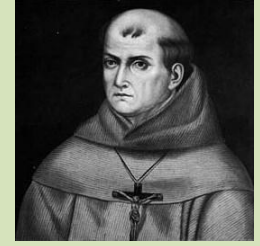




SERRA CLUB OF ORANGE COUNTY



December 2023

Pacific Region

District 79

Charter 438

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

FUTURE EVENTS

Jan. 4 - Club Meeting, Speaker: Msgr. Stephen Doktorczyk

Jan. 13 - Serra Meets - 9am - Zoom - Bishop Andrew Cozzens on the Eucharistic Congress and the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

Jan. 18-21 - Serra Rally - Miami

Feb. 2 - World Day for Consecrated Life (celebrated in parishes Feb. 3-4)

Feb. 1 - Club Meeting, Speaker: Fr. Brandon Dang

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Each year along with the Christmas season comes our Serra Christmas party. Virginia Mort again was the gracious hostess and we can always count on our fellow Serrans to bring great potluck dishes.

The always reliable Deacon Bill Weeks conducted our Communion service. The Gospel was Matthew in which Jesus says "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven." Deacon Bill said we must listen to the Word of God and act upon it - listen and glisten.



Seminarian Francis Ang spoke to us after lunch. He is Margot Ang's son and Virginia Mort's adopted seminarian. He spoke to us about his participation in the Institute of Priestly Formation at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. The program is a recipient of grants from the Serra International Foundation.

Francis is the first seminarian in our Diocese to participate in the program since about 10 years ago. He was there along with about 200 other seminarians. He said it was like being in college

again, what with living in a dorm and the food choices. When asked to go to Nebraska to do this program he said what is in Nebraska? They are known for their corn but what else? Well, he did find more there. He made friends and did activities outside of the program. Francis likes to do research and have fun. The College World Series was in Omaha when he was there and IPF raffled off some tickets which he won. Omaha is known for their zoo so he went there on the weekends they were off. So he did have some fun in Omaha but the heart of his stay was the program.

The program consists of 4 classes - 6 units The first two weeks was Christian Prayer and Discernment. What a way to start off this program. Because it is a Jesuit university, they taught Ignatian Discernment Spirituality. The first week was learning how to pray. They then go into an 8 day silent retreat to prepare them for the program. There are four mandated hours of holy hour and prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament. They meet with a spiritual director too, who gives them scriptural passages to read. What is God trying to reveal to us? Passages said that we're loved by God; we're sons and daughters of God.

After this initial experience they were ready to begin their other classes. But the whole experience felt like a 10 week retreat to Francis. He spoke of the beautiful chapel and the beautiful churches in the area. Francis says they are just built differently out there - so beautiful. Just to be there every day and rest in the Lord is what our souls look for. He thanks us for giving him the opportunity to do this.

The second class in the program is Authentic Masculinity and Manhood; what that looks like as a young man and as a future priest - just to be that countercultural figure in society

The third class is Spirituality.

The fourth class is The Mystery of the Liturgy - how for each of us the liturgy sustains us and feeds our souls so we can be out in the world to talk about Jesus and how Jesus changes our lives and sustains us.

Francis concluded by saying that the program is in a beautiful setting and he still keeps in contact with some of the guys he met. He thanked Father

Brandon for allowing the seminarians to do this program. It was such a blessing.



He highly recommends the program for those serious about their vocation and who want to be a priest and be closer to God because this program really sustains a seminarian. It teaches you those simple foundations and backgrounds to be successful as a priest. Because what is a priest? A priest is one who is close to God and provides nourishment to the people and lets them know God loves them. But how does he do that? He has to know that he is loved by God, that he prays and receives God so he can share that with the people.

What the program was all about for Francis was learning the foundations, the principles of becoming a good priest in the future. He said that our society needs not just priests but good holy priests. That is what the program was about - setting up young priests for success to be faithful and to be holy.

Francis is now at St. Justin Martyr. He went straight into internship after the program to experience the reality of what it is like to be a priest. In just these couple of months of internship he feels the affirmation of God for him to be a priest. He thinks God has been affirming him all along but Francis had just been hard headed. Francis announced to us that he has personally said, "Yes, I want to be a priest."

Our Christmas Party concluded with entertainment by Annette Hills. She engaged us in her performance by having us hold snowflakes and ring bells. She related how the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" was used by persecuted Catholics in England to secretly teach our faith; Two Turtle Doves = Old and New Testament; Seven Swans A-

Swimming = the Seven Sacraments, etc. Her performance included a thoughtful "I'm Your Mother" and an example of the wrong attitude to have at Christmas with her rendition of "Santa Baby."

We all left the party in the spirit of the season.

I wish each of you a Very Merry and Blessed Christmas and may God guide you in the coming year.

Catherine Walton

SPEAKER



November's Serra Speaker was our club's own beloved chaplain, Sr. Nadine McGuinness, S.S.J., who recently returned from a very interesting trip to Vietnam where she spent the whole month of August. She was kind enough to share her experiences with her fellow and curious Serrans through a slideshow presentation.

