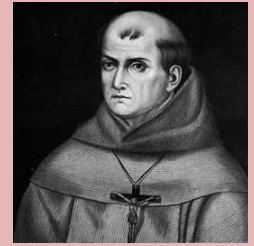




SERRA CLUB OF ORANGE COUNTY



February 2023

Pacific Region

District 79

Charter 438

Newsletter

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

FUTURE EVENTS

February 2 - Club Meeting, Speaker: Father Michael Fitzpatrick.

**February 2 - World Day for Consecrated Life -
(Celebrated in parishes Feb. 4-5)**

March 18 - Lenten Day of Recollection

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



On February 2 we celebrate World Day for Consecrated Life which is observed this year in parishes on the weekend of February 4-5. When it was established by Pope John Paul II in 1997 February 2 was chosen since it is the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, also known as Candlemas Day - the day on which candles are blessed symbolizing Christ who is the light of the world. So too, those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to all people.

Let us hear what our last three Popes have to say from their World Day for Consecrated Life homilies:



"Dear Men and Women Religious, what a favourable opportunity you are afforded on this day dedicated to you, to reaffirm your fidelity to God with the enthusiasm and generosity of the moment when you first pronounced your vows! Repeat your "yes" to the God of Love every day with joy and conviction. In the recollection of the cloistered monastery or beside the poor and marginalized, among young people or within the structures of the Church, in the

various apostolic activities or in mission lands, God wants you to be faithful to his love and dedicated without reserve to the good of your brothers and sisters.

This is the precious contribution which you can make to the Church, so that the Gospel of hope may reach the men and women of our time."

Pope John Paul II 2004

"According to the insight of Bl. John Paul II, who celebrated for the first time in 1997 the day dedicated to consecrated life, it establishes specific goals. First, it seeks to respond to the need to give praise and thanks to the Lord for the gift of this state of life which belongs to the sanctity of the Church. Today, the prayer of the entire Community is dedicated to every consecrated person, giving thanks to God the Father, giver of every good, for the gift of this vocation, and once again invoking him with faith. Moreover, this occasion offers the opportunity to appreciate increasingly the testimony of those who have chosen to follow Christ through the practice of the evangelical counsels by promoting understanding and appreciation of the consecrated life within the People of God. Finally, the World Day for Consecrated Life is meant, above all for you, dear brothers and sisters who have embraced this state in the Church, to be a precious occasion to renew your commitment and rekindle the feelings that inspired and continue to inspire the gift of yourselves to the Lord. Let us do this today, this is the commitment you are called to realize every day of your life."

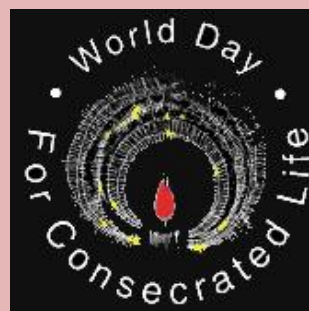
Pope Benedict XVI 2012

"What is our vision of consecrated life? The world often sees it as "a waste", a relic of the past, something useless. But we, the Christian community, men and women religious, what do we see? Are our eyes turned only inward, yearning for something that no longer exists, or are we capable of a farsighted gaze of faith, one that looks both within and beyond? I am greatly edified when I see older consecrated men and women whose eyes are bright, who continue to smile and in this way to give hope to the young. Let us think of all those times when we encountered such persons, and bless God for this. For their eyes are full of hope and openness to the future." Pope Francis 2022

Remember that in addition to supporting our seminarians and priests, our Serra mission is to encourage and affirm vocations to consecrated religious life. Let us rededicate ourselves to supporting and praying for aspirants to and consecrated members of the 48 women's and 20 men's religious communities and secular institutes in the Diocese of Orange.

Enjoy a Happy Saint Valentine's Day!

In God's Love,
Catherine Walton



SPEAKER



The New Year welcomed a new speaker to our Serra Club, Fr. Khoi Phan, Administrator of St. Cecilia Parish in Tustin. Fr. Khoi's story is one of adventure; truly a long journey which he compares to a transformative "forty years in the wilderness" type of experience.

Born in 1978 in Vietnam, Fr. Khoi is one of seven brothers and sisters. In 1983 he left Vietnam and spent one year in a Refugee Camp. He described his

departure from the camp by becoming one of the Boat People and arriving with one of his brothers to Malaysia, where he remained for 2 years. In 1990 he arrived in the U.S. at the age of 12 with his brother who was 14, whereupon they became wards of the state and were put into foster homes. Fortunately, their 16 year-old brother who had previously arrived in California, was asked by Social Services if he would like all three brothers to live together, to which he assented so long as it was in Irvine. The 16 year-old had been living in Santa Ana and West Garden Grove and had seen many gangs in high schools in those days. Although the boys were placed in a Buddhist home in Irvine, their foster parents respected the boys' religion and would drop them off every weekend at St. Barbara's for the 7pm Mass. This would continue until Fr. Khoi was 18 years old.

