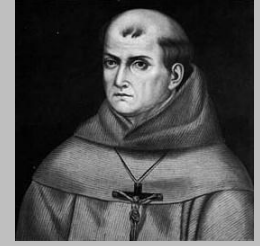




# SERRA CLUB OF ORANGE COUNTY



September 2023

Pacific Region

District 79

Charter 438

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

## FUTURE EVENTS

Sept. 7 - Club Meeting, Speaker: Rev. Sy Nguyen

Sept. 9 - Serra Meets - 9am - Zoom - James Jansen, M.T.S., Director of Pastoral Services for the Archdiocese of Omaha.

Sept. 18 - 16th Annual Monsignor Sammon Golf Outing

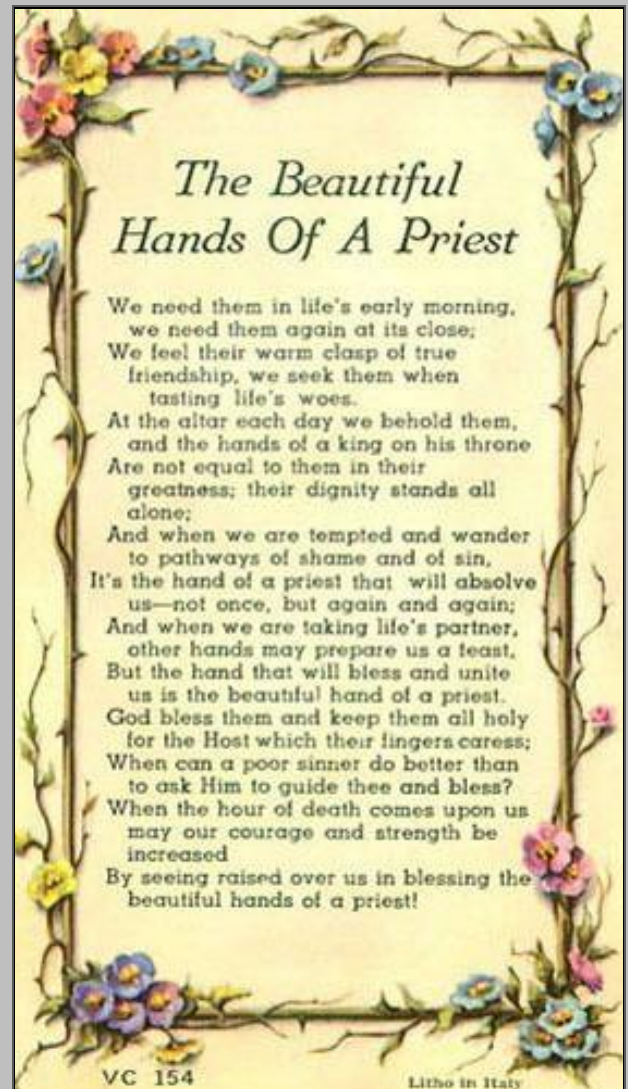
Oct. 5 - Club Meeting, Speaker: Rev. Hoa Tran

Nov. 2 - Club Meeting, Speaker: Rev. Erialdo Ramirez Alfaro

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



At our last meeting we gathered for an Aloha Summer themed meal. Lulu Papac did a crazy good job with the food and decorations (see pictures). We welcomed Margot Ang to our Hospitality Team. Our celebrating continued with our presence at the Ordinati. The City Club hosted this year. We provided the flowers and the framed pictures that were given as gifts to the newly ordained priests (see pictures). I worked with Lily Hanson and Diane Salinger to prepare their gifts. Gabriella Negrete helped to create the beautiful floral arrangements.



Our next event is our very own Monsignor Sammon Memorial Golf Outing. It's shaping up to be a successful event. Enjoy!

In God's Love,  
Catherine Walton

## SPEAKER



This month's speaker, Fr. Thomas Tran, recounted to us a very unique and profound vocation story filled with filial love and devotion to God's people.

Fr. Thomas Tran's vocation started very early in life. He was born two-months premature, the size of a small potato. Due to the lack of modern medical technology in Vietnam, his prognosis was dire. His parents would go to the hospital every day to pray. The doctors would tell his parents: "Take him home so he can die there." Filled with faith, his parents would not give up and continued to pray and asked others to pray with them. They would go to chapel every night and pray to St. Joseph and the Blessed Mother. Their story became like that of the prophet Samuel whose mother, Hannah, offered her son to God. Since their baby survived, Mr. and Mrs. Tran wanted him to belong to God.

In 1975, the family left Vietnam and arrived at a refugee camp in Guam. They were later sponsored by an American family from Melbourne, Florida. At the time, there were not many Vietnamese in Florida and therefore the sponsors did not understand the culture. Thomas was only five years old and with his other four siblings soon learned American ways from their sponsor's teenage children. However, Mr. and Mrs. Tran were not about to let their children forget their Vietnamese roots and would take their children to Catholic Mass regularly.

