

Serra Club of St. Petersburg

On the Internet at: "http://serraclubstpete.com"



April 2006

"Always go forward, never look back"

Dates to Remember:

- Tuesday, April 18, 7:00 p.m. Regular Monthly Meeting, St. Jude's Pastoral Center, Program: Sandy and Mike Tobin from the McGivney Institute.
- Wednesday, April 26, 7:00 p.m. Holy Hour. St. Jude's Chapel.
- Tuesday, May 16, 7:00 p.m. Regular Monthly Meeting, St. Jude's Pastoral Center, Program: Deacon John Alvarez, Prison Ministry
- Wednesday, May 24, 7:00 p.m. Holy Hour. St. Jude's Chapel.
- Wednesday, June 14, 6:30 p.m. Annual Installation Dinner and Seminarian Reception. St. Petersburg Yacht Club, 50 Central Avenue, St. Petersburg. Speaker: TBA

Seminarian Details His Path to Priesthood

Seminarian Keith Fitzsimmons spoke to Serrans at our March meeting, detailing his past and intended path to the priesthood. Keith, who is currently serving a pastoral year at St John Vianney Parish in St Pete Beach, related how he was adopted at age 5 from his native Korea by Irish Catholic parents. He served as an altar boy and had early thoughts of the priesthood, but dismissed them as he went to college, and, in fact, stopped the active practice of his faith. After graduating from Purchase College in NY, he acquired employment in the computer field, and lived what he called a "selfish life," for a number of years.

He chanced upon a book titled "View from a Monastery," while browsing in a book store, and was moved to make a change in his life and a more active practice of his faith. He went to a Benedictine Monastery in South Dakota, for a "retreat" but ended up staying 10 months while he contemplated his future, including the possibility of entering the monastery.

Seminarian - Continued

He finally decided his gift involved working with people, and he could do this best as a diocesan priest. He contacted the vocations director of this diocese, to which his parents had moved, to request an interview. He described Fr Len's surprise when an oriental with an Irish name arrived for the interview. Fr Len was obviously expecting a ruddy faced Celtic.

Keith candidacy was approved, however, and he has been studying at both St John Vianney and St Vincent De Paul seminaries. In August he will resume his studies at St Vincent and expects to be ordained in 2 years. He will be 34 at time of ordination. Serrans responded warmly to Keith and assured him of our continued prayers and support.



McGivney Institute Subject of April Meeting

Our April 16 meeting will feature Mike and Sandy Tobin speaking to us about a proposed center for the ongoing formation and spiritual enrichment of priests called the McGivney Institute.

The Institute will be located in Crystal River, Florida and will be directed by a priest and a qualified professional staff. It is contemplated that priests will come to the center for a 3 or 4 month stay, during which they will be immersed in human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation programs. In effect they will renew and refresh their priestly vocations, but from a new perspective. They will emerge as better, more dedicated and energized priests.

The project is certainly within the purview of the mission of Serra, which is not only to promote new vocations, but also to sustain and enrich existing ones. We look forward to hearing what Mike and Sandy have to say.



Annual Retreat Draws 30 Serrans & Guests

The annual retreat of our Serra Club was held on Saturday, April 2, drawing 30 attendees, including a few guests. The site again this year was the media center of St Petersburg Catholic High School, and the nearby cafeteria. Leading the retreat exercises was our recently installed chaplain, Fr Tom Tobin. He focused the retreat on the theme of Pope Benedict's Encyclical Letter "Deus Caritas Est" or God Is Love.

The morning reflection stressed God's love for us, and the afternoon session considered how we are called upon to extend that love to others. Following each talk, Serrans were given a list of questions to ponder in silence, the purpose of which was to internalize the themes of the talks. Some sharing followed each session. Climax of the day was the celebration of Mass in the nearby St Mary Magdalene Chapel. The day also included a breakfast gathering and a delicious sandwich lunch prepared by the school food service. In addition to being a significant event in the Lenten observances of Serrans, the retreat was an important program in furtherance of one of our purposes, i.e. to deepen the spiritual life of our members. Planning and arrangements for the retreat was handled by our Program VP's Jim Prior and Charlie Fuss, by our president, Kathy Bolich, and by Serrans Loren and Jan Davy.



Kathy's Korner

It's time again to develop a slate of officers for next year. Every year our nomination committee searches our membership for the characteristics of leadership, a passion for the mission of Serra, and the attitude of a servant. Only you know your availability and area of interest within our club. We have been blessed with a membership that is motivated, and members that make themselves available for service at whatever level that they are able. Please take a few minutes to prayerfully consider the needs of our club and your own availability and talents. Please contact Larry and Maureen Ahern, who are heading the nomination committee if you would like to be considered for one of the offices of the executive committee. If they approach you please consider the responsibilities involved and be as generous as you can with your time and talents.

Kathy's Korner - Continud

The last 3 months of our fiscal year are busy ones. Please consult the "dates to remember" section of the newsletter and mark your calendars. These are some of the most fulfilling events of the year culminating in the ordination of 2 new priests for our diocese. I hope to see you at each event and to share your joy in the fruits of our prayers for vocations. ...**Kathy**



Religious Lunch Survives Setbacks

It seemed like a simple task. Provide a closing lunch for about 65 religious, mostly sisters, at the close of their annual retreat and gathering at Christ the King Church in Tampa. Most of the Serran women were engaged with the Magnificat meeting on the date--Saturday a.m. Mar 11, so the guys stepped forward. No problem. Nick Mellon offered to head up the team. He would arrange for the sandwiches and other items to be prepared at a deli on the beach, and bring them to Tampa. There Larry Ahern, Conrad Beaulieu and Norm Dusseault would meet him at 11 a.m. , plenty of time to set out the food on several round dining tables for the noon lunch.

But they didn't count on a fire at the deli. 11 a.m. came and went and still no food, and then 11:30, and 11:45. Frantic calls were made and finally the message was received. Nick was flying across the bridge. He arrived with 5 minutes to spare. In the meantime, the closing remarks were "extended." The Sisters and other attendees were advised to walk slowly to the dining area, where four harried Serrans were hastily, even frantically, setting out the lunch. In the end all was serene. The lunch was delicious and enjoyed by all, even the harried Serrans. Commented our Serran team "Piece of cake."



Seminarians Home Parishes

Carl "Buster" Melchior: Christ the King, Tampa
Victor Amorose, Dac Clement and Tim McIntire : Light of Christ , Tampa
Ralph Wolosik: Mercy of God Polish Mission, St Pete,
Tim Cummings: Nativity, Brandon
Walter "Butch" Dugan: Our Lady of Fatima, Inverness
Mark Sokolewicz: Sacred Heart, Pinellas Park
Justin Paskert: St Anne, Ruskin
Jonathan Emery: St Clement, Plant City
Joe Musco: St Francis Cabrini, Spring Hill
Dominic Corona,: St Ignatius, Tarpon Springs
Dayan Machado: St Joseph, Tampa
Bill Santhouse: St Luke, Palm Harbor
Carlos Rojas: St Paul, Tampa
Keith Fitzsimmons, St Scholastica, Lecanto