



Serra Club of Louisville

February, 2019
Newsletter

MISSION:

To foster and promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

“To always go forward – to never turn back!”

– Saint Junipero Serra

If you receive this through regular postal delivery, but would be willing to receive it by email, please contact Chuck Lynch, (502) 244-2752.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Unless noted otherwise, all lunches are at 11:45 at the Golden Corral in Hikes Point, Louisville, and are open to the public.

Feb 4 Mtg – We may have a speaker on the topic of “Accompanying Immigrants on Their Journey.”

Feb 20 Mtg – The U of L FO-

CUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students) team will be speaking to our club.

Mar 4 Mtg – Fr. Shibu Puthenpukkel, CMI, will talk about the Carmelite priests in India.

Mar 18 Mtg - Fr. Nick Brown, pastor of St. Bartholomew, will speak on his vocation story.

PUBLIC PRAYERS FOR VOCATIONS:

Each Mon. - Holy Spirit Church, Lexington Road, Mondays at 7 pm.

Each Tue. - Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Holy Hour for Vocations - 9 to 11 am.

Each Wed. - St. Patrick Church, 7:30 am.

Each Wed. - St. Thomas Church, Bardstown, KY - 6 to 7:30 pm.

2nd Mon. - Mount St. Francis, Floyds Knobs, IN, 7 - 8 p.m.

CHARTER SERRAN TOM RANSELL PASSED AWAY ON JANUARY 7.

Serran Tom Ransdell passed away Monday, January 7, 2019, at the age of 94. He was a charter member of the club from its formation in the 1950’s, as well as Associate Director of Vocations for the Archdiocese in the 1990’s. At the visitation, we noticed that his 60-year pin was on his lapel.

Prior to getting married, Tom Ransdell actually spent high school and college in the Passionist seminaries. But he finally discerned that the priesthood was not for him.

Tom was a real estate broker, a builder, and owner of Ransdell Realty Co. for over 65 years.

Tom joined the Serra Club November 1, 1955. So, he was a



Serran for 63 years. He had a number of roles over the years, including President of the club. He was also deeply involved with Serra

International. Tom had earned awards from the USA Council (USAC) of Serra International; and in 1987 he was the principal author of a Serra International booklet entitled “The Spiritual Life and the Serran.”

He and his wife Milly have been married for 66 years and were part of St. Barnabas parish when it started back in the 50’s. That parish merged with St. Pius parish, and they were most recently members of that merged parish, St. John Paul II.

Tom was survived by his wife Milly, seven children (five daughters and two sons), 18 grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. The funeral Mass was at St. John Paul II parish, with burial at Calvary Cemetery.

The family asked that any memorial donations be made to the Ursuline Sisters or the Passionist Fathers.

OUR SPEAKER ON JANUARY 7 WAS SR. RACHEL GERACITANO, OSB

Sr. Rachel Geracitano, OSB, joined us to speak of her vocation story and tell us about the spirituality of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana.

She was born and raised in Louisville, attending St. Polycarp school. Then she attended South Central High School in Elizabeth,

SR. RACHEL GERACITANO, OSB (continued from page 1)

Indiana. In 2012 she graduated from Bellarmine University with a BA in Theology, and a minor in Psychology. In 2012, she joined the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana. She took her first profession of vows in 2014. In 2017 she graduated from Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology with a Master's in Pastoral Theology.

With Archbishop Kurtz presiding, she just completed her final vows October 13, 2018.

She currently serves as a Family Counselor with the Louisville Catholic Cemeteries. She has had a variety of other ministries over the years – including work in chaplaincy and assisted living facilities.

Sr. Rachel jokingly says she “was tricked into the monastery” since going there for a retreat was recommended by Bellarmine’s Campus Minister, Melanie Prejean-Sullivan, while Sr. Rachel was a junior in college. She previously had no idea she’d pursue a religious vocation, and was even dating while in college. But the retreats were amazing experiences that changed her life.

The [Rule of St. Benedict](#) has a chapter on humility that goes to the essence of the Benedictine way of life. God is in ordinary things and everyday events. They live an intentionally balanced life that finds God in prayer, work, community, spirituality, time for silence, recreation, and moderation in all things. They think of living ordinary lives in extraordinary ways.

St. Benedict told his followers to “dress as the people.” Consequently, the sisters don’t wear a habit. They pray the Liturgy of the Hours each day, some in communal prayer and some in individual prayer. They also attend daily Mass and study Scriptures using [Lectio Divina](#).

