

Serra Club of St. Petersburg

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



March 2006

"Always go forward, never look back"

Dates to Remember:

- Tuesday, March 21, 7:00 p.m. Regular Monthly Meeting, St. Jude's Pastoral Center, Program: Keith Fitzsimmons, seminarian serving at St. John's Parish
- Wednesday, March 22, 7:00 p.m. Holy Hour. St. Jude's Chapel.
- Saturday, April 1, 8:30 a.m. Annual Serra Retreat, St. Petersburg Catholic High School.
- 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.

Winners of Serra

"Ads" Contest Named

It has become a tradition. At the closing of the Focus 11 Vocations Fair the winners of the Serra vocations advertisement contests are announced. Again this year the contest rules asked contestants to imagine themselves as the advertising director for God, and to produce advertising copy to recruit candidates for the priesthood and the religious life.

Sixth graders were asked to produce a visual ad on a poster, while the 11th graders were asked to write a 60 second "spot" for radio. At the 6th grade level, about 62 posters ads were submitted for judging by the Serran team. At the 11th grade level the "spots" were judged by Serran Nick Mellon, by Spirit FM manager John Morris, and Annie Karlow, a radio personality and entertainer. The three top winners in both categories were awarded cash prizes of \$100, \$50 and \$25. In addition all the posters were displayed at the Focus 11 Serra booth in a continuous video and the winners will be displayed on our Serra web site. The announcements will be used by Sprit FM.

Here are the winners:

Poster visual ad contest for 6th graders:

First Place: Dina Ghioto, St. Lawrence School in Tampa

Second Place: Theresa Martens, St. Cecilia School in Clearwater.

Third Place: Molly Jacobson, St Paul's , St. Petersburg.

Winners - Continued

Radio spot contest for 11th graders:

First Place: Nara Nensey, Academy of the Holy Names

Second Place: Brianna Silva, Academy of the Holy Names

Third Place: Rebecca Vazquez, Academy of the Holy Names

Note that at the high school level only Academy of the Holy Names chose to submit entries. Other Catholic High Schools in the area chose not to enter the contest. We hope to gain wider participation next year. **Congratulations** to all the winners and our thanks to all those who entered.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW
SERRA ANNUAL RETREAT
SATURDAY, APRIL 1ST, 2006
8:30a.m to 3:00 p.m.

ST PETERSBURG CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR
FR. TOM TOBIN

THEME: Deus Caritas Est (God is Love)
by Pope Benedict XVI .

Fee: \$12.00 includes Lunch
Family, Friends invited

CALL

Jim Prior, 825.0068
Charlie Fuss, 360-6549

Annual Retreat Set for April 1st

The annual Serra Retreat is the spiritual highlight of the year, and will be held this year on Saturday, April 1 at St Petersburg Catholic High School. We will gather in the school cafeteria between 8:30 - 9:00a.m. for coffee and donuts and expect to conclude after Holy Mass at 3:00p.m. A box lunch will be included. Cost will be \$12 per person. Guests and spouses are welcome. Retreat master will be our chaplain, Fr Tom Tobin. He will draw his theme from the first part of the Encyclical Letter Deus Caritas Est (God is Love) by Pope Benedict XVI. Plans are not fully developed at this writing, but it is anticipated that the day will include talks, time for reflection, spiritual exercises, and schedule permitting, Mass. The retreat will conclude by 3 p.m.

Retreat - Continued

One of the principal purposes of Serra is to develop the spirituality of its members and our annual retreat is a major element in pursuing that purpose. Fr Tobin reminds us that not only will this day expose us to the first encyclical by our new pope, but it will be an opportunity to enhance our Lenten observance. He urged those planning to attend to obtain a copy of *Deus Caritas Est* and read it in advance.

Reservations will be necessary so please call Jim Prior at 825-0068, or Charlie Fuss at 360-6549 to make reservations.

Fr. Anthony Fortunato Delights Serrans

Displaying his entertaining brand of humor, Fr Tony Fortunato O.De.M delivered a well prepared 15 minute talk to Serrans on Feb 21, outlining the qualities of a priest, and his own history as a student, teacher and priest both in his native Italy and here in the U.S. The Serran audience held Fr Tony for another 15 minutes of uninhibited questions and even more uninhibited answers.



Father Tony Fortunato

Fr Tony related his early life in a tiny northern Italian village, and his calling to the priesthood. "At first," he said, "I thought I might become a diocesan priest, but my uncle pointed out that diocesan priest wore black, but Mercedarians wore white. And white is the color of the good guys," he joked. A more serious reason was that, as a Mercedarian, he got to study in Rome.

He was ordained in the 800 year old Order of Mercy in 1967 and volunteered for service in the U S shortly thereafter. Through the years he obtained additional degrees in Psychology and Education, and served in high schools and parishes in Niagara NY, Batavia N Y, Cleveland Ohio, Philadelphia, Pa, and here in St Petersburg at Transfiguration and St Jude's parishes, where he is currently parochial vicar. Fr Tony distributed hand-outs which provided his personal history and information about the Mercedarian Order, which has a significant presence in our community.

Fr Tony almost always attends our Serran-sponsored Holy Hours, and sometimes officiates. He is a great friend of Serra.

Seminarian to speak at March Meeting

Our previously announced program for March, Fr Robert Morris, pastor of St John Vianney Parish at St Pete Beach, has come up with a conflict and so Seminarian Keith Fitzsimmons, who is on assignment at St John's, will speak in his stead.

Seminarian - Continued

Keith, whose home parish is St Scholastica, Lecanto, always presents a bit of a puzzle to those he meets. He is obviously Oriental, but bears a very Irish name. He was born in Seoul, South Korea, but was adopted as a child by James and Catherine Fitzsimmons and raised and educated in New York. He received a degree in history from Purchase College in NY and later moved to Florida with his family. He spent a year in the Benedictine Community before discerning his vocation to the diocesan priesthood. He spent a year on pre-theology at St John Vianney Seminary in Miami, and later moved to St Vincent De Paul Regional Seminary in Boynton Beach. Currently he is spending a year at St John's parish before returning to St Vincent's in August.

Keith is a familiar face on the Serra Seminarian picture board, and has also attended our Seminarian receptions in June. He has been the object of our prayers and Holy Hour devotions for several years. We look forward to welcoming him and learning first hand of the experiences he is having in this stage of his vocational journey.

Serrans Invited to Workshop

The Diocesan Vocations Office has issued a special invitation to all Serrans to attend a Vocations Workshop at the parish center, Holy Cross Church, 7851 54th Av N, on Saturday, March 18, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. A continental breakfast and a lunch will be provided. There is no fee. The theme of the workshop is "Cultivating God's Call to the Young" focusing on developing collaborative strategies within parishes and ministry organizations to foster and promote a vocations culture for the youth.

The program will open with Mass at 8 a.m. (optional), followed by breakfast and registration. Keynote speaker at the morning session will be Fr Michael Carruthers, Rector, St John Vianney Seminary, and Miami. The remainder of the morning will consist of breakout sessions on the following subjects (select one):

- New Parish Vocation Teams
- Connecting with Youth Ministry and Religious Education Programs
- Connecting with Catholic High School and Elementary Schools.

A presentation of web resources and a report by Fr Len Plazewski, vocations director, will conclude the program prior to a closing lunch. *Reservations may be made by calling Sharon Price, Office of Vocations, (727)345-3452.*

Kathy's Korner

Just a short note this month due to available space. I urge all Serrans to attend our annual Serra Retreat April 1st. See more details elsewhere in this newsletter. Please call Jim Prior or Charlie Fuss to make reservations

...Kathy

