

THE SERRA NEWS – OCTOBER 2011



SERRA CLUB OF DUPAGE COUNTY

Encouraging and affirming vocations to the priesthood and religious life through prayer and active fellowship since 1958

www.serradupage.org

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Serra Club Calendar

Oct 17 Mon **Monthly Vocation Meeting** *(Guests are welcome. Dinner is optional at \$15.)*

Guests, please contact Joanne Carr: CARRGEOJO@gmail.com or 630-665-0994.

***Note the change in location. See explanation below calendar.**

Morning Star Books & Gifts, 28 W. St. Charles Rd., Lombard, IL 60148

6:00 pm – Rosary for Vocations

6:30 pm – Dinner & Social Time

7:30 pm – Meeting & Speaker

Speaker: Deacon Julio Jimenez, St. Alexander Parish, Villa Park

Nov 12 Sat **Serra Officers & Trustees Meeting** *(All members are invited to attend.)*

St. Procopius Abbey, 5601 College Rd., Lisle

7:00 am – Mass *(Abbey Church)*

7:45 am – Meeting *(Private dining room, lower level)*

9:00 am – Adjournment

Nov 21 Mon **Monthly Vocation Mass & Meeting** *(Guests are welcome. Dinner is optional at \$15.)*

Guests, please contact Joanne Carr: CARRGEOJO@gmail.com or 630-665-0994.

St. Petronille Parish, 420 Glenwood Ave., Glen Ellyn

6:00 pm – Rosary for Vocations *(Church)*

6:20 pm – Mass *(Church)*

7:00 pm – Social Time *(Parish Center)*

7:20 pm – Dinner & Program *(Parish Center)*

Speaker: To be announced.

IMPORTANT! Location of October Meeting Is At Morning Star Books & Gifts, Lombard

For the past number of years, it has been the custom of our club to hold its September meeting at Morning Star. This September, the owner and our host, Chris Regan, was preoccupied with a home move and a much anticipated vacation, so it was decided to swap our September and October meetings. While we unfortunately cannot celebrate Mass there, the change in venue does provide an opportunity to become acquainted with a Catholic book and gift store. Chris is always a very gracious host. Dinner will be catered by Sodexo just as it is at our regular venue.

President's Corner: Ed Graham – Welcome New Members

Joe Langenderfer, Donna Wilson, Deacon George Soloy and Christa Selig. Who are these people? They are our new or soon-to-be members of the Serra Club. In 2010, membership growth stalled, but through the grace of the Holy Spirit and the invitation of others, including fellow Serrans, these faithful Catholics have or will become a part of our local Serra Club of DuPage.

Diane Fabrizius has been leading the local club's efforts as Vice-President of Membership, and recently, an ad hoc committee was formed to study membership recruitment and retention. Inspired by the strength of the words of Bishop Daniel Conlon at the Seminarian Send-off this past August, and his fondness for the Serra Club from his prior Episcopal assignments, I hope the local Club is entering a new era of membership expansion.

The vitality of any organization, but especially one that is focused in humble prayer asking the Master of the Harvest, Our Lord, to call new individuals to build His church is easily apparent. The number of our priests and religious has been in decline for decades. We acknowledge the burdens that are placed on the parish priests especially. And though the permanent diaconate is alive and well in the Diocese of Joliet, our loyal, and holy priests are shouldering many more responsibilities. We trust in Our Lord, and the answer is in prayer.

As Serrans, we are also active in fellowship and supporting the diocese in various ways. The project list is highlighted by the annual Seminarian Send-off, but also includes managing Tix4Cause fundraising, acting as a liaison to the Joliet Area Vocations Association (JAVA), developing the Vocation Prayer calendar, managing the Serra Club website, producing newsletters and managing the Joliet Diocese Vocations calendar.

Let's welcome our new members and persist in inviting others to the benefits of Serra.

On another matter, I'm reminded every day of all the people who have lost their jobs and are unable to find employment, especially the parents of our seminarians. Please remember all of them in your prayers.

Priesthood Sunday – What Is Your Parish Doing?



Priesthood Sunday, October 30, 2011, is a special day set aside to honor priesthood in the United States.

It is a day to reflect upon and affirm the central role of the priesthood in the life of the Church.

What happens on Priesthood Sunday? The lay faithful of all parishes in the U.S. develop their own special way of marking the

day and honoring their parish priests both at Mass and other parish events, such as social celebrations and school activities. **For ideas & materials see:** www.priestsunday.org

Priesthood Sunday is designed to be an event led by the laity, but you can invite your parish priest(s) to participate by talking about how he experienced and answered his own calling and about priests who may have inspired him.

This nationwide event is coordinated and sponsored by the USA Council of Serra International.

A Serran Pen Pal's Personal Reflection on Fr. "Bob" Sum, OSB

Fr. Bob, age 50 and campus minister at Benet Academy since 2006, passed into eternal life late in the night on Tuesday, August 16th while praying the rosary with his Benedictine community by his bedside. He battled cancer for the last year and a half. The Mass of Christian Burial was held at St. Procopius Abbey Church on Saturday, August 20, 2011. Fr. Bob entered St. Procopius Abbey in 1997 and was ordained a priest on Saturday, July 2, 2005.

Bill Reid, a Serran, was Fr. Bob's pen pal for many years and offers his following reflection.

In 2002 I was given the privilege of being Brother Bob's pen pal. Over the ensuing years the Reid Family attended many events with him and often his family that included the Serran's annual Seminarian Send-offs, his



Transitional Deaconate Ordination, his Ordination to the Priesthood, and even at Benet Academy's performance of *Oklahoma* this past spring. In the process we became friends with both him and his family. Unfortunately, the most recent time I've seen his family was at their son's funeral.

I reminded my children as we entered the Abbey for Fr. Bob's visitation that we were entering the monk's home and we must act accordingly as a visitor. It was immediately clear once we entered the sanctuary that there was a palpable sadness among his family of Brothers and Priests; you could feel their sense of loss. Once inside, the Reid family waited in the long line towards the altar and Fr. Sum's family. While waiting and soaking it all in, I became aware of all the different communities that Fr. Bob touched, represented in the crowds of people coming to pay their respects: his immediate family; his adopted family of fellow Benedictine Brothers; and the parents, students, and faculty in the Benedictine University and Benet Academy community where he was director of Campus Ministry. All these communities have suffered a great loss. Collectively we lost a son, brother, monk, priest and dear friend!

Near the end of the evening visitation I noticed a familiar face in the pews. It turned out that he was a member of the Knights of Columbus - in fact the Illinois State Deputy of the K of C. His daughter was sitting alone at the far end of their pew. He explained that she was a student at Benedictine University where she had attended several retreats with Fr. Bob. His daughter had grown to love Fr. Bob and was very upset at his passing. He went on to describe the impact Fr. Bob had on his daughter's life and her faith. She had been moved by his compassion and acceptance, and his passing was almost too much for her to bear.

In 2005 at Fr. Bob's ordination his mother saw the Reids sitting in the rear of the church. She then insisted that we come down and join their family in the front pew. It would have been a privilege to have such seats at any ordination - to witness the beauty of the sacrament so close and intimately - but as you might imagine, it had even more impact on my children to witness Brother Bob become Father Bob.

Fr. Bob's mother is the kind of woman whose embrace will melt away all your worries, and she gave a ready hug for each of us when we met at the funeral. She talked to my wife and daughters as though we were at a backyard picnic. It then occurred to me that this loving family created an environment that allowed their son to be receptive to the invitation to religious life offered by Father David Turner. He is also a member of the Benedictine order, who met the younger Robert Sum while he was assigned to the Newman Center at the University of Illinois.

Fr. Bob earned a doctorate in Computer Science at the University of Illinois before responding to Fr. Turner's call by moving to the abbey. He was memorable in many ways, down to earth, fun and loving. He had a way of making me forget how bright and capable he was. It was easy to relax with Father Bob and be yourself.

The Sum family had their share of sadness the year prior to Father Robert Sum's death. Their daughter-in-law passed away leaving behind a husband and two young children, and Robert Sum Sr. - both the father and namesake of Fr. Bob - was diagnosed with cancer. By the time of the funeral he was reduced to a wheelchair. Fr. Sum's father, a regular guy with a twinkle in his eye made it clear that he understood he too was dying. The last time I saw him in the spring he told me he was going to enjoy his last summer. At his son's funeral in late August I said, "Mr. Sum, you made it through the summer." "Yes, now I want to do my taxes. I will live to do my taxes," he said with a mischievous grin.

The last time I saw Fr. Bob he was joking about all of his medications and giggling with my children while offering them samples of the special candies he was using to offset some of the effects of his treatment. He made being sick look easy. Fr. Bob was giving cancer a run for its money with all the determination and optimism of his father.

A year earlier we were with Fr. Bob at the abbey when he said he was experiencing pain in his abdomen and apologized for removing the belt of his robe. Brother Guy looked at me and expressed concern for his friend. Three days later he was diagnosed with intestinal cancer.

My daughter Alice will join her big sister next year at Benet Academy. On the way home from the funeral she was very quiet. When I asked what was on her mind she answered, "Papa, Fr. Bob won't be there for me next year." Unfortunately he will be missed by the many people in all the communities he supported. He touched so many people's lives through his work. I know he lives on in their hearts and minds. It is his "conscientious and cheerful" nature, as Abbot Austin described so accurately, that will never be forgotten.

Vocation Reflection

PRAY! – INVITE! – ENCOURAGE! – AFFIRM! VOCATIONS!

There are vocations ... which manifest themselves. They must be fostered.

... which are not conscious of themselves. They must be awakened.

... which dare not manifest themselves. They must be found and encouraged.

... which are in fear of being lost. They must be reassured.

... which meet with opposition. They must be strengthened.

... which are paralyzed by poverty. They must be helped financially.



Look around you. How many men and women in your parishes are caring and compassionate individuals who are good listeners, articulate speakers, and loving enthusiastic Catholics? How many of these special, gifted people have ever been invited to consider becoming a priest, sister, brother, deacon, or a full-time lay minister?

Statistics show that 80% of the 18-30 year olds in the U.S. and Canada have never been asked to consider a Church vocation.

Diocesan Parish Vocation Contacts Conference – Who’s Attending from Your Parish?

CATHEDRAL OF ST. RAYMOND NONNATUS

JOLIET, IL

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2011

7:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Each year the Vocation Director invites all the Parish Vocation Contacts in the diocese to a meeting where he can report on his vocation work and provide a forum for the PVC’s to learn about vocation work, how to organize it in their parishes, and learn about successful vocation initiatives through sharing.

It is the hope of Bishop Conlon and Fr. Burke Masters that each parish have a least one PVC and that they attend this important annual event. Who is attending the conference from your parish? Ask your pastor.

Send reservations to: John Matyasik, jmatyasik@stpiuslombard.org

The Serra Club of DuPage County partners with Fr. Burke, Diocesan Vocation Director and JAVA (Joliet Area Vocation Association) to organize and sponsor this annual conference.

For These Serrans & Friends of Serra Who Are Ill, We Pray to the Lord.

Phyllis Maronta, Jane Whalen, Maggie (Sr. Audrey’s great niece), Casey Korneczuk, Terry Toner, Mark Jenkins, Jim & Rita O’Toole, Betty Rosenbaum, Jim Cormack, Gahan Hangsterfer.

Rosemary Schoener - May Her Soul Forever Rest in the Peace of Our Lord

Rosemary entered eternal life on Friday, September 16, 2011. She faithfully served as the Administrative Assistant to the Bishops of the Diocese of Joliet for many years. Serrans extend their sincere condolences to her entire family, especially her husband, Frank and her mother, Suzzette.

www.serradupage.org

The Serra Club of DuPage County was founded in 1958 and is part of Serra International, recognized by the Holy See as the global lay apostolate for vocations in the Catholic Church.

Our objectives are: to foster and promote vocations to the ministerial priesthood in the Catholic Church as a particular vocation to service; to support priests in their sacred ministry; to encourage and affirm vocations to the consecrated religious life in the Catholic Church; and to assist its members in their own lives to recognize and respond to God’s call to holiness in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

We carry out our objectives in the Diocese of Joliet through a variety of programs including: the Diocesan Annual Seminarian Send-off, Vocation Prayer Calendar, annual diocesan Seminarian Poster, and Picture Yourself as a Priest Program. The Serra Club also provides support to the Vocation Office as requested.

The Serra News is distributed monthly by the Serra Club of DuPage County.

Contact George Carr at CARRGEOJO@gmail.com or 630-917-7580 with corrections, suggested content, or to be removed from the mailing list.