



Club chartered May 22, 1955

Saint Serra Club of Louisville VOCAATION DIGEST

OCTOBER, 2023
Newsletter

MISSION:

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

“Always Forward, Never 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) 442-9302.

A PARISH VOCAATION MINISTRY WORKSHOP WAS HELD ON SEPTEMBER 9.

What a success! And Fr. Martin Linebach, our Archdiocese’s Vicar for Vocations, said the workshop “exceeded my expectations.”

Since the USA Council of Serra International offers [S.P.A.R.K.](#) (which stands for Serra Serra Promotion And Resource Kit), they



now offer an IGNITE Workshop, to any interested diocese. These workshops help parish representatives to learn how to promote vocations at the parish level. And the program has been presented to about 140 parishes across the country.

The Archdiocese of Louisville Vocation Office and the St. Serra Club of Louisville jointly offered this workshop on Saturday, Sep 9. Only some parishes were invited due to the limited capacity of the

conference room in the Pastoral Center. However, we hope to eventually reach all parishes. Representatives, including some priests and one deacon, came from eight parishes. Attendance was free while speaker travel, workshop materials, breakfast and lunch were paid for by the USA Council of Serra International and the St. Serra Club of Louisville.

The two out-of-town speakers were Dr. Anne Roat and Gino DiMattia.

“Eighty percent of priests now come from the 20% of parishes that have an active Parish Vocation Ministry.”

Dr. Anne Roat is President-Elect of the USA Council, with the Serra Club of Lafayette, IN. Anne, whose husband Bill joined us, has had many roles in her Serra Club. Dr. Roat currently ministers as a Spiritual Director and works as the Director of Evangelization, Family Life, and Pastoral Ministries at the St. Mary Cathedral and St. Ann Church Pastorate in Lafayette. Anne holds a Master’s degree in Pastoral Theology from Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Graduate Theological Foundation, and a

theology certificate from the University of Notre Dame.

Gino DiMattia is a member of the Serra Club of Lima, OH. Gino has served as chairman of the Parish Contact Team, club chairman of Vocations Committee, club president, District 51 Governor in 2009,



Chairman of USA Council Vocations Committee in 2010, and USA Council Vice President of Vocations. While national Vocations vice president, Gino was able to write an article on how parish vocation committees can influence a culture of vocations that was published in the Summer 2013 issue of Horizon Magazine, a quarterly publication of the NRVC (the National Religious Vocation Conference). Gino also served as Regional Director of the USA Council’s Region 6, an area that encompassed Ohio, West Virginia and the Michigan Lower Peninsula.

We began with an 8:15 Mass, and then the workshop ran from 9

PARISH VOCATION MINISTRY (continued from page 1)

am to 3 pm, interrupted for Eucharistic Adoration and lunch. There was so much information distributed to all the attendees that we can't do it justice in a brief article.

The stated objectives of the workshop were (1) to foster new vocations; (2) to affirm existing vocations; and (3) to increase our holiness.

SOME STATISTICS

In the introductory comments from Gino, it was stated that 80% of priests now come from the 20% of parishes that have an active Parish Vocation Ministry.

Fifty percent of today's priest were ordained in the 1970s! So, we're going to see many retirements in the near future. There are 16,000 parishes in the U.S. and 3,300 of them do not have a priest in residence.

In 2022, we had 452 priests ordained across the country. Twenty percent of dioceses had no ordinations at all last year. It was noted that many young people were very influenced by the first World Youth Day (WYD), initiated by Pope St. John Paul II in 1985. With that came an increase in vocations. And a high percent of priests who attended WYD prior to the priesthood said it fueled their vocations.

Although the U.S. Catholic population is up 58% since 1965, the number of diocesan priests is down 30%.

Thirty-five percent of US Catholics are Hispanic, while only 14% of our priests are Hispanic.

OBSTACLES TO VOCATIONS

We learned some of the many obstacles to vocations.