The Benedictines is the longest living monastic tradition, going back 1,500 years, to the time of St. Benedict. They minister to the needs of the people. The sisters living in two locations (“houses”) in Louisville are devoted to a wide range of ministries, including the homeless, social work, parishes, teaching, our vocation office, grief counseling, and more. The ministries of the order have changed over the years,

adapting to the needs of the communities they serve.

The orders of men and women followers of the Rule of St. Benedict have a very close kinship. They were started at the same time – the men having begun under St. Benedict and the women having begun under his sister, St. Scholastica. Usually within a close distance from each of the Benedictine men’s monasteries you will find a Benedictine women’s monastery.

One of their ministries in Southern Indiana is the [Benedictine Scholar House](#), which helps single-parent families with financial assistance and education as a way out of poverty. It is an attempt to replicate the successful work of the Family Scholar House in Louisville.

Women enter the order as postulants (eight to ten months) then become novices (varies from one to two years depending on their discernment to make temporary profession). The formation program starts out with two years of intensive

classroom work often taught by members of the order or the staff at St. Meinrad. During the formation time, the sisters have a part-time ministry. Afterwards, they get into some full-time ministry. On occasion, the order has even helped some women with their college student debt. Their “sweet spot” for novices are young women under the age of 40 and especially right out of college.

There are about 140 sisters associated with the Ferdinand Monastery, including a number who live in a half dozen houses throughout Indiana and Kentucky, as well as a few in Peru. They currently have two who have made their temporary profession, and a good number of young women considering joining the order as postulants. Sr. Rachel was the only member making final vows in October. Each monastery is affiliated with one of four U.S. Federations of Benedictine women.

You can find out more about the order by clicking [here](#).

We want to thank Sr. Rachel for her vocation and all the information on the order of the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana.

(Thanks to Jerry Zimmerer for the picture with this article.)



REPORT (AND PICTURES) FROM THE 2019 SERRA RALLY

Ken Peet, our District Governor, attended the Serra Rally at the Ventura Beach Marriott in California, which ran from January 16 through January 20.



The Rally is held once each year (sometimes in different cities) and is a gathering of Serrans from all of the USA Council. USAC has about 7,500 members; and several hundred people, including spouses and special guest speakers were in attendance. The Serra International Board of Directors also held a meeting there during the Rally. Serra

International Episcopal Advisor Thomas Cardinal Collins, from Ontario, was one of the speakers.

Various speakers touched on topics such as energizing our ministry through inspirational images; Serra discipleship and spirituality; engaging young



Catholics to become missionary disciples; vocational discernment at every age; helping aspiring vocation candidates overcome the obstacle of college debt; and the role of prayer

in vocations. There were 14 speakers altogether, including two auxiliary bishops from L.A. The Rally is also a chance for Serrans from across the country to exchange ideas and best practices. There were workshops on communication, programs and membership. Time was also allotted for Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, sightseeing and much more.



and the role of prayer

Ken said that some clubs are more active than us in fund raising; and some clubs wrestle with an aging

membership and difficulties attracting new members. On fundraising Ken told the great story of the Serra Club out of Franklin, TN, which has had a fund raiser



for seminarian education each of the last six years.

The first year they raised \$6,000. But that annual event has grown to \$325,000 last year! A number of attendees at the Rally stayed



longer in order to take a pilgrimage tour of the Franciscan Missions located between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Some of these missions were originally established by St. Junipero Serra himself.

Ken said the big theme this year was about increasing membership. The entire USAC membership only increased by about 35 people in the last year.



We want to thank Ken for representing us at the Rally and taking the time to update us on the Rally.



SERRA CLUB OF LOUISVILLE NEWSLETTER RECEIVES AN AWARD

We are proud to announced that at the January national Serra Rally in Ventura, CA, our newsletter was chosen winner of the “2019 Great Lakes Region Best Newsletter Award.” This Region covers OH, IN, KY, and lower MI.

Ken Peet, our District Governor, attended that meeting and accepted the award on our behalf. He presented the award to me, as editor of this newsletter, at the January 21 meeting of the Serra Club of Louisville.

