States, Canada, and Europe and to meet new friends from around the world. I traveled alone on my first leg, a 12 hour flight to Taiwan. As I was going through customs for the four-hour flight to Chiang Mai, I heard someone call my name, which turned out to be Lynn Jones from Portland. Serran friends from Portland, Lafayette, and Houston were on this flight as we converged on the convention. When we arrived we were greeted by Serrans from Thailand with a big sign saying “Serra International.” They had a van waiting and took us directly to an English Mass in their Cathedral.

Before the convention began, we enjoyed 2 day tours and got a taste of Thai culture in Chiang Mai. On one tour we visited a few of the 270 temples in the city and a museum on Buddhist religious artifacts. (Catholics make up less than 1% of the population in Thailand.) The next day we went to a national park that is an elephant sanctuary on the Burma border.



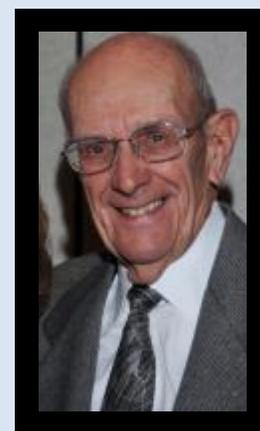
**SERRAN BIRTHDAYS IN JULY
LILY HANSON AND
BARBARA BENEVILLE**

We played with and fed some elephants and had lunch with the family that cares for them. Some of us went swimming with them (I skipped due to my recent injury). We were also able to watch and learn how they use traditional looms to make scarves and table runners. We continued on to the highest point in Chiang Mai by van for views of the city. After the convention, we spent a wonderful day at a Thai cooking school. We went shopping for the ingredients at local markets, then cooked and ate the several courses we prepared.

Pat Manzo



Jeanne Bullington was installed as Trustee at our June meeting.



Dick Peters
1931 - 2023



The Joy of Adopting a Seminarian

Since we are blessed with several new members, I wanted to share a recent happening at the Hazel Wright Gala dinner at Christ Cathedral regarding my current seminarian, Francis Ang. Francis and I often communicate with each other, which I dearly love and enjoy. During one of our breakfasts or lunches, Francis shared that Bishop Timothy Freyer was very instrumental over the years while he was a priest at St. Boniface Church in Anaheim, and Francis was an altar server, that perhaps Francis could become a priest. It was Father Timothy Freyer who planted the seed with Francis that he should explore the possibility of a calling to the priesthood. Years later, while working at St. Mary's Hospital as a nurse, thoughts of the priesthood came to his mind. Through deep prayer and many discussions with family and clergy, his calling to discern a possible calling into the priesthood took root. Fast forward to the Gala dinner held prior to the concert celebration of the Hazel Wright organ's return from Italy to the Christ Cathedral. I was walking over to the organ concert when I looked over to the tall man walking alongside of me only to discover it was Bishop Timothy Freyer. I introduced myself to him and added that I was seminarian Francis Ang's adopted mother. The Bishop stopped walking, took his phone from his pocket and asked a passerby priest to take our photo because he wanted to send it to Francis showing proof that we had met at this event. Since I had never met Bishop Timothy, I dared not ask him to send a copy of the photo to me as well as to Francis. I was thinking that I would alert Francis about our chance meeting and if the Bishop should remember to send him our photo, if Francis could please forward it to me. The very next day the photo arrived from my seminarian. Why am I sharing this story? I just wanted to share the joy and happiness that is gained if you choose to adopt a seminarian. These relationships really are made in heaven.

Virginia Mort



PRIESTHOOD ORDINATION





DIACONATE ORDINATION