Many young Catholic girls never see religious sisters to know what their vocations are all about.

With families smaller than those of two or three generations ago, there's more pressure on each child to eventually give grandchildren to their parents, instead of considering a religious vocation.

Our modern culture teaches that college is the key to high income and wealth. Even Catholic schools often fall into this trap.

A number of grade schoolers don't really know what a vocation is. And it was noted that our Catholic grade school students need to more frequently see, and interact with, priests, deacons, and religious sisters and brothers.

SPARK TOOLS

It was explained that we have 28 SPARK tools, broken down into four categories: (1) Awareness Tools – to make people aware of our vocation needs, especially the shortage of priests. (2) Prayer Tools –

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Regular meetings - We target to have *most* meetings the first and third Mondays of each month, at **11:30 AM**, in the **Golden Corral at Hikes Point** (4032 Taylorsville Road). The charge will be \$12 for members and \$15 for guests. Non-members wanting to attend should contact Chuck Lynch in advance.

Oct 2 (1st Mon) – **Dr. Brian Reynolds** gives us “An Update from the Chancellor.”

Oct 9 (2nd Mon) – **Rosary for Vocations**, 7 pm, by Zoom. See separate article for details.

Oct 11 (Wed) - **Holy Hour for Vocations** – 12:45 at St. Margaret Mary Chapel, after the Noon Mass.

Oct 14 (2nd Sat) – “**Serra Meets**” - 12 Noon Louisville time - national Zoom meeting for all Serrans – for details, click [here](#).

Oct 16 - (3rd Mon) – **Barry Mudd**, Associate Director of the Office of Worship, will speak.

Oct 24 (Tue) – 12:45 - **Serra Board meeting** - St. Margaret Mary Spirituality Center.

Questions? - Contact Chuck Lynch at (502) 442-9302 or ChuckLynch4782@gmail.com.

various ways to pray for vocations. (3) Affirmation Tools – to affirm and thank priests, deacons, sisters, brothers, seminarians and postulants. (4) Invitation/Encouragement Tools – for encouraging those who might be good candidates for religious vocations.

Not only does the [SPARK website](#) have many ideas, but it also has free videos and downloads that can be very helpful to parishes, as well as links to items a parish might consider purchasing.

Each attendee was given a booklet on the seven most popular of these 28 tools – called “The 7 Greats.”

The St. Serra Club of Louisville has compiled an extensive outline of *Parish Vocation Ministry Ideas* which can be found on our website [here](#).

FR. MARTIN LINEBACH SPOKE

Although not scheduled to actually speak, Fr. Linebach attended the entire workshop and even offered some input. He reminded us that Archbish-



PARISH VOCATION MINISTRY **(continued from page 2)**

op Shelton Fabre's decision to have a full-time Vocation Director and creating Fr. Linebach's title of Vicar for Vocations, is evidence of the archbishop's support on this issue. He suggests that we thank the archbishop for this decision. We have not had a full-time vocation director for many years.

Among other things, Fr. Linebach said that parents can sometimes be a significant challenge.

Attacking these problems with enthusiasm, Fr. Linebach says "Today's seminarians will be my legacy." He also said, "The Church is in good hands with today's priests."

DISCERNER ALEX WILLINGER SPOKE

During lunch, Alex Willinger was asked to speak briefly. He not only attended the workshop for St. Margaret Mary, but he is discerning a vocation to the priesthood.

Alex was very comfortable speaking to us; and he said that as a youth, although he was an altar server, he never thought much about a vocation. However, while at U of K, and going to the Newman Center on campus, things changed. He began to feel a possible call to the priesthood.

After college, he got involved with young adults at St. Margaret Mary, and went to Holy Hours on Wednesdays. He got to know his priests, as well. People began asking if he had considered the priesthood.

Saying how much he loved his faith, Alex explained that, with hindsight, what influenced him most about considering the priesthood was being an altar server, knowing the priests, and people asking him to consider the priesthood.

