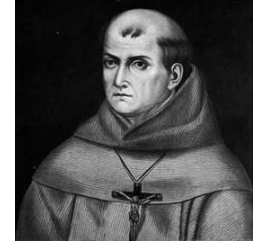




# SERRA CLUB OF ORANGE COUNTY



April 2022

Pacific Region

District 79

Charter 438

Newsletter

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

## FUTURE EVENTS

April 7 - Club Meeting, Speaker: Fr. Eric Ramirez

April 9 - "SerraMeets" Archbishop Cordileone of San Francisco - Protecting the Legacy of St. Junipero Serra in Modern Times. 9am Zoom.

<https://serraus.org/serra-meets/>

May 5 - Club Meeting, Speaker: Fr. Kiet Ta

May 7-8 - World Day of Prayer for Vocations

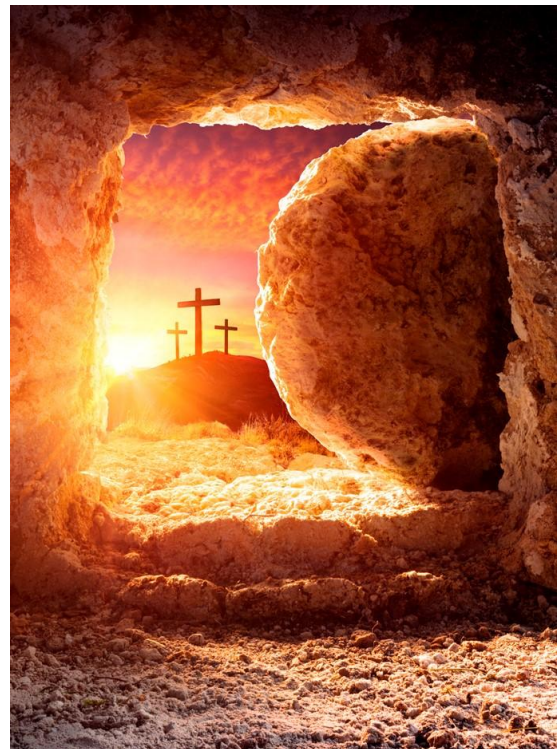
## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



### Lenten Reflections

Last month, Serrans gathered for the Lenten Day of Recollection. In these final days of Lent before the glory of the Resurrection and the Easter Season I'd like to present, for those who weren't there, some of what Father shared with us at that event.

Father Cheeyoon Chun spoke on the final words of Jesus on the Cross. As he hung there Jesus could hardly breathe. He could only say so many words. Our words are numbered too. We should be selective in what we say. What would be your last words?



**First word:** "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." We are called to love our enemies. Christ wants more. We are called to see our enemies through His eyes, but, moreover, we are called to see ourselves through His eyes. Jesus helps us to mold our hearts to look like His Sacred Heart. Our hearts are God's clay. When we receive the Eucharist we are pouring water on the clay. Who must you forgive in your life in order for you to be free?

**Second word:** "Today you will be with me in Paradise." The Good Thief is appropriately named.

He gets hold of what is not his - he gets Paradise without paying for it. Aren't we all a good thief? We want those graces. So be good so you can receive and you will be remembered by Our Lord. The Good Thief says, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Addressing Him as 'Jesus' does not show disrespect but rather intimacy. How do you address God? How does God address you?

**Third word:** "Woman, behold, your son. Behold, your mother." Jesus completely empties Himself on the Cross giving us the gift of His Mother. We are so close to Christ when we are with Mary. What are you willing to gift to another in order to profit from God's grace and become more available to God and His people? What are some aspects of your life that keep you from intimate relationship with our Lord? How have you accepted Jesus' gift of his mother? Do you have a prayerful relationship with Mary? How has the Mother of God become your mother?

**Fourth word:** "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The first verse was often used to quote an entire scripture passage. Running out of air, that is exactly what Jesus is doing as he quotes the first verse of what we now know as Psalm 22. He prayed every day with the Psalms. Is Jesus just thinking of his pains or is he perhaps thinking of the persecution of the woman caught in adultery? When we think of people being stoned, how many rocks does it take to destroy a human person? We have our words - invisible rocks that bring down a person. The most powerful words on earth are words we didn't say - words of mercy or love. Do words that others have thrown at you heal or remain as scars? How can the Word of God be your remedy? What scripture verse has been a cure for you? What words - spoken or unspoken - have been invisible stones that you regret? Who do you wish to reconnect with, forgive or ask for mercy? What is stopping you?

**Fifth Word:** "I thirst." Jesus thirsts not for the wine soaked sponge on a sprig of hyssop but for us. He thirsts for those who followed him all those years but were not with him at the Cross. Perhaps he is thinking of Zacchaeus, the rich tax collector who doesn't have to be there but goes out of his way to see Jesus by climbing a sycamore tree. Jesus had just intended to pass through the area but inspired by Zacchaeus' love and faith he says to Zacchaeus, "I'm coming to your house." Jesus climbed his own

sycamore tree so that he could be witnessed - so others seeing him could say, "Lord, I must come to your house." How far are we willing to go to see Jesus? Jesus died on the tree for us and continues to go the distance with us to be with us at Mass and in the Eucharist. What is your sycamore tree? What means and resources are at your disposal that can get you closer to Christ? How far are you willing to go to see, listen, and encounter Christ? What is stopping you from climbing your sycamore tree? Christ thirsts for you. In your journey of faith how have you satisfied Jesus' thirst? What moments in your life have you taken away his quench? Instead of the soothing love which he longs for, what are the bitter sins that you offered for his taste?

**Sixth Word:** "It is finished." Before this finish on the Cross there was a previous finish - the finish of his journey with the disciples culminating in the Last Supper. The last days, months and years of a life can be very intentional. He remembered his last meal, his last interactions, his last conversation. The dialogue back and forth of the washing of the feet was the perfect lesson - the perfect sacrifice in service just as He was the perfect sacrifice on the Cross. In John 13, Jesus reminds them He is God - I AM. I have a plan for you. Follow me. Love one another. Let your sign be your love. If you love one another that is my mark on you and you will show it to the world. The perfect dialogue is happening as we read - I am the vine you are the branches. This is a guideline to His Church. It is not finished until it is finished in us. Don't be selfish. Bring others to Christ. More generations are coming. It is not finished until every soul has returned to His home.

**Seventh Word:** "Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit." The power of darkness is defeated by trust in a faithful God. We grow from our suffering. We see a different perspective of Our Lord's suffering. From conception to death it was a life of surrender. He is calling us to be like him - to trust Him. Sainthood is for everyone. At your deathbed, although you may be weak - be strong in heart. Receive Our Lord.

Have a Holy Lent and **Happy Easter!** 

In God's Love,  
Catherine Walton

## SPEAKER



In March the Serrans were delighted to welcome as guest speaker, Fr. Brandon Dang, who was introduced by his Adopter, Mrs. Mary Brockschmidt. It was a true pleasure to know of the great accomplishments achieved by someone so young and energetic.

Fr. Brandon Dang is originally from St. Nicholas Parish in Laguna Woods and he studied at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park. He remembers fondly of the care packages received (especially Mary's brownies). Fr. Brandon was ordained in 2016 and his first assignment was as Parochial Vicar at Our Lady Queen of Angels in Newport Beach. He thoroughly enjoyed his work there, however, during his third year at Our Lady (March 2019) while heading to celebrate morning Mass, he received a call from Bishop Vann's secretary asking to meet with him that very morning. While waiting for Bishop to appear, Fr. Brandon is anxiously trying to think of topics of conversation as he has no idea of the purpose of this meeting. Upon entering the room, Bishop comes directly to the point of his desire that Fr. Brandon be the next Vocations Director for the Diocese of Orange. To be sure, this is a huge blessing and very humbling as he is to become the youngest Vocations Director in the history of the Diocese of Orange. Fr. Brandon asks Bishop, "are you sure? ---I am a young priest". Bishop reassures him that it is precisely due to his youth and how he exudes the joy of the priesthood that he has been chosen for this position. Fr. Brandon assumed the position of Vocations Director in June 2019 and was also co-emcee of the Christ Cathedral dedication in July.