As this was Sr. Nadine's second trip to Vietnam, she witnessed great changes compared to her first trip 30 years ago at the fall of Saigon. The purpose of her visit was to visit different communities to see how her order could help. Invited by friends to celebrate her 50th anniversary of religious vows, her trip included a bit of fun mixed with ministry. She noted that Vietnam looks like a "skinny California", it has good weather and lots of people.

The Sisters have a convent in Pleiku, near the Ba River which was contaminated with Agent Orange making the water seriously poisoned. However, through a grant from the Sisters of St. Joseph, there is a clean water plant which brings water to 30,000 people for which they charge a minimal amount. Although the Communist regime took away territory from their convent and schools, the Sisters now do nursing. The Sisters also make clothes, teach, all kinds of things to make money and support

themselves. There are 15 different communities in Pleiku to help children, and the Sisters are able to provide free food to the children. These children stay with them and go home for the weekend. Schools do not have much equipment and what exists is old-fashioned. She visited about 20 communities, some of them were impoverished. She noted how they would save the best for the elderly in their communities. Fortunately, money goes a long way in Vietnam.

After her stay in Pleiku, Sr. Nadine arrived in Saigon for a two-night stay. In Saigon she noticed many people rode bicycles. Sr. Nadine presented pictures of the beautiful St. Francis of Assisi church where people demonstrated a strong devotion to the Virgin Mary. She also visited a Redemptorist parish which served ethnic communities (non-Vietnamese people) and here witnessed a strong devotion to St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary. In photographs we see the Confirmation of 200 candidates and parishioners are seen wearing their own native costumes as well as sitting on the floor as there are no chairs.

As English is taught in Communist-run universities, the people liked to practice English with Sr. Nadine as they know it is the language of the future of the world. Grateful students would prepare their favorite foods for Sr. Nadine as she had the opportunity to teach in some of these schools to give talks about the Pope and women's roles in the Church and to be prepared for a shared leadership in the future. Indeed, they can follow her example as Sr. Nadine is on the Hospital Boards of Santa Rosa and of Napa. She also is an author and teaches doctrine. We are very proud and blessed to have Sr. Nadine as a fellow Serran and friend. May God bless her for making those talents grow so abundantly.

Gabriella Negrete

**SERRAN BIRTHDAYS IN DECEMBER
MOLLY THOMAS
AND IN JANUARY
JERRY STAUBER, CATHY WALTON,
SILVIA URIARTE AND PAT MANZO**

MEMBER PROFILE



I was born Ethel DeFraités Reynolds in New Orleans, LA, one of five children in a traditional Catholic family. I attended Catholic elementary schools, but a public high school. While studying Dental Hygiene at the University of Alabama, I first experienced being a “minority” Catholic.

I married Frank E. Reynolds in my home parish, Mater Dolorosa. Frank was a Civil Engineer employed in the petroleum industry which took us around the world. Our first son was born in New Orleans. Our first daughter was born in Maracaibo, Venezuela. Our second son was born in The Hague, Holland. Twins (boy/girl) arrived in London, and the youngest son and daughter were born in New Orleans. We came to Orange County on Christmas Eve of 1972.

The children attended St. Jeanne de Lestannac School in Tustin and went on to Foothill High School. They all have college degrees, 6 have their masters, and one has his PhD, two have law degrees.

Experiencing Catholicism in different cultures and languages helped me discover the richness of the faith and its varying traditions. I remember how happy I was when we would occasionally run into a Mass with an English speaking priest!! I truly appreciate the number of bi-lingual priests we are blessed to have in our Diocese.

In the Middle East it was difficult to even find a Catholic Church and there were many weeks over the years of Frank’s work in Dubai and Saudi Arabia that I missed Mass, and I truly missed it.

I am happy to support vocations to the priesthood through Serra Club and with my prayers.

VOCATIONS REPORT



The seminarian who received the gift card for December, donated by Silvia Uriarte, is Alvin Huynh. Alvin is Maureen Kosinski’s adopted seminarian. Alvin is in Pre-Theology/Discipleship Stage 4 at St. John’s Seminary. He is from St. Bonaventure Parish.

Seminarian David Hoang wrote that the Serra Club prayers are always encouraging. He realizes that the journey to ordination is long and necessary. He asks for our continued prayers for all of the seminarians. He assures us of his prayers for us as well.

The Serrans realize how necessary our support is for those who seek the call to the priesthood. Send Christmas remembrances to your seminarian before December 17th. Then they will be leaving the seminary for their Christmas break.

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

VOCATIONS PRAYER: Father, you desire us to be happy. Stir up the grace of a religious vocation in the hearts of many men and women. Grant to them the willingness and generosity to give of themselves, their lives, their time and their talents to the service of Jesus Christ, Your Son, Our Lord and Savior, and to his Holy Church. May more men and women go forth as priests, deacons, brothers and sisters to bring the truths of our Catholic faith to all others so that soon they, too, may know you better and love you more and serving You, be truly happy. Amen.

Mary Brockschmidt
Vice President, Vocations



Ethel Reynolds is inducted as our newest member.



SERRA RALLY

MIAMI

JANUARY 18-21, 2024



If you've never been to a national Serra event, this is the one to attend! Let's join together to create a culture of vocations! **REGISTER TODAY**

Editor's Note: Traditionally, there will be no newsletter in January so the contributors can enjoy the Holydays with friends and family. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

CHRISTMAS PARTY 2023