MENTORS

Mentors are being recruited from Serra Clubs



across the country. Every parish completing the IGNITE Workshop will be assigned a mentor, who will contact the assigned parish once per month for 12 months – checking in to see how they are progressing and whether the mentors can answer any questions.

From the local St. Serra Club, five of our six mentors were in attendance.

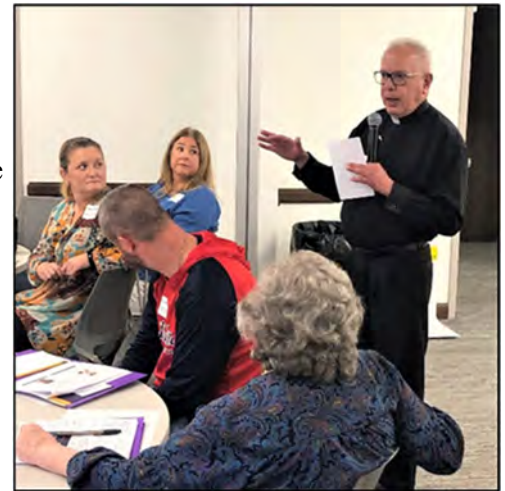
One of the parish representatives said the workshop was

"stimulating, most informative, rewarding, professionally presented, to the point, and answered a lot of questions."

We want to thank Dr. Anne Roat and Gino DiMatta for coming to Louisville to teach us so much.

And we want to thank the Vocation Office and our Serrans for helping to make this event such a success.

(Thanks, too, to Paul Willett for the pictures with this article.)



GROUP SHOT - THE PARISH VOCATION MINISTRY WORKSHOP



JIM JANSEN SPOKE AT OUR SEP 9 “SERRA MEETS” ZOOM MEETING.

Jim Jansen is a cradle Catholic from Omaha, Nebraska, with over 20 years of experience in evangelization and parish renewal.

At the invitation of his roommate at Benedictine College, Jim joined one of the first [FOCUS](#) (Fellowship Of Catholic University Students) Bible studies in 1999. After graduation, he became a FOCUS missionary on the founding team at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. During his 18 years on staff with FOCUS, Jim served as a campus missionary, team director, and regional director.

Jim returned to Omaha in 2017. Captivated by the vision of [One Church: Encountering Jesus, Equipping Disciples and Living Mercy](#), Jim now leads the Archdiocese of Omaha’s efforts to coach pastors and train disciples for mission.

Jim is also the host of [EquipCast](#), a podcast produced by the Archdiocese of Omaha, designed to help pastors and leaders transform culture.

Jim holds a master’s degree in Pastoral Theology from Madonna University in partnership with Ave Maria University. He and his wife, Kim, live in Bellevue, Nebraska, with their six children.

Jim’s new book [A Clear Path: How to Make Missionary Disciples in Your Parish](#) just came out and can be purchased online.

Jim’s topic for this meeting was “The Funda-

mentals of Encounter.” He spoke of how language in the Church has changed in the last few decades, as if the goal posts have been moved, regarding being a faithful Catholic.

Jim mentioned words and phrases such as “encounter,” “missionary disciple,” and “being called to a personal relationship with the Lord.” However, he says, “All are called to be missionary disciples.” Much of his presentation referenced [Luke 24:13-35](#), regarding the story of the road to Emmaus.

Despite the disciples’ discouragement of the preceding few days, Christ met these two men where they were, asking about their conversation.

Then Christ explained, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!” He then explained that they’re expectations were mistaken and, “Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” Then Christ explained the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah.

Jim explained that there is no escape from sacrifice. And it can bear fruit for the salvation of souls, if we encounter Christ with our problems.

The two men going to Emmaus said, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?”

They hurried back to Jerusalem to tell their story. This encounter with Christ made them missionary disciples. As Jim explains it, “Only in an encounter with Christ do we become missionaries.” You can’t NOT be missionaries if you’ve truly encountered Christ!

JIM JANSEN
(continued from page 4)

Even when Christ healed people and told them not to tell anyone, they had to run off and tell others the story of their encounter. Jim says “That is your test.” If you’ve had a true encounter with Christ, you can’t help but become missionary disciples.

Throughout the New Testament, when people inquired of Christ about politics, corrupt leaders, taxes, etc., he turned the conversation to talk about the Father’s love for his people. Recognizing this, we can discover peace, love, and joy.

He says there are **three habits of missionary disciples.**

First is prayer – an honest, daily conversation with Jesus, one which includes explaining our disappointments. Christ understands our frustrations. He is human, like us. Jim says to read the prayers of saints and the prophets. Those prayers were not only honest, but sometimes sassy! When Mother Teresa prayed to God, it sometimes sounds like a lovers’ spat. And it was!

Second is friendship. Notice in the Scriptures how powerful and consistent it was when people had an encounter with Christ. They were changed; and they had to tell others.

Community and friendship are essential to people who have an encounter with Christ. And we’ll want to extend that friendship to non-believers.



We have to listen to the pains, fears, and frustrations in the hearts of our friends, neighbors and fallen away Catholics. This second habit is all about listening to and meeting people in friendship.

Third is sharing your story. The men on the road to Emmaus ran back to Jerusalem to tell others what they encountered. And they didn’t talk theology; they told their story - of encountering Christ in the breaking of the bread. This is also how we are to encounter Christ today – through the Eucharist.

Jim related his own story - a personal encounter he had with Christ after losing friends in a car crash while he was in college. He prayed earnestly and honestly to Christ in Eucharistic Adoration, and felt a close encounter with the Lord. Christ is “not only a good shepherd, but also a good physician,” Jim said.

“Let Jesus meet you in your discouragement, your frustration, and your confusion,” Jim said. It’s exactly where Jesus wants to come to us.

He wrote his book, [*A Clear Path: How to Make Missionary Disciples in Your Parish*](#) in order to introduce this concept to parishes. And the book is now available on Amazon.

We need a trellis, a context and a framework in order to share our encounter story with those who don’t yet know the Lord.

You can watch the entire presentation [here](#).

FR. JEFF HOPPER GAVE US HIS VOCATION STORY ON SEP 18.

Fr. Jeff Hopper, our Assistant Chaplain for the St. Serra Club of Louisville, spoke about his journey into the Catholic faith and his call to the priesthood.

He was born in Columbia, Kentucky and grew up in nearby Russell County. His dad was primarily a farmer and his mom, a homemaker. The family attended Beckham Ridge Separate Baptist Church in Russell Springs, KY. There he developed a strong love for the Lord and a firm grounding in the Bible.



Fr. Jeff and his wife, Betsy, had known each other since the 1st grade, as they celebrated the same birthday. They were in the high school band together and fell in love as teenagers. They married soon after graduation from high school in 1976.

In 1977, he entered the Navy’s submarine service and while on active duty, he finished his college degree, a Bachelors in Sociology. During their time in the Navy, they joined the Episcopal Church and since he had felt a calling to ministry since his late teens, he entered seminary in Lexington, KY upon leaving active duty in 1984,

After graduating in 1988 he was ordained as an Episcopal minister and served a parish in Covington, KY. He then joined the Army in 1991 as a chaplain. He served in Korea and at four different Army Posts in the US until his retirement in 2003. During his military career in both the Navy and the Army, Fr. Jeff and his family moved over 20 times.

Fr. Jeff enjoyed serving as an Episcopal chaplain, but was concerned about the denomination’s move-

FR. JEFF HOPPER
(continued from page 5)



ment to the extreme left on many issues. He soon realized that the Episcopal Church could not be a part of the catholic church as understood by the teaching of the branch theory. After much soul searching and prayer Fr. Jeff and his family joined the Catholic Church in 2003. In fact, his wife, Betsy, went through the RCIA program three years ahead of him.

