



Club chartered May 22, 1955

Saint Serra Club of Louisville VOCATION DIGEST

“Always Forward, Never Back”
- Saint Junipero Serra

January, 2026

Newsletter

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

SR. KATIE CUMMINGS, OSB, SPOKE AT OUR DEC. 1 MEETING.

About Our Speaker

Sr. Katie was raised by devout Catholic parents near a Benedictine abbey in Kansas and was always impressed with the large medieval doors of the monastery. The monks there invited her parents to take



all six of their children to dinner at the monastery. She remembers learning the monks were truly human when they debated if Captain Crunch cereal was simply too noisy to eat for breakfast in a quiet monastery!

Sr. Katie grew up in the 90s when we had the first female astronaut, and females being first in other fields as well.

She was raised without cell phones prior to college and without a personal computer prior to becoming a teenager.

When considering religious life, she came to slowly realize she had a religious vocation and started investigating it at age 31.

She had read that Servant of God, Dorothy Day, said, “We have all known the long loneliness, and we have learned that the only solution is love, and that love comes with community.” Sr. Katie said that a life in community sounded right. And she learned that there are three types of religious communities – contemplative (focusing on prayer), apostolic (focusing on mission), and monastic (falling in the middle of the other two).

Choosing an order was a lengthy process. You need to prove you really want to join.

After researching many orders, she chose the Benedictines, being especially impressed with how they really cared for each other. However, she spoke of how it was scary to leave behind her job, house, family, etc.

She entered the Benedictines at 36 and is now age 40.

Sr. Katie lives with other Benedictine sisters in a small house near Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. Her monastery is headquartered 90 minutes away in Ferdinand, Indiana.

About the Benedictines

The Benedictines were formed in 529 AD, prior to other mainstream religious orders which focus on the vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty. In fact, they are the oldest order in the Latin / western Church. Consequently, their vows are obedience, stability, and the vow of continual conversion to the monastic way of life. For them, the conversion vow also includes chastity and poverty.

They are not itinerant like some orders, because the Benedictine orders typically own land and schools.

The one vow that is most confusing to tourists in Ferdinand is stability. It was explained to her by someone pointing out how Mary and Joseph went to a stable in Bethlehem for Jesus’ birth. The stable didn’t come to them; it was ready when needed. Monastics stay where they are; and people come to them.

When people say they were taught by Benedictines, that is a fruit of stability in the community. The Benedictines are also famous for their hospitality.

The Benedictines in Ferdinand were established in 1867. They originally focused on teaching and nursing. About 75 years ago, they branched out into other ministries, including social works, canon lawyers, psychologists, a librarian, and many others.

There are still cloistered monasteries in the Benedictine order. However, Sr. Katie is among the

active monastics, who go out to minister in the community, provided they observe the monastic schedule.

Ministry to Young Adults

Sr. Katie said that young adults in general, including at Spalding University, no longer have the mindset of “belief before belonging” but, instead, now think along the lines of “belonging before belief.” She says they seek a place to belong and only then investigate the beliefs.

She also says young people are lonely and can’t find true connections with others using only their phones.

Campus ministry is relatively new at Spalding. They have 1,600 students, of which 30% are students of color. Many are student athletes. They have more graduate students than undergrads. Some of the graduate programs are online; so, she mostly works in campus ministry with undergrads.

Many of today’s students see their parents worried about economic crisis; and their fellow students are facing suicidal thoughts, anxiety, and depression. Many have suffered childhood abuse. Some are worrying about gun violence on campus. They’re not seeking religion that is thinly veiled politics, a set of rules, something forced upon them, or a self-help manual.

Except for some areas, there is no longer any social pressure to belong to a religion. The Church is no longer a social outlet for most young people. Young people no longer feel any obligation to go to Mass.

The way we can help today’s young people is through our own authenticity. Tell others what we get out of church and the Mass, Catholic community, its support for suffering, its help in the search for meaning and purpose. “Be a good listener,” she says. Maybe we can say to someone, “What would be so wrong in trying it out?” Recommend they go to Mass a couple of weekends and see if they like it. Ask, “What does it hurt to believe in the supernatural?”

Some of the responses you might get include them saying they don’t need a crutch; they are practical or scientific and don’t need church.