As editor, I wish to thank the Board of Directors for recommending the submission of the application for nomination. I also want to thank everyone who has had any role, large or small, in the production of our monthly newsletters. Although I write most of the articles, ideas have been suggested by many members. Most of the content is based on the great speakers who have volunteered to make presentations. Most all of the pictures are taken by **Jerry Zimmerer**. Other Serrans have also helped out with pictures or articles in the last few years. Proofing each issue for spelling and grammar has been handled by **Donna Richardson** and **Paul Willett**.

Thanks.

Chuck Lynch, Editor



**All of us Serrans
are recruiters
for the Serra Club.
"Each one, bring one!"**

BROTHER ZACHARY WILBERDING, OSB, WAS OUR SPEAKER AT THE JAN 21 MEETING

Our speaker for this meeting (coincidentally, on the feast day of St. Meinrad) was Brother Zachary Wilberding, OSB, from the St. Meinrad Monastery. He has been the Vocation Director for the monastery for the last year; and he joined us to talk about Benedictine vocations as well as Benedictine spirituality.



Bro. Zachary was born and raised a Catholic in Dubuque, Iowa. He obtained a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, from the University of Iowa in 1975 and a Master's in Nursing, from the same school in 1984. Before monastic life, Bro. Zachary was a staff nurse, administrator and staff educator in hospitals in Chicago, Iowa City and Seattle. His major clinical areas were mental health and oncology.

He joined the Benedictine Order in 1996. And took his final vows in 2000. Bro. Zachary earned a Master's of Divinity from the Aquinas Institute of Theology in 2010.

On vocations, Bro. Zachary reminded us that we all have them, from the day we are baptized; and some of us might even have more than one. We are each “a cell in the body of Christ.” He spoke of his own case as involving two vocations, one as a nurse and the later decision to also become a monk.

Bro. Zachary speaks of his suggested rules for discerning a vocation – questions, such as: Is it moral? Do you *want* to do it? *Can* you do it? What do others think of you doing it? And all of these questions should be considered while praying.

Personally, after becoming a nurse, he began to feel the call to a religious vocation. He knew about the Franciscans and spoke with some of them. While in the Midwest on business, he heard of St. John's Abbey in Minnesota – a Benedictine monastery. He

[BROTHER ZACHARY](#) [\(continued from page 4\)](#)

attended a retreat there; and while in the Liturgy of the Hours, the monks' singing of the Psalms brought tears to his eyes. Each of the rooms they slept in had the "Rule of St. Benedict." Reading it he felt blown away. He fell in love with the Benedictines. He said to himself, "This is what I want to do."

He spoke of a vocational calling as "listening to God, with the ear of your heart" and "giving up your own will" to live the will of God. Bro. Zachary spoke of the vow of obedience and "doing battle for Christ."

The Benedictine monastic life is rooted in prayer, their central ministry. They go to church five times a day, including daily Mass and Liturgy of the Hours. Their daily schedule includes starting with prayers at 5:30 am. They are at work by 8:30. Their prayer life also includes [Lectio Divina](#) – meditating with the Scriptures.

Each of the 78 members of the monastic community at St. Meinrad have different jobs – including service to others, jail ministry, being pastors at local parishes, being chaplains, receiving guests, leading retreats, fixing meals, cleaning and washing, serving one another, teaching at the seminary, administration, spiritual direction, gardening, carpentry, and much, much more. St. Benedict said work was a big part of their monastic lives; but he never specified what that work had to be. Over the years, it has evolved to fit the times and the communities in which they live. He also said that they never really retire, even though we all slow down as we get older. One of their members is now 100 years old.

From the [Rule of St. Benedict](#), he read and discussed one of the saint's quotes - "Clothed then with faith and the performance of good works, let us set out on this way, with the Gospel for our guide, that we may deserve to see him who has called us to his kingdom." And the final goal is the Kingdom. Bro. Zachary spoke of [Bishop Robert Barron](#) as saying the most important thing is to know Jesus. For that we need to read the Gospels.

He also spoke half-jokingly of how the vocation



of living in a monastic community is sometimes considered a "form of penance." He said the community is like a rock tumbler, which eventually causes the rocks to lose their rough edges and impurities. However, he admitted that even when someone in the community rubs you the wrong way, you miss them after their gone. He said part of community life is "learning to love people despite our differences."

Taking a vow of fidelity to monastic life they never own anything individually. If they need to go somewhere, they have to see the "car monk" for keys to a vehicle. The monk takes a vow of stability and generally stays with one monastery his whole life. Taking a vow of obedience, they are obedient to the abbot of their order.