Archbishop Kelly accepted Fr. Jeff as a candidate for the priesthood through the Pastoral Provision program, a program instituted under Pope John Paul II which allowed married Episcopal ministers to become Catholic priests after converting to the Catholic Church. He ended up teaching school for a couple of years, including a year at St. Rita's in Louisville while his paperwork made its way through the approval process in Rome. Fr. Jeff was ordained as a deacon 2005 and served as the Associate for Faith Formation at St. James in Elizabethtown. He was then ordained a priest in May of 2006.

In 2010 the Vatican announced that married convert clergy could now be appointed as parish pastors. So, after serving at St. James, Elizabethtown and at St. Thomas and St. Monica, Bardstown; in June 2016, he was made pastor of St. Christopher Parish in Radcliff and St. Martin of Tours in Flaherty in 2017. Fr. Jeff stays very busy with his two parishes. He also provides coverage for a local hospital, two nursing homes and assists with services at the chapel on Fort Knox. Preparing for ministry after retirement in five years at age 70, he has been taking classes through the Avala Institute and the Heart of Christ Program for Spiritual Direction so he can serve as a spiritual director in addition to assisting at local parishes.

Not only did Fr. Jeff and his wife become Catholic, but so did his two children and six grandchildren. He and his wife Betsy celebrated their 47th wedding anniversary in August.

We want to thank Fr. Jeff Hopper for telling us all

about his vocation journey and conversion to the Catholic faith.

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



PARISH VOCATION MINISTRY
IDEAS UPDATED

The extensive list of ideas compiled by our club has recently been updated. You can find it on our website [here](#).

PRIESTS CELEBRATING
ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to our priests celebrating anniversaries of ordination this month. This list includes priests from religious orders and other dioceses, working in our Archdiocese.

DECHENNE, REVEREND JASON R.
10/25/08 (15 years)

DEACONS CELEBRATING
ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to our Deacons celebrating ordination anniversaries this month. The asterisk (*) indicates Retired; (^) indicates Senior Deacon. The names of the wives of deacons are in parentheses.

MARKS, STEPHEN W.^* (Marcia)
10/14/2000 (23 years)

A list of all our deacons, their wives, ordination anniversaries and parishes can be found [here](#).

SEMINARIAN BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

CONOR MCCLURE
October 8

You can get more information on all our seminarians, as well as their email addresses by clicking [here](#).

NEWMAN CONNECTION UPDATE

Across the country, there were about 52,000 new names given to the Newman Connection program for Catholic college freshmen – a part of Newman Ministry. These people are then contacted by Catholic cam-

Join us for this unique opportunity to hear
FR. JOHN BAPTIST HOANG, OP
(of St. Louis Bertrand Parish) speak on
**"HOLINESS - LIVING
LIFE TO THE FULL"**
sponsored by the
SAINT SERRA CLUB OF LOUISVILLE
www.ArchLou.org/Serra



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2023 8:15 am to 1:15 pm
ST. MARGARET MARY PARISH, 7813 SHELBYVILLE ROAD 40222
Program includes - 8:15 Mass (in the Church).
9:00 (in the Hospitality Room): sign-in, coffee, juice and
pastries. 9:30 sessions will begin, box lunch included.



Registration and \$40 payment required
by Tuesday, October 31 due to catering.

For more information or to register, contact Bob Hublar at
RJHublar@BellSouth.net or call (502) 216-0945.

Co-sponsors: Holy Family Radio (WLCR 1040 AM, FM 94.9),
Cheryl Bruner of Pitt & Emison, Family Renewal Project,
The Derby City Group of Morgan Stanley, Heuser Law Office,
Tallent & Associates CPA, Highland Roofing,
Retirement Management Services, Deacon Bill and Barbara Klump,
Chuck & Sally Lynch, Theresa Fiedler,
Don & Mary Carol Kelly, Evelyn Siemens

pus ministers or nearby parishes to make them aware
of Catholic community activities on or near the col-
lege campus.

