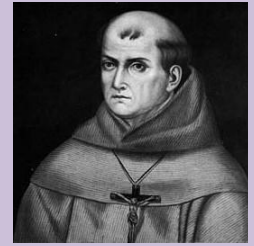




SERRA CLUB OF ORANGE COUNTY



April 2024

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 4 - Club Meeting, Speaker: Rev. Michael Khong

April 13 - Serra Meets - 9am - Zoom - Scott Hahn

April 21 - World Day of Prayer for Vocations

May 1 - Religious Brothers Day

May 2 - Club Meeting, Speaker: Rev. David Moreno

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I hope you had a blessed Easter. Now we continue to celebrate the season of Easter over the next 50 days, from the first Sunday of Easter through to the Ascension and then to Pentecost. Take what you learned during Lent and live it out in your lives now.

One of the missions of Serra is to affirm existing vocations. We did this when we celebrated Sisters Week in March. This year we decided to give a donation to the Missionaries of Charity Contemplative Sisters. We accompanied it with a card that we all signed at our March meeting indicating our prayers and support for them.



Our President-elect Gabriella Negrete delivered the items. While most people are familiar with St. Teresa of Calcutta's active missionary work to the "poorest of the poor" all over the world, she also founded several other branches of the religious order, including religious priests, brothers and contemplative sisters. The Missionaries of Charity Contemplative Sisters is the first contemplative order in Orange County, coming here in 2021. This fulfills a specific desire of Bishop Vann, as stated in the Diocesan Strategic Plan: "Identify and invite a religious community, with a charism of intercessory prayer, to make their home in the Diocese of Orange in support of evangelization efforts, the pastoral life of the Diocese and vocations." They pray with and for the poor in their neighborhoods serving the spiritually poor through dedicated prayer and spiritual works of mercy. They will offer their prayer and spiritual works for the Church, especially for the Diocese of Orange.

Finally, I've put a picture of the Annunciation (April 8) for this month's newsletter. I've chosen the painting by Tanner which was the subject of a memorable meditation I experienced at the Serra International Convention in Sacramento in 2014. The Annunciation also reminds me of the sacrament of Confirmation. My grandson will be confirmed during this Easter season, the first of the next generation in our family that we have passed the faith on to. Like Mary with her 'yes', the confirmed assents to follow God's will. As we renewed our baptismal vows at Easter Mass, let us also tap into and draw strength from the gifts of the Holy Spirit that we received at our Confirmation.

In God's Love,
Catherine Walton

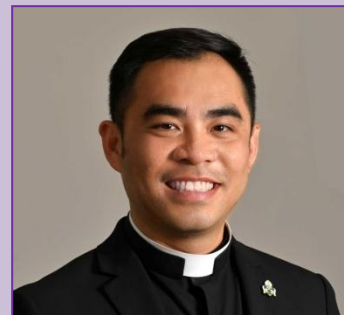


Convent Renovations



Garden at Convent

SPEAKER



This month's Serran speaker was the recently ordained Fr. Ben Nguyen who is presently serving as Parochial Vicar at St. Killian's in Mission Viejo.

Fr. Ben Nguyen was born in Vietnam and is the middle child of three brothers. Fr. Ben came to Orange County in 1995 when he was 15 years old. His first ambition was to become a lawyer, so he enrolled at Cal State Long Beach while also working for the county, performing Data Entry. Upon receiving two degrees, he took a job as a Social Worker for the County of Orange. In his spare time, he studied to take the LSAT exam and attended Law School in the evenings for four years. He later transferred from the Orange County Refugee Assistance Program to the county Adoption Services, for which he served two years. In total, he worked approximately 11 years for the County of Orange. These years serving the community did not pass in vain, as it established a firm grasp in Fr. Ben's mind to answer the call to service.



President-elect Gabriella Negrete with the Superior, Sr. Anne Marie.

During this discernment, Fr. Ben made a pilgrimage to France and Medjugorje. While visiting Medjugorje during Divine Mercy Sunday Healing Service Mass, Fr. Ben Nguyen met with Fr. Ben Tran (also visiting Medjugorje at the time) and discussed his plans to enter Seminary. It was a difficult decision as 2 years prior he had purchased a house with his younger brother and did not want to back down on the responsibility. Although never involved in the Church, he demanded a sign from God and asked for John Paul II's intercession. He did not have the courage or assurance to quit his job. Fr. Ben Tran prayed over him, and the future Fr. Ben Nguyen cried as he felt the Holy Spirit was with him. Any misgivings were quickly set at ease when his younger brother informed him that he could afford the mortgage by himself.

In Medjugorje there is the statue of Mary with open arms, and upon seeing her he felt led to her and could hear her call, "Come to me" and with tears in his eyes he approached her. He entered St. John's Seminary and was in formation for seven years and was ordained in 2023. During Covid, he would read testimonies in Tribunal cases and found it fascinating as he could help people come back into the Church. He still has hopes of becoming a Canon Lawyer.

Fr. Ben is grateful for the Serran's prayers and asks that we continue to pray for him to be a faithful priest and for more vocations, which are needed now more than ever.

Gabriella Negrete

VOCATIONS REPORT



The seminarian who received the gift card for April, donated by Molly Thomas, is Samuel Nguyen, Samuel is from Blessed Sacrament Parish and is in Theology/Configuration Stage 1 at St. John's Seminary. Samuel is Gabriella Negrete's adopted seminarian. Most of the seminarians have had a

Spring Break and have now returned to their respective seminaries.

On June 8th Deacon Cole Buzon will be ordained to the Priesthood at Christ Cathedral. On July 26th our Serra Club of Orange County will host the Ordinati event at Christ Cathedral which is attended by family members as well as Serra Club members to honor the newly ordained.

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

VOCATIONS PRAYER: Faithful God, You sent your Son to be our Good Shepherd. Renew in us our commitment to serve you. Bless all who dedicate their lives to you. Give insight to those discerning their vocation. Send us to proclaim the Good News of Jesus, our Good Shepherd, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Mary Brockschmidt
Vice President, Vocations



Father Ben Nguyen with the stole we gave him