She recommends three points for engaging young people. First, respect their freedom, maybe saying, “I respect your decision, and ...” Secondly, she says to be authentic, sharing from your personal experiences, especially admitting when we mess up. Thirdly, keep open the lines of communication, being loving and patient, and being a safe place for them to come back to no matter what happens.

We want to thank Sr. Katie Cummings, OSB, for speaking to our club.

(Thanks, too, to Jerry Zimmerer for taking pictures at this meeting.)

FR. PAT DOLAN SPOKE ON HIS MILITARY MEETING IN ROME.

Our chaplain, Fr. Pat Dolan, is retired military, a Brigadier General Chaplain in the U.S. Army.

He’s part of the Apostolate Military International (AMI), an umbrella group over Catholic military organizations in each country. The one in the U.S. is only a year or two old; but ones in Germany and Austria go back to WW I conflicts.

The AMI meets once a year in various places throughout the world but also reports to the Vatican. Fr. Pat reported to this umbrella organization, on behalf of the U.S. group, during the week of our Thanksgiving holiday.

The AMI reported in meetings Monday night almost to midnight, meeting with three dicasteries, a bishops’ organization, the Swiss Guard, and the Secretary of State for the Vatican, Cardinal Parolin – reporting what they do and the effects of their activities.

The AMI is the only military lay organization (with one priest on the executive board, appointed by the Vatican) of the 450 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for the Vatican.

Wednesday and Thursday there were meetings of all the Vatican-inspired NGOs.

Wednesday evening there was a Mass with several bishops and nuncios to various UN organizations.

Thursday were panel discussions, when Fr. Pat had 10 minutes to discuss what he had done in Ukraine – training military chaplains on how to spiritually help the soldiers deal with the difficulties of war.

Since it was Thanksgiving in the U.S., one of the nuncios let Fr. Pat preach at the Mass and explain to others all about our Thanksgiving holiday.

The different dicasteries and Secretary of State were thrilled to hear about their AMI activities, as well as about Serra Clubs, the faith-science discussion group, and the K of C, because the AMI is a lay organization that is doing all the things that bring the dignity of what we are (lay people made in the image and likeness of God) up to the point where it actually functions parallel to (not in competition with) what the clergy do.

Fr. Pat says we have a right to know that at the highest levels, the Church “is very thrilled with who

you are, what you do, and how you do it."

Thanks to Fr. Pat for his continued service to the military in his retirement years, as well as his continued service to our club as our chaplain and spiritual advisor.

(Thanks to Jerry Zimmerer for taking pictures at this meeting.)

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

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

Jan 5 (1st Mon) - **Dr. Mary Beth Bowling**, new Vice Chancellor for the Archdiocese, will speak on her role and her vision moving forward.

Jan 12 (2nd Mon) - **Zoom Rosary for Vocations**, 7 pm. See the separate article for details.

Jan 14 (2nd Wed) - **Holy Hour for Vocations** – After the noon Mass in St. Margaret Mary Chapel.

Jan 19 (3rd Mon) – **Valerie Wilson**, consecrated virgin, will give her vocation story.

Jan 19 (3rd Mon) - "Serra Meets" by Zoom – **8 pm** Louisville time. **Msgr James Shea**, of the University of Mary, will be the speaker. Click [here](#) for the link to participate.

Jan 27 (Tue) - 11:45 - **Serra Board Meeting** - St. Margaret Mary Spirituality Center.

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

ST. MARGARET MARY ORNAMENTS FOR VOCATIONS

St. Margaret Mary's Parish Vocation Committee put ornaments on a Christmas tree in the back of church, suggesting people take them and then send a Christmas card to the retired priests, seminarians, and religious communities whose name and address were on the back of the ornament.



Here's a picture of one of those ornaments as well as the tree. Thanks to Dr. Holly Smith for the pictures.

CANDIES TO OUR RELIGIOUS SISTERS

For the sixth year in a row, the St. Serra Club of Louisville decided to give a box of candy to every religious sister in the archdiocese – both active and retired. We distributed over 350 boxes of candies made by the local Muth's Candies company, driving the boxes to about 14 locations all over the archdiocese mid-December.



We thank the sisters again for their many years of past and current dedication to the Church, our

archdiocese, and the many causes and ministries they support.

