

Serra Club of St. Petersburg

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



February 2006

"Always go forward, never look back"

Dates to Remember:

- Tuesday – Wednesday – Thursday, February 14-15-16, Focus 11 Vocations Fair, Christ the King Tampa.
- Tuesday, February 21, 7:00 p.m. Regular Monthly Meeting, St. Jude's Pastoral Center, Program: Fr. Anthony Fortunato.
- Wednesday, February 22, 7:00 p.m. Holy Hour. St. Jude's Chapel.
- Tuesday, March 21, 7:00 p.m. Regular Monthly Meeting, St. Jude's Pastoral Center, Program: Fr. Robert Morris, Pastor, St. John's Church.
- Wednesday, March 22, 7:00 p.m. Holy Hour. St. Jude's Chapel.

Fathers of Priests Address Serrans

Our January program was surely unique and delightful. Two fathers of priests shared the program, telling us about their sons' vocational journeys, from their perspectives. John Hourican, a member of our Serra club, took the first part of the program, relating his son John's vocational journey which climaxed by his ordination in June of 2005 at the age of 39. Fr. John's story was very special to Serrans because it was a vocation born and nurtured by a Serra Club. Both John, the father, and John, the son, were members of the Memphis, Tenn. Serra Club, and John Jr. was well started in a career as an accountant.

Influenced by Serra, and other factors in his life, John gradually increased his prayer life, started attending daily Mass, and to discern his calling. The process went on over many months and included a retreat at the House of Discernment in Memphis. Finally, he responded to the call and entered Notre Dame Seminary. John Sr. recounted how pleased he and his wife Pat were when after his first Mass, the new priest presented them with the Purificator used in his first Mass.

Fathers of Priests – Continued



John Hourican & Leon Toups

Leon Toups, father of Fr David Toups of our Diocese, told a completely different story. David was a senior in college, and engaged to be married, when he presented his parents with the prospect that he might be interested in studying for the priesthood. He too developed a more intense prayer life, including Mass, the rosary and visits to the Blessed Sacrament. David also attended World Youth Day in Denver and was much impressed by Pope John Paul II. When David finally decided to enter the seminary, Leon advised him to "give it his best shot." Leon, meanwhile, put his son's fate into the hands of his favorite saint, St Joseph, with whom he felt a kindred spirit. Humorously, Leon described how he helped David explain this change in plans to his betrothed. As it turns out David later helped her to enter the Church, presided at her wedding to another man, and baptized her child. David spent several years in Rome studying for his MA and PhD degrees in theology and in the process became personally acquainted with Pope John Paul. Leon and his wife also visited and met the Pope, as well as several other significant people, including Mother Theresa, and Mikhail Gorbachev of the USSR. Leon even persuaded his son to ask the Pope to sign a baseball for him, which he proudly displayed. This is probably the only baseball autographed by any Pope in history.

Focus 11 Fair Set for Feb 14, 15 & 16

Focus 11, the major event in our agenda of Vocations activities, is just around the corner. It is set for Tues, Wed and Thurs, Feb 14-16 on the campus of Christ the King Parish in Tampa. Serran workers are needed on all three days, and if you are able we ask you to please work on at least one of those days. A volunteer sheet was passed around at the last meeting, but there is still time to sign up. Call Kathy Bolich or Denise Reilly. Our poster contest is held in conjunction with Focus 11 and you can help to judge posters on Sunday, Feb 5, at 10:45 a.m. at the St Jude's Pastoral Center.



Ten New Serrans Inducted

It was a thrilling sight! Ten new members were formally inducted into Serra at our January meeting, nine in person and one in absentia. It was a virtual mob scene around the head table as the group of new Serrans were instructed by Membership VP's Larry and Maureen Ahern, and repeated the Serran pledge administered by Chaplain Fr Tom Tobin.. The Aherns then presented each with a membership pin.



Nine New Members Taking the Serra Pledge

The newly inducted members are Nick Mellon, Virginia Tottle, Trudy Barron, Dr Joe Ezzo and Helen Ezzo, Bill and Rickey Pearson, Carol Fuss and Alida King. Eugene Murphy has asked to be excused from night meetings, but was inducted in absentia. Pending the success of renewals, this should move our membership to more than 46 for the first time in our history.

Fr. Anthony "Tony" Fortunato Will Speak in February

Our speaker for the Feb 21 meeting will be Fr Anthony Fortunato, Order of Our Lady of Mercy, also known as Mercedarians. Fr Anthony and Mercedarians are well known to us since their house is located across the street from St Jude's, Fr Anthony is currently serving on the staff of St Jude's. He is a regular attendee at our Holy Hours.



Fr. Tony Fortunato

Fr Anthony was born in Italy, near Naples, and received his early education there. He later received his B.A. at Lateran University in Rome and in later studies earned a Masters degree in Education, Counseling and Theology. He was ordained in the Mercedarians in June, 1967. After emigrating to the U.S he taught at Niagara NY Catholic High School, at St Edwards in Cleveland and at St Pete Catholic High. His parish assignments include St Therese's in Niagara Falls, Our Lady of Mt Carmel & St Rocco in Cleveland, and, of course at Transfiguration and St Jude's here in St Petersburg.



New Members



Helen & Joe Ezzo



Alida King

Kathy's Korner

At SPCHS, the athletic program honors a member of each team that goes beyond the call of duty, whose team spirit is undeniable, whose output is consistent and important to the team's goals, and who is very rarely recognized for all the work that they do. They are given the "Unsung Hero Award". The Serra Club has a person like this in its midst.

Every month, the Serra Club of St. Petersburg has worked to promote and foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Our club was re-chartered at the onset of the priest scandals that rocked the North American Church. As a new club we were sensitive to the pain this caused the priests, therefore, we have sought to affirm the existing vocations in our diocese by sending birthdays and anniversary cards to every priest. This huge task involves organizing the information by months and weeks, obtaining a stock of appropriate cards, addressing and personalizing each card and then mailing them in a timely manner so that the priest receives his greeting on or near his birthday or anniversary. Judy Lillico, with assistance of her husband Jim, has performed this task faithfully and generously for the past 9 years. St. John Bosco is often quoted, as saying that "to become a saint you are not required to do extraordinary things, but to do ordinary things extraordinarily well". Judy is a true unsung hero of our organization and a saint in the making. I hope that all of you find her example as inspiring as I do.

As an aside, the Communications Committee has developed a new link to our website with the list of priests that are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries each month. Our web site address is www.serraclubstpete.com. I encourage you to access the site regularly and send a personal note to the special priests in your life. Our club is full of unsung heroes and saints. I am so proud of all that you do for the promotion of vocations to the priesthood and to religious life. The level of participation by the members of our club during the Focus 11 has always been inspiring to me. I look forward to working with you in one of the most rewarding projects in which Serrans participate. If you would like to work at the Focus 11 but you need a ride to Christ the King, please contact me at 542-0418, or Denise Rielly at 458-6161.

One last thought, for the next two months, Feb and Mar, our Holy Hours are scheduled on the Wednesday following our Tuesday meetings. Blame the calendar. Normally we like to schedule these events a week apart, but the Holy Hours are set by the Diocesan Office on the 4th Wed, and our meetings are set for the third Tues. It happens in these two months that the 4th Wed falls on the day after the third Tuesday. In April the two dates will again be separated by a week.

...Kathy