And for the Louisville Archdiocese, we turned in
1,048 names of freshmen! For more information on
Newman Ministry, checkout their website [here](#).

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

NATIONAL VOCATION AWARENESS
WEEK BEGINS SUNDAY
NOV 5 THIS YEAR

This is an annual week-long celebration of the
Catholic Church in the U.S. dedicated to promote vo-
cations to the priesthood, diaconate and consecrated
life through prayer and education, and to renew our
prayers and support for those who are considering a

**NATIONAL VOCATION
AWARENESS WEEK**
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religious vocation.

Click [here](#) for prayers and homily ideas; info for DREs, teachers, catechists, parents and youth ministers; fact sheets; vocation terms; things to do; parish resources; answers to questions; find your spirituality type; and more.

Click [here](#) for Holy Hour ideas (with and without a priest). Click [here](#) for some great infographics, particularly valuable in the classroom.

**PARISH VOCATION MINISTRY
- THE 31 CLUB**

One of the many things Serrans do is organize prayers for vocations. And one of our programs is called "The 31 Club" – getting members of a parish (or any group) to each take a day of the month (for a period of 12 months) to pray for religious vocations to the Catholic Church. Some information can be found [here](#).

For more information, contact Chuck Lynch at (502) 442-9302 or ChuckLynch4782@gmail.com.

**PREPARE FOR DEACON SUNDAY -
SECOND SUNDAY OF OCTOBER.**

During the 2021 calendar year, 458 new permanent deacons were ordained in US arch/dioceses. At the same time, 512 deacons retired from active ministry, and another 393 deacons died. "As is the case with priests in the United States, there are not enough new permanent deacons being ordained to make up for the numbers who are retiring from active ministry and dying each year," said the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA).

The second Sunday of October each year is Deacon Sunday. Here are some resources to learn more about deacons, help prepare for the day, and even consider the diaconate.

To learn more about how to celebrate Deacon Sunday, click [here](#).

To learn more of what a Catholic deacon does, click [here](#).

To read a blog by a Catholic deacon, click [here](#).

To learn about how to become a permanent deacon, click [here](#).

**ANNUAL VOCATION POSTER
AND ESSAY CONTESTS**

Schools, parishes, home-schoolers and youth leaders are being notified in October of the annual Voca-

tion Essay and Poster Contests sponsored by the Vocation Office and the Saint Serra Club of Louisville.

The Contest starts with the National Vocation Awareness Week (the week beginning November 5 this year); and entries must be received in the Vocation Office by Monday, January 8.

The Saint Serra Club will provide cash prizes to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners in each contest – the Essay Contest (grades 7 & 8) and the Poster Contest (grades 4 through 6).

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR CHAPLAIN

Please pray for our St. Serra Club Chaplain, Fr. Pat Dolan, who was injured in a vehicle / bike accident on August 30. He is staying with a friend during recovery.

Fr. Pat, please get well soon! We miss you!



**JOIN US BY ZOOM FOR OUR MONTHLY
"ROSARY FOR VOCATIONS"**

Our Saint Serra Club of Louisville gathers online for our Zoom Rosary for Vocations at 7 pm, on the **second Monday of each month**. By link, click [here](#).

By phone, call (312) 626 6799. Meeting ID is 865 4452 6535.

VARIOUS ITEMS OF INTEREST

Birthdays - Serrans and the Vocation Office

Todd Popson, Voc. Off., Oct 8

Melody Denson, Oct 21

Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre, Oct 25

Pope's Prayer Intention for the month of OCTOBER: For the Synod - We pray for the Church, that she may adopt listening and dialogue as a lifestyle at every level, and allow herself to be guided by the Holy Spirit towards the peripheries of the world.

Thanks to **Paul Willett** for maintaining our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SerraLouisville.

Thanks to **Mary Means** and **Lynn Haner** for proofing our newsletters.

Newsletter questions, comments, or submissions? Contact Chuck Lynch, Editor, at (502) 442-9302.