There are many layers to Fr. Brandon's job. He commented that once a priest is assigned he naturally becomes disconnected from the seminarians. Father understands a seminarian's state of mind and how important it is to nurture and form that mind into a good Christian man and priest. Fr. Brandon stated the three layers of his job:

- Director of Seminarians-Overseeing their formation.
- Director of Discernment-Integrated in helping them discern.
- Promotion of Vocations-Through booths to recruit (e.g., SEEK program, FOCUS which sends missionaries to college campus, SLS which has Newman Centers in colleges).

Fr. Brandon noted that many young men finishing college and starting careers found their vocation upon going to a retreat. At present, there are 16 seminarians: 3 in college studying General Ed., 2 in Pre-Theology which is a two-year program, 7 in Theology, 2 in their Pastoral Year and 2 on Special Assignment. Special prayers are asked for two seminarians, Mark Jung and Vincent Nguyen. Of late, we have downsized to three seminaries: St. John's in Camarillo which has 7-9 in formation, Mount Angel in Oregon which has 3 in formation and Bishop White in Spokane which has one undergraduate seminarian.

Fr. Brandon is in the process of implementing a propaedeutic year during the novitiate year for diocesan priests, in which there will be spiritual and human training without academia. This is a program for pastoral integration. The USCCB has developed this program in order to be able to connect closer with people and foment a human connection, have accountability through teaching, checking on them, encouragement, and accompaniment so as to have someone to journey with them. Fr. Brandon has also created Discernment Mentors and has started a high school discernment meeting which is known as CALLED.

Fr. Brandon asks us to continue to pray for and encourage vocations.

Gabriella Negrete

# VOCATIONS REPORT



# INDUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

The seminarian who received the gift card for this month, donated by Silvia Uriarte, is Simon Li. Simon is from St. Norbert's Parish and is in Theology 3 at St. John's Seminary. Simon is Madrienne Peters' adopted seminarian. Simon grew up in Orange, graduated from UC Irvine and worked a few years before entering the seminary. Simon feels his parents, who formed his foundation as a Catholic, influenced his decision to enter the seminary. Simon knew he wanted to live a meaningful life. He took it a step at a time and was encouraged by priests each step along the way.

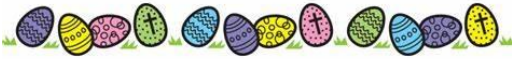
We were pleased to have Vocation Director Father Brandon Dang participate in our Induction Ceremony for new members Sophia Wickson, Barbara Beneville and Gabriella Negrete at our March meeting.

Any questions regarding discernment, contact our Vocations Director, Father Brandon Dang, at 714-282-3036 or [bdang@rcbo.org](mailto:bdang@rcbo.org).



**VOCATIONS PRAYER:** From World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

O Father, raise up among Christians numerous and holy vocations to the priesthood to keep the faith alive and guard the gracious memory of your Son Jesus through the preaching of his word and the administration of the Sacraments, with which you continually renew your faithful. Give us holy ministers of your altar, who are careful and fervent guardians of the Eucharist, the sacrament of the supreme gift of Christ for the redemption of the world. Call ministers of your mercy, who, through the sacrament of Reconciliation, spread the joy of your forgiveness. Sustain the bishops, priests and deacons, consecrated men and women, and all the baptized in Christ, so that they may faithfully fulfill their mission at the service of the Gospel. We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



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Mary Brockschmidt  
Vice President, Vocations