

Serra Club of St. Petersburg

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



April 2007

"Always go forward, never look back"

Dates to Remember:

- **Tuesday, April 17, 7 p.m. Regular Monthly Meeting, St. Jude Pastoral Center. Program: Fr. Jean Robitaille, Cursillo Spiritual Director, Diocese of St. Petersburg.**
- **Wednesday, April 25, 7:00 p.m. Holy Hour. St. Jude's Chapel.**
- **Saturday, April 28, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Annual Serran Retreat, St. Petersburg Catholic High School, Chaplain Fr. Tom Tobin, retreat master.**
- **Sunday, April 29, 3:00 p.m. Altar Server Mass, St. Jude's.**
- **Tuesday, May 15, 7 p.m. Regular Monthly Meeting, St. Jude Pastoral Center. Program: TBA**
- **Wednesday, May 23, 7:00 p.m. Holy Hour. St. Jude's Chapel.**

Fr. Bob Morris Speaks At Serra Meeting (*Finally*)

For several months Fr. Bob Morris, pastor of St John Vianney Parish, has been scheduled to speak to Serra, but conflicts, both his and ours, delayed his appearance. Finally, on March 13, he came, and his talk was well worth the wait.

Fr. Bob related his journey to the priesthood in an inspiring manner. He traced his origins from a religious family in the Albany, NY area, where he served as an altar server, and had the example of a devout Catholic mother, several relatives who entered religious life, including his uncle who was a priest.

He came to Florida for college, attending St Leo, where he was influenced by the late Abbot Fidelis. Throughout his college years he remained faithful to his prayer life, as he discerned his role in life. He graduated from St Leo in 1979 with a degree in education and became a teacher, first in Pinellas Park, Florida, and later in the state of New York. When he moved with his family to Florida in the early 1980's, he took a position as a youth minister at Incarnation Parish in Tampa. It was during that time that he seriously began to discern his calling to the priesthood. He entered the seminary and was ordained a priest in 1991. He related how meaningful it was for him to use his uncle's chalice to say his first Mass.

Fr. Bob Morris - Continued

He has served in a number of parishes in the diocese, including St Mary in Tampa, St Joan of Ark, St Stephens, and now St John's at St Pete Beach. Fr. Bob gave us a graphic description of the intensity that is involved in living as a priest. "Think about it," he said, "a priest enters the lives of people at the most significant times in their lives, whether it is baptizing children, presiding at a marriage, visiting the sick, or ministering to the dying, administering at the Sacrament of Reconciliation, etc.—all of these are deeply felt experiences, and the priest is there, living these moments with them, and, hopefully, bringing Christ's love to the moment. The priesthood is truly an exciting life."

Fr. Morris also discussed his concept of the responsibilities of a pastor to minister not only to his parishioners, but to the whole community. He told of bringing services to a nearby minority community including many non-Catholics, while in Tampa. These were people, who could not travel to his church. He described his plans to conduct a blessing liturgy for motorcyclists when they have their rallies in this area. His own parish, St John's, is located in a highly seasonal beach community and so he has been able to minister to vacationers and travelers who take the opportunity to seek Reconciliation while away from home, or to seek spiritual comfort or counseling about troubling events in their personal lives.

Fr. Bob Morris left us with an expanded vision of the daily life and role of a priest and pastor, and in so doing made us even more grateful for their service in our community.



Serra Annual Retreat
Saturday, April 28th, 2007
9:00am to 3:00pm

St. Petersburg Catholic High School

Media Center

Spiritual Director

Fr. Thomas Tobin

Cost \$12 includes cont. breakfast & lunch

Family and friends invited

Reservations Required – Please Call

**Maureen Ahern at 381-2166
or Lee Boudart at 381-2444**

Fr. Jean Robitaille to Speak At April Meeting

Our scheduled speaker for April is Fr. Jean Robitaille, spiritual director for the Cursillo Movement of the Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg. Fr. Robitaille is a member of the Missionaries of Africa and serves as superior of the society's retirement community in St. Petersburg.

Born in Quebec, Canada, Fr. Robitaille and his parents immigrated to the United States when he was 6. An only child, he was raised in western New York state, near Buffalo. A graduate of the University of Dayton, Ohio, Fr. Robitaille was ordained in 1973. He served in Zambia in central Africa for 10 years before returning to the United States in 1987 to care for his elderly parents.

Mark Your Calendars for Annual Retreat on April 28!

Each spring our Serra Club has been fortunate to hold a retreat day, conducted by our chaplain. The retreat this year is scheduled for Saturday, April 28; from 9 a.m. to about 3 p.m. Location again will be at St Petersburg Catholic High School and will include a continental breakfast and lunch. Spouses and guests, particularly prospective Serra members, are welcome. A modest charge of \$12 per person is requested to cover expenses.

Chaplain Fr Tom Tobin has been researching the faith journey of St Peter and plans to build the retreat program around the life of this early apostle, and first recognized leader of the Christian community. The retreat exercises will conclude with a Mass. at the school chapel. For planning purposes reservations will be necessary. Call Maureen Ahern at 381-2166 or Lee Boudart at 381-2444.

Serrans Serve as Greeters For Special Exposition

A Monstrance blessed by Pope John Paul II is making its way around the country. The purpose of the specially blessed Monstrance is to hold the Blessed Sacrament in prayer services for vocations.

During the month of March the Monstrance was used at several diocesan churches, including the Cathedral of St Jude. The exposition at St Jude's was held for 8 hours, from noon until 8 p.m. on Wednesday, March 28, replacing the monthly Serra-sponsored Holy Hour for Vocations scheduled for that date.

Special Exposition - Continued

Serrans were very much involved, however. Our members served as greeters throughout the 8 hr period, working in groups for one hour shifts. We also handed out prayer booklets and Serra literature, and generally acted as hosts for the event, and provided lectors in both English and Spanish for the closing liturgy. Although no official count was kept, it appeared that the event drew hundreds of people all offering their prayers for vocations to the Blessed Sacrament.

Kathy's Korner

The presence of the Papal Monstrance for Vocations last week was an awesome experience. Thank You to all the Serrans who served either as greeters or readers and to those who attended the exposition and benediction. A special thank you to Lee Boudart who worked extra hard this month to call all our members for the many events we had in the last two months. She spent many hours on the phone and she is one of the reasons for our success.

Where have we come since the activation of our club? I began to contemplate the accomplishments our Lord has achieved thru the efforts of our small grass-roots organization. This club was reactivated 10 years ago on Sept 9, 1997. At that time the diocese had only 2 seminarians and no action plan to foster future vocations. The Serra Club assisted Fr. Michael O'Brien, the vocations director at that time, to adapt the PVET /DVET program of Serra International to the Diocese of St. Petersburg, assisted with the creation of the Focus 11 program. We started the Poster and essay contest, established the Seminarian fund, coordinated the monthly Holy Hour for Vocations, and established the affirmation project of sending cards to all the priests in the diocese. We have worked hard to affirm the religious with an annual luncheon.

Fr. Len reports that the Diocese has 23 seminarians for next fall and he has not even finished screening for next year's class. He is hopeful that he will add another 4 or 5 to the roster. We are most assuredly making gains in the efforts to provide priests for the local diocese.

Please pray for the past, present, and future Serrans of St. Petersburg. Please continue to say yes to God's call to a ministry that provides the help needed to foster vocations. Pray for the leadership of the Serra Club of St. Petersburg and please continue to pray for the past, present, and future priests of the diocese.

“God won't give me anything I can't handle –
I just wish he didn't trust me so much”

...Kathy