The monastery currently has four men making solemn vows (just a few days after this meeting), all around age 30; four men who are under temporary vows (a period usually of three years), two novices (a period of one year); a candidate who may join in May and one who may join in October. So, their vocations are looking good. And for those who are asked to go on to the priesthood, then there would be more education and theology.

We want to thank Bro. Zachary for his presentation on Benedictine vocations and spirituality.

(Thanks to Jerry Zimmerer for the pictures with this article.)

[SPORTLIGHT – MEMBER](#) [JOHN TICHENOR](#)

John was born in Louisville in 1932. As a child he was in St. Boniface and St. Columba parishes. He graduated from Flaget High School, Bellarmine, and finally U of L with his Masters degree. He became a CPA in 1962. He retired from being the CFO of Allied Sporting Goods.

In 1953 John married Barbara Mulloy. He was in the Army military police from 1952 to 1954. John and Barbara joined St. Raphael parish in 1971 and have been in that parish ever since. They have three children, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

John joined the Serra Club in 1959. He served as



JOHN TICHENOR
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President in 1968-69 and 1982-83, and District Governor 1985-87. From 1989 to 1993, John served in different capacities on the Serra International Board, including Treasurer and two terms as VP. He was also US and Canada Council (USCC) Treasurer 1994-95 and President 1996-97. He has been coordinating the Serra Traveling Chalice Program at St. Raphael for the last 15 years.

John and Barbara attended a Serra meeting in Rome and, all in one day, were able to shake the hands of both Mother Theresa and Pope John Paul II.

This year, he celebrates the 60th anniversary of joining the Serra Club! John, thanks for all your years of service.

NATIONAL CATHOLIC SISTERS
WEEK IS MARCH 8-14

Established in 2014, as part of Women’s History Month, the National Catholic Sisters Week is March 8 through 14 each year. According to the national office, “The NCSW mission is to honor women religious through a series of events that instruct, enlighten, and bring greater focus to the lives of these incredible women. We welcome events of any type, and encourage organizations to think about creative ways to celebrate sisters for the entire week.”

This is a good time for all parishes, schools, and others to choose some way to celebrate this occasion. Maybe you can simply take your favorite religious sister out for a meal.

For more information, see [here](#). For FAQ’s, see [here](#). Events that some are considering include - a Mass and supper; a Sisters’ Appreciation Day; a card or letter to your favorite sisters; Vespers; a Cupcakes, Coffee, and Conversation event; a retreat; etc. To see what others are doing around the country, see [here](#). To see if an event has been scheduled near your location, check out this [website](#). For some great stories about women religious, check out the Sister Story [here](#).

POTPOURRI –
VARIOUS ITEMS OF INTEREST

Serran Birthdays this month

Eddie Bauer, Feb 1, Fr. Pat Dolan, Feb 23

The Pope’s Prayer Intentions for this month - Uni-

versal – Victims: For a generous welcome to the victims of human trafficking, enforced prostitution, and violence.

Save the date – The 2019 Archdiocesan Men’s Conference will be Saturday, April 6, 2019, at St. Michael Parish.

The U of L chapter of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) will speak at our Feb 20 meeting. See an article about them [here](#).

A married Catholic Priest who supports celibacy - see the article [here](#).

The Amazing Story of 12 Anglican Nuns Who All Became Catholic – See the article [here](#).

Five good reasons to read the Bible – read the article [here](#).

The vocation of nonviolence - Read Martin Luther King, Jr.'s essay "Nonviolence and Racial Justice" [here](#).

On Sundays - "Do not let Sunday be taken from you. If your soul has no Sunday, it becomes an orphan." - Albert Schweitzer

Quote from a saint - "Christ is at once above and below - above in Himself, below in his people. Fear Christ above, and recognize him below. Here he is poor, with and in the poor; there he is rich, with and in God. Have Christ above bestowing his bounty; recognize him here in his need" - Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.) (excerpt from Sermon 123, 44).

Another good prayer - "Most High and glorious God, enlighten the darkness of our hearts and give us a true faith, a certain hope and a perfect love. Give us a sense of the divine and knowledge of yourself, so that we may do everything in fulfillment of your holy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, 1182-1226)

Thanks to **Paul Willett**
for proofing most of this newsletter.

Newsletter questions, comments, or submissions?
Contact Chuck Lynch at (502) 244-2752.