Prior to living in Irvine, Fr. Khoi's older brother had been living in Santa Ana with a foster mother who was involved in a Christian group. Although the other foster kids were in gangs, he participated in the Christian group and Fr. Khoi wanted to serve there as well. At the age of 14, Fr. Khoi started to read the Bible and the more he read, the more he loved. He felt that becoming a priest would give him more time to dedicate to learning the Bible. He began to investigate all religious orders. In those days, long distance calls were expensive, therefore he began to call from public telephone booths. During his high school years he thought long and hard if this was a desire to just learn religion or if this was his true vocation. He questioned whether his feelings were valid or did he fear not having anyone to support him? He continued on to receive his Physics degree from UCI and realized he could manage on his own. He no longer had that fear of support and the desire to become a priest still remained.

In 2002 he entered seminary at the Society of the Divine Word to which he jokingly added "because I liked the outdoors." He studied Pre-Theology in Iowa and lived in Chicago for his Novitiate Year. One of his favorite pastimes was exploring the world and nature.

The moment of truth arrived in 2004 when after 15 years of separation Fr. Khoi's parents were given

their VISA to the U.S. He had to decide whether to continue to discern his vocation or move back to California to be closer to them. In January of 2004 he was sent to Boston for a 30-day retreat and was later sent by the Diocese to St. John's Seminary. In 2006 he was sent to the beautiful city of Quito, capital of Ecuador, to learn Spanish by full immersion. In 2009 he was ordained by Bishop Brown at St. Columban's.

Fr. Khoi is very grateful for Serrans' prayers which he knows carried him through his discernment and continue to help him to this day

Gabriella Negrete

MEMBER PROFILE

We welcome our new member
Molly Thomas



I grew up in the southern part of India. I studied in Catholic schools through college. After college I got married to my husband, Tom. We came to the United States in 1976 and lived in Chicago for 8 years. Then we moved to Southern California and settled in Anaheim Hills for 35 years. We moved to Tustin in 2020 to be close to our children and to spend more time with our grandchildren. We are members of St. Cecilia Catholic Church in Tustin. I met Virginia Mort at the St. Cecilia's women's group and she invited me to join the Serra Club. Thank you, Virginia.

VOCATIONS REPORT



The Seminarian who received the gift card for January is Rev. Ian Gaston. Ian is from St. Norbert Parish and is in Theology 4 at Mt. Angel Seminary. Ian is Mary Brockschmidt's adopted seminarian. Ian thanked our Serra Club for the gift card and our continued support of prayers. It is greatly appreciated. He finished his silent retreat and will begin his last semester at Mt. Angel. Ian shared that Father Scott Borgman is now at Mt. Angel. Ian feels the seminarians will greatly benefit from his presence. Father Scott is a great priest and a fatherly figure to the seminarians.

Seminarian Cody Schurter, newly entered in September, wished our Serra Club members a beautiful start to the New Year. He also feels it is a gift to know that there are people dedicated to the work the Serrans do for vocations. He has us in prayer now and throughout the year and asks our Lord to continue to draw us into deeper relationship with Him.

The seminarian who received the gift card for February, donated by Virginia Mort, is Rev. David Moreno. David is Sylvia Uriarte's adopted seminarian. David is from Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and is in Theology 4 at St. John's Seminary.

We have twenty-three seminarians studying for the Diocese of Orange at three seminaries: St. John's Seminary, Mount Angel Seminary and Bishop White Seminary. The monthly Gift Card and Adopt a Seminarian are the activities our club members can sign up for to support our seminarians. At our February meeting, members can sign up for the monthly gift card. Only four of the seminarians have

not been adopted by a club member. Any member who would like to adopt a seminarian can do that at our meeting.

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

VOCATIONS PRAYER: Loving God, Creator of the universe, you have gifted me with life. You call me to be a light to the world through Baptism. Help me to brighten our world by sharing my gifts in the service of others and respecting all of creation. I ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Mary Brockschmidt
Vice President, Vocations



Sue M Silvestri
October 15, 1930 - January 21, 2023



**SERRAN BIRTHDAYS IN
FEBRUARY
SOPHIA WICKSON, MARY
BROCKSCHMIDT AND BRUCE
JUNOR**