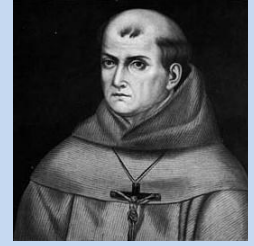




SERRA CLUB OF ORANGE COUNTY



May 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

May 1 - Religious Brothers Day

May 2 - Club Meeting, Speaker: Rev. Francis Ng

May 11 - Serra Meets - 9 am - Zoom - Mike Downey, US Serra Club President, will give a special update on the US Serra Council.

June 6 - Club Meeting, Speaker: Deacon Bob Alvarado

June 8 - Priesthood Ordination - Christ Cathedral



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



When Deacon Cole Buzon is ordained to the priesthood in our Diocese on June 8 at Christ Cathedral, he will be one of 475 men ordained as diocesan or religious priests in the United States this year. That is up from 458 last year. The number of ordinands in our own Diocese fluctuates. While Cole's ordination is the only one this year, we had three last year. Next year we are also scheduled to have one ordination.

A study of the ordinands of 2024 was conducted by CARA: The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, which is sponsored in part by the Serra International Foundation. It found that just slightly

more than half of the new priests this year are age 31 or younger. Results also indicated that while 63% were encouraged to consider the priesthood by a priest, 41% were encouraged by parishioners. Once they are in the seminary they need encouragement, too. Remember that many of our priests who have spoken to us at our meetings have said how our support got them through difficult times during their seminary years. Our prayers and our encouragement of our adopted seminarians make a difference.

Our financial support is important, too. We can support the seminaries that our men from this Diocese attend as well as the various programs within our Diocese that the Vocations Office implements. To that end I would encourage you to donate to the Monsignor Sammon Fund. May is Monsignor Sammon month which we dedicate to requests for donations to this fund.

The Monsignor Sammon Fund was named after Msgr. John F. Sammon who was our Serra Club's chaplain from 1976 - 2006. The fund's purpose is to advance and support vocations to the Roman Catholic priesthood and the religious life, and in particular for the support of seminarians of the Diocese of Orange. The most recent grants were to the Diocese of Orange Vocations Office and St John's Seminary where we currently have 12 seminarians from our Diocese and Bishop White Seminary where we have 2 seminarians. Any amount is appreciated. Let us give in memory of our beloved former chaplain and support our future priests and religious.

In God's Love,
Catherine Walton

SERRAN BIRTHDAYS IN MAY
SARA ADAMO
MAUREEN KOSINSKI
DIANE SALINGER

SPEAKER



This month's Serra Speaker was Fr. Michael Khong, secretary to Bishop Vann, Master of Ceremonies, Chancellor and Interim Director of Priests' Personnel.

Born in Vietnam and the youngest of eleven siblings, Fr. Michael Khong arrived in Orange County in 1993 at the age of 21. In 1994 he enrolled at Golden West College majoring in Computer Science. As part of a large family, his desire was to have the same. He worked hard and had a good income, yet he felt something was always missing. A deep emptiness and meaninglessness of life consumed him. In his

mind he would think, "Quo Vadis?" Why and Where? He recalls that his mother had told him that only God could help him with his depression.

Admittedly, he did not use his money wisely and on May 22, 2005 his life hit rock bottom. He had lost everything. That day he prayed before the Blessed Sacrament with these words, "Jesus, I don't believe in you but if you show me, I will follow you anywhere...I don't want to live anymore." He felt God's embrace and tears came upon him. He heard a voice say "I love you." He had lost everything but he had found Jesus Christ! In his mind he saw himself raising a monstrance and blessing, and hearing the words, "You will be my witness of mercy." He remained before the Blessed Sacrament for three hours.

His family's reaction to his decision to become a priest was mixed, as one sister thought he was crazy, but they all gave him their support. He began attending daily Mass, signed up to be a Lector and then a Eucharistic Minister. His sister told him he needed to go to Confession, as he jokingly stated his relief at there only being 10 Commandments as if there had been 25, he would have broken all of them! Three weeks later he was first in line to Confession and a miracle occurred afterward. His confessor, Fr. Neneman, asked him, "Young man, what is your name? Ever thought of becoming a priest?" He replied that he felt unworthy, to which Fr. Neneman then replied, "You are a witness to God's love and mercy."

Although amazed at these words, the future Fr. Michael Khong had no desire to become a diocesan priest as he had a reputation as a trouble-maker. He wanted to run away from his past and go far away where nobody knew him, but a priest advised him not to look into the past for Jesus said, "I AM" and not "I was." Fr. Michael Khong attended St. John's Seminary for 7 years and was ordained in 2017 and his first assignment was St. John Neumann.

Fr. Michael Khong strongly recommends that when a person is dying, please call 911 and then a priest for Last Rites, as it heals their soul. He also asks Serrans for continued prayers for young men and women to open their hearts for vocation to religious life and for priests.

Gabriella Negrete

VOCATIONS REPORT



The seminarian who received the gift card for May, donated by Gabriella Negrete, is Ethen O'Campo. Ethan is from St. Joachim's Parish and Ethan is in Theology/Configuration Stage 1 at Mt. Angel Seminary. Ethan is Molly Thomas's adopted seminarian.

Our Club received a note from Samuel Nguyen. Samuel is studying at St. John's Seminary and he said hearing from our Club was a surprise. He appreciates that our Club prays for him. He feels that our prayers and dedication help him to keep moving on his journey to ordination. He prays that his prayers for the Serra members will shower us with an abundance of grace.

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: God our Father, You made each of us to use our gifts in the Body of Christ. We ask that You inspire young people whom You call to Priesthood and consecrated life to courageously follow Your will. Send Workers into Your great harvest so that the Gospel is preached, the poor are served with love, the suffering are comforted, and Your people are strengthened by the sacraments. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mary Brockschmidt
Vice President, Vocations



Serra International Convention

NEW ORLEANS – AUGUST 8-11, 2024

Join us for Serra's 81st International Convention in vibrant New Orleans, the perfect destination for an unforgettable convention! Immerse yourself in the rich Catholic heritage of the city, explore the beautiful St. Louis Cathedral, stroll the renowned French Quarter, and savor delicious Cajun cuisine while connecting with Serrans from around the world!

Registration Link:

[New Orleans Convention - Serra International](#)

MONSIGNOR SAMMON FUND



May is Monsignor Sammon Fund month.

Please donate to support vocations.

**Make your check out to
Orange Catholic Foundation
with Msgr. Sammon Fund in memo
line**

**and send to
Pat Manzo**

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