Also, thanks to our Club Secretary, Bob Hublar, for organizing this project, Ralph Williams for coordinating the shopping and purchasing of the candies, Fr. Pat Dolan (our Chaplain) for composing the note put with every box of candy, Chuck Lynch for printing and folding the notes, and those who volunteered to deliver the candies all over the Archdiocese (Ramsey Kraft, Melody Denson, Lynn Haner, Deacon Bill Klump, Richard and Peggy Spalding, Mike and Bev Knoop, Sarah Schurfranz, Norb Nopper, Ken Peet, Ben Smith, Lincoln Lewis, and Sam Willett).

Above is a picture of the delivery wagon used by Mike and Bev Knoop before they loaded it with boxes of candies.

FR. PAT GAVE US AN ADVENT REFLECTION ON CHARITY AT OUR DEC. 15 MEETING.

Fr. Pat Dolan, our club's Chaplain, solicited topics for his Advent reflection. Given what was proposed, he decided to reflect on the question about our nation's discontinuing **charitable giving** to other countries through the USAID program, which had been spending \$40 billion or more in each of the last five years. Being

one of the wealthiest nations in the world, should our nation be helping other poorer nations?

Fr. Pat said, "Absolutely not!" ("And that's out of Scriptures," he said.) We must first follow justice and pay our own national debt, which is out of control. If we get to where we can't pay those debts, "we'll have chaos in the streets," Fr. Pat said. National debt

interest is extremely high relative to the size of our federal government income. Paying debts is a requirement of individuals and nations.

Fr. Pat tells us that St. Paul said (in 2 Corinthians 8:12-14) your generosity to others should not impoverish you. There needs to be a balance of support for one another.



Having said that, there is the challenge that nations also must help their own citizens needing a handout. Colonial America didn't always do this. Catholics eventually started many of our nation's schools, hospitals, healthcare and social services. But government eventually stepped in to offer these things to all.

There are a lot of other nations that don't have our national debt and can more readily afford helping other countries – Norway and some Arab countries are examples. The U.S. is perceived as rich and a land of opportunities, which is why we get so many immigrants.

"Justice has to come before charity." We must take care of our debts first. This will require raising taxes and cutting back on national spending. And politicians don't want to do either, causing them to run into trouble.

What are the options for us citizens? Let the government continue to borrow, and give to other countries, dealing with political and foreign corruption in the process? Human nature being what it is, people involved in the process, take advantage of the situation and steal funds along the way even in the best and most watched circumstances.

Instead of paying taxes, having our funds going to other nations, net of the costs of corruption, individuals can give directly to Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) of our own choosing, after vetting those NGOs. Some to consider are Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Near East Welfare Association, missionary orders, etc. Fr. Pat says he's more comfortable choosing the charities, instead of trusting the government to choose them, which may have priorities that neither we nor our Church agree with.

The good news of Fr. Pat's Christmas report is that **"we can feel comfortable giving legitimately to charities that you've looked at. That's the right thing to do. It's holy and good."** **"Do it with the love of God working through you."** As Mother Teresa said, "In this life we may not do great things, but we can do small things with great love."

Reflecting on the Magi, Fr. Pat said that their gifts had various meanings, in addition to the traditional ones. Gold was always useful and didn't corrode. With incense, a little was worth a lot; being easy to carry, it also functioned as a currency. Myrrh, the basis for many creams and salves, was also very tradeable. They were also known as symbols of the three known continents at that time. "Giving to others, we can follow in the footsteps of the Magi," and give a little with great

love Fr. Pat said.

We thank Fr. Pat Dolan for his Advent reflection on charity.

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

**ALL OF US SERRANS ARE RECRUITERS
FOR THE SERRA CLUB.
"EACH ONE, BRING ONE."**

CHRIS KRESLINS OF VIANNEY VOCATIONS SPOKE DEC. 15 AT "SERRA MEETS."

This was the 61st monthly, national "Serra Meets" by Zoom, hosted by our USA Council President, Dr. Anne Roat.

Our speaker was **Chris Kreslin**, Senior Manager for



Vianney Vocation's **"Vocation Pathway."** Chris has extensive experience at both the parish and the diocesan levels. He has led youth ministries as well as campus ministries. He and his wife Rose have seven children and one grandchild.

Vianney Vocations is an organization that

helps Serra publish the *Serran Magazine*, as well as maintain the websites for Serra International and the USA Council. They reach out to vocation offices primarily through the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors ([NