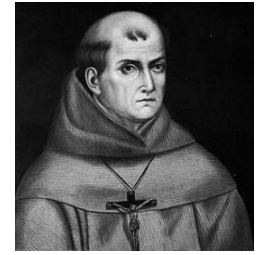




SERRA CLUB OF ORANGE COUNTY



March 2021

Region 11

District 79

Charter 438

Newsletter

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

FUTURE EVENTS

Mar 4 - Club Meeting - via Zoom - 1pm.

Speaker: Father Bruce Patterson

Mar 13 - Serra Meets - 9am - Father Luke Ballman - Executive Director of the U.S. Bishops' Secretariat for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations

April 1 - Club Meeting - via Zoom - 1pm

Speaker: TBD

May 6 - Club Meeting- via Zoom - 1pm

Speaker: Deacon Omar Uriarte

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

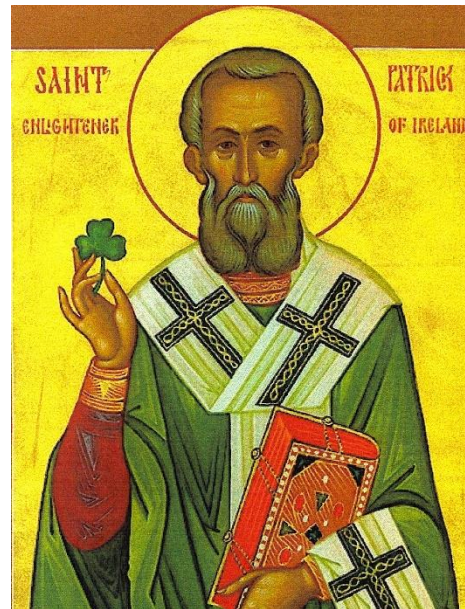


We are about two weeks into Lent. I hope you are all making progress on your Lenten journey. My main President's Message consists of my report on the Lenten Day of Recollection contained elsewhere in this newsletter. I am so glad that the Serra City of Orange Club chose to go forward with this event. Things turned out quite well.

I did want to note Bishop Thomas Daly of Spokane's weekly series of Lenten Reflections. You should be receiving them in your email.

Here is the latest segment:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcixwGV5vWM&feature=youtu.be>



I'd also like to share the new "Discover Serra" promotional video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apgmF5nmA5g>

Other Serran News: The Toronto Convention planned for June of this year has been rescheduled for 2022. Instead, Serra's 78th International Convention will be held in Chicago, Illinois from October 7-10, 2021. More details including hotel reservation link:

<https://serrainternational.org/news/serra-international-convention-2021-chicago>

Speaking of Toronto, the Archdiocese of Toronto's legendary Ordinandi Dinner will be virtual this year on Tuesday, March 2 at 7pmEST. Catch it here:

youtube.com/archtoronto

Remember to 'Pray, Fast, Give' in living out your Lent.

In God's Love,
Catherine Walton
President

SPEAKER



Two years ago, Sister Eymard spoke to our Serra Club. It was delightful to welcome her back on February 4th as our speaker. She currently is employed by Caritas where she teaches children and adults.

Sister is focused on the impact that the Covid virus has had on our lives and about the many ways that each of us has been coping with the quarantine lock down, wearing masks, social distancing and the new manner of living that has been thrust upon us regardless of our age.

Covid has presented opportunities as well. Our mission is healing. During this time, Pope Francis introduced the encyclical "Fratelli Tutti" on healing and hoping and talking to our family and friends.

Sister praised Zoom which she called a Godsend. It allows us to feel connected. Each day Sister Eymard calls 3 to 5 people to check on them and to see they are ok. Drive-bys have become very popular. A woman in Ireland plays Amazing Grace as she drives by. A man plays his bagpipes. People in Rome are singing arias. People really look forward to that time they can come outside to sing and to play. There is a lady standing outside her husband's hospital window trying to chat with him. So many people have had to die in the hospital alone. The Pope is asking that everyone reach out to others.

Sister, like so many others, has lost family members and dear friends. We need to travel lightly. We need to let go of the baggage that is keeping us bogged down. Sister suggests that we can reconnect with what we used to enjoy during the good times of our lives such as knitting scarves, sewing, making other things, baking, cooking, etc.

Sister Eymard challenged us to look at Jesus' actions. We pray our actions match our words. We need not be afraid, because Jesus is always with us. We can bring hope to others. Sister prays for us daily and would appreciate it if we reciprocated and prayed for her as well.

Virginia Mort

SERRAN BIRTHDAYS IN MARCH JOAN GOLDING



VOCATIONS REPORT

We pray for the repose of the soul of Mary Brockschmidt's husband, Don.
Our condolences to Mary and her family.

ONE TEAM PRAYS FOR ANOTHER TEAM



Members of our **Serran Prayer Team**: Mary Horan, Sue Silvestri, Cathy Walton, Sara Adamo, Virginia Mort, Mary Brockschmidt, and Rose Falbo have committed to praying one hour a week for our **OC Vocations Team**: Vocations Director, Father Brandon Dang and Joan Patten, AO, Apostolic Oblates, the Diocese of Orange Delegate for Consecrated Life.



Any questions regarding discernment, contact Father Brandon at 714-282-3036 or bdang@rcbo.org.

VOCATION PRAYER: O God, Father of all Mercies, Provider of a bountiful Harvest, send Your Graces upon those You have called to gather the fruits of Your labor; preserve and strengthen them in their lifelong service of You. Open the hearts of Your children that they may discern Your Holy Will; inspire in them a love and desire to surrender themselves to serving others in the name of Your son, Jesus Christ. Teach all Your faithful to follow their respective paths in life guided by Your Divine Word and Truth. Through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, all the Angels, and Saints, humbly hear our prayers and grant Your Church's needs, through Christ, our Lord. Amen

LENTEN DAY OF RECOLLECTION

On Saturday, February 27, 2021 Serrans from our two Orange County clubs had a chance to get together again after a long period of separation. The occasion was the Lenten Day of Recollection hosted by the Serra City of Orange Club. We met at St. Cecilia's, the home parish of a great number of our members. We were allowed to meet inside the church. They did an excellent job of arranging the socially distanced seating inside. The event, which was open to non-Serrans as well, was well attended as you can imagine. The thirst for God was clear.



While our mission as Serrans is to pray for, support and affirm vocations, it is also to answer our own personal call to holiness, and this event certainly accomplished that.

The theme was "Jesus and Me, An Ongoing Love Story." The main speaker was Father Domenico Di Raimondo, MSpS, (Missionaries of the Holy Spirit), Director of the House of Prayer for Priests in Orange. We also heard from three Serrans who recounted their experiences of God's love. Father, who has been a priest for 42 years, entered the seminary when he was 12. There are lots of things he has not experienced, so the team sharing is part of the presentation.



Father says that we, too, are a part of this Day of Recollection. The title is Jesus and me, not Jesus and Father Domenico. There are things only you and God know. He invites us to join in the presentation. Reflecting Lent has to do with love. Have you experienced love in your life? In your silence, you and God engage. You are going to tackle your love story.

The first presentation was by Serran Angie Brazeal. She focused our attention on the painting displayed before us (pictured below). It was created by a Serran, Marilee Nielsen in 1997. Angie asked Marilee to paint a picture of Jesus' suffering. Marilee had never done such a thing before so she said she would have to pray over it. It was finished in a week and a half - the fastest painting she had ever done.



Inspired by the Holy Spirit to show Jesus' love for us during the Passion, the watercolor shows a woman kneeling at the foot of the cross; but Angie saw so much more. Blood dripping down - a woman reaching up; the eyes of love staring up from the woman - the eyes of love looking down from Christ. Such love has been going on for over 2000 years as each person kneels at the foot of the crucifix in their own churches and in their own homes.

At home with the painting, Angie could feel His love coming down, flowing in her and through her. As she meditated on it in the ensuing days, it took her to the foot of the cross. She saw figures in the background - both followers and enemies of Christ. Wounds on knees became faces. A figure appeared in the bright area on the bottom right. The eyes of Satan look out from the shadow of the cross as he gleefully thinks he has won. He would soon discover how mistaken he was.

Angie played a song she would listen to over and over as she looked at the painting - "Such Love." As it played, we gazed at the painting and marveled at God's love for us.

Father says we are hoping and praying that such love will bring this presence of Jesus to people. Why did Christ have to suffer so much? God created a good world. The Bible says that Adam jumped for joy at the creation of woman. Such love turned to hate, however, as he blamed Eve for the fall. His heart was torn apart by original sin. With Cain and Abel, love turned to hate, envy to killing.

Father asked us how many experienced love in our lives. Then he asked how many experienced hate.

Maybe someone stole and broke a toy of yours when you were young. Or maybe you spent the whole day cooking a great meal for a spouse only to have it underappreciated. Or maybe, like Father, you asked your fellow priests to do the dishes and you came back late to find the sink full.

Love and hate have been battling throughout history because in our hearts is that original sin. In the midst of pain there is love, however. In the midst of the Holocaust there was Maximilian Kolbe who exchanged his life for that of another prisoner with a family. Christ's sacrifice for us and love for us can inspire us to love, to sacrifice in return.

Father next recounts that when he was still a newly ordained priest, he was called to a woman in the hospital, pregnant with a long awaited baby, but told by her doctor that she would likely die in childbirth. She wanted a priest to be with her when she told her husband. She decided she would ask that the baby be allowed to live and she die if such a choice had to be made. She told her husband. He said that he wanted both to live but respected her decision. Father blessed them. Later the mother died during childbirth. Two days later the baby died. The husband could only hold on during this tragedy because he was a believer because he knew there is an ongoing love story between each person and Jesus.

Father asked us to ponder when we had experienced love. When did the seed of love that God planted in our heart blossom? Was it when we were young or when we were older? We were provided with pages to fill out later to share our experiences with a family member.

Next, Serran Anne Champagne shared a personal testimony of a failure to love. She recounted an incident that happened between her and her sister seven years ago. She was old enough to know better but did not make the proper choice. This ultimately led her to understand God's capacity for great mercy and forgiveness.

She quoted from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans which says, "What I do, I do not understand, for I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate."

When her sister was the most vulnerable and in need of loving support Anne had offered none of them. Anne's intent had been the exact opposite, however, as she had wanted to help alleviate a stressful situation. The part that bothered her the most is that she is very close to her sister even though she lives far away. The mercy of God and sincere apologies were the only means to rectify the damage she had done. Eventually her sister offered her forgiveness. Some actions, however, leave a scar and there is no

going back and forgetting. As Anne brought this to prayer and confession she understood the forgiveness and mercy of God in a way that she never had previously. Forgiving herself is still a work in progress.

Father recommended that she read John 21 which tells of Jesus after the Resurrection. He was with the apostles just as Jesus was with Anne, just as Jesus is with us. Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" three times. Despite all of our frailties and mistakes all in our past similar to Peter's three time denial of Christ, He still loves us and is with us in good times and in bad.

Anne's experience makes present to us that we all have a seed that makes us not love or to be short in love. When you face the moment you don't love - it hurts. We sometimes take short cuts that make it worse. Instead we must be open, humble, and self presenting like Peter when he said, "Lord, you know I love you!"

Father said that Anne is challenging all of us in the name of Jesus to ask ourselves when did we experience this lack of love for others and for God. He asked us to go deep into a time we did not love. It might hurt, but do it for the Lord. It is the only way we can come to the foot of the cross and say Lord, this is why you died for me - so I can be free.

This exercise we went through is just a taste of what you can do at home during Lent.

Serran Beverly Truzzolino spoke next. She gave her testimony about experiencing love at a surprise 50th birthday party arranged for her by her husband and a friend. Her vivid and detailed description of the party reflected the love that was put into it. It brought tears of joy to her then and as she recounted it to us.

Father asked us to recall beautiful moments we have helped love others or when we have been loved.

This is the core of Lent - that we have been loved. The love story does not end until we breathe our last and then opens a new stage in our journey. God wants us to be our best selves. Early Christians were not ashamed to speak of their hero crucified. They did this so we could be free. At the core of Lent is Jesus' love for us to the point of dying and the love that He wants from us.

Next, we listened to the song "Nobody Loves You Like I Do." It is clear that Jesus loved us long ago when He sacrificed His life for us, but He still loves us. He is alive. He said, "I will be with you until the

end of time." He has been walking with us in our daily lives. We have to recognize His love. It's a gift.

Father says he was dying when he was 6 months old His dad offered blood for a transfusion. His mom said that she needed to ask Jesus to save her baby. On the top of a hill in his hometown is a church and a big crucifix that all the people loved. A steep set of stone stairs leads up to this crucifix. His mom went on her knees praying for him up the stairs. She ended up in the hospital, but here he is today - safe.

When he thinks of this love shown by his parents, he can also relate to the love of Jesus Christ saying not only my knees but my whole self I gave for you and for everyone.

We next listened to the original Spanish version of "Nobody Loves You Like I Do" as we watched a video of excerpts from the film "The Passion of the Christ." Father asked us to focus on the characters depicted and contemplate that they could be us if we ask the Lord to reveal to us His love for us.

In conclusion, Father asked us to put a note with our loving thoughts to Jesus in a basket at the foot of the cross on the altar. These messages were there during this Mass and will be present at some Masses he will say in the future.

Father concluded with this prayer:

As we begin this Lent, we recognize that nobody loves us like You do. As we discover this love, maybe for the first time or maybe as a continuation of a love we have been experiencing, grant that we love You, and because of You, grant that we love those around us in the same way with our whole heart and mind.

Catherine Walton