A year after living in Florida, the family moved to California and Mr. Tran found a job in Los Angeles. Committed to raising their children in a Catholic environment, they were enrolled in St. Gregory Nazienzen parochial school. Thomas' parents became very involved in the parish and Thomas became an altar server to an Irish priest, Fr. James

O'Grady (a known jokester) who became Thomas' mentor. In the 6th grade, when Thomas was 10 years old, he knew he wanted to become a priest. As young Thomas did not know about the formation process, Fr. James explained about the seminary, which fascinated Thomas. Certain of his calling, upon 8th grade graduation, young Thomas applied to only one high school...Seminary of Our Lady Queen of Angels in San Fernando! He was thrilled at being accepted but it was a boarding school and as it was his first time away from home, he became homesick. His Dean of Studies, Bishop Patrick Ziemann recommended he give it a chance for one week, which turned out to be four years!

After high school graduation, Thomas attended St. John Seminary in Camarillo but took two years off to discern, at which time he got a job as a teller at Bank of America and went to school at Cal State Los Angeles. He was still yearning for what God was calling him, but he felt he was at a crossroads. He knew he did not want to be a diocesan priest as it was his desire to explore the world as a missionary. He decided to become an SVD, Divine Word Missionary, which was in 70 countries around the world. He moved to Chicago to study as a missionary and in 2000, Fr. Thomas was ordained in the Society of Divine Word Chapel in Techny, Illinois.

The proverb, "Make Plans, God laughs" proves apropos to this story. Fr. Thomas was given three choices as his first assignment: 1. England 2. Argentina 3. The Philippines. Indeed, God had other plans for Fr. Thomas. He was needed with the Appalachian Missionaries in West Virginia. He was sent to the Hollers of West Virginia in charge of four parishes which were far into the hillside. They were all small towns where everyone knew each other and for the four years he was there, he enjoyed ministering to them very much.

After West Virginia, Fr. Thomas moved to St. Louis, Missouri for four years. Nevertheless, Fr. Thomas remained curious to see the world and from 2010-2014 was finally assigned to New Zealand where he ministered to Aboriginal tribes. Yet, Fr. Thomas' love of service and adventure did not diminish the love for his family in California. His parents wanted him closer to home, so he talked to Bishop Vann and after a five year process was incarnated into the Diocese of Orange. He has been assigned to St.

Barbara's, St. Anthony Claret, Our Lady Queen of Angels and is at present Parochial Vicar at St. Thomas More in Irvine.

Fr. Thomas reminds us Serrans to continue to pray for all priests, as it is very hard to live out the priesthood as they are all still trying to rebuild the trust of the community.

Gabriella Negrete

**VOCATIONS PRAYER:** We must pray so that the hearts of these young people may be emptied; emptied of other interests and other sentiments, so that they may become free. This is the prayer for vocations. Lord send us nuns and send us priests. Defend them from idolatry; the idolatry of vanity, the idolatry of pride, the idolatry of power, the idolatry of money. This prayer is to prepare these hearts so that they are able to follow Jesus closely.

Mary Brockschmidt  
Vice President, Vocations

**VOCATIONS REPORT**



**SERRAN BIRTHDAYS IN  
SEPTEMBER  
MADRIENNE PETERS AND  
LULU PAPAC**

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The seminarian who received the gift card for September, donated by Silvia Uriarte, is David Hoang. David is Lulu Papac's adopted seminarian. David is from Holy Spirit parish and is in Theology 2 at Mt. Angel seminary.

Many Serra Club members as well as family members and friends of our three newly ordained priests, attended the Ordinati Mass and Luncheon on August 23<sup>rd</sup> at Christ Cathedral. The priests, Rev. Ian Gaston, Rev. David Moreno and Rev. Benjamin Nguyen shared their vocation story. Hearing their testimony confirms for the Serra Club members that our prayers and support are greatly appreciated on their journey to ordination.

The seminarians have returned to their seminary. Our Director, Father Brandon, has reported that we have three new seminarians, Shane Duffy, Stephen Pham and Kevin Rodriguez. There will be an updated list of the seminarians in our next newsletter.

Any questions concerning discernment, contact our Vocations Director, Father Brandon Dang, at 714-282-3036 or [bdang@rcbo.org](mailto:bdang@rcbo.org) or Father's Associate, Father Cheeyoon Chun. Father's assistant, Elizabeth Sandoval, can be reached at [esandoval@reco.org](mailto:esandoval@reco.org)

**16TH ANNUAL  
MSGR. JOHN SAMMON  
GOLF OUTING**

*Serra Club of Orange County invites you to have a fun day of golf, dining, and camaraderie with friends and the clergy of the Diocese of Orange*

**Tustin Ranch Golf Club  
12442 Tustin Ranch Road  
Tustin, California 92782**

**Monday, September 18, 2023**

**Entry Fee: \$186.00**

Golfing Fee  
Golf Cart Lunch  
Cocktails and Dinner

**Cocktails and  
Dinner Only: \$67.00**

For information contact:  
Maureen Kosinski 714-309-3206

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# AUGUST MEETING





### ORDINATI 2023

**Our club provided the flowers and framed picture gifts for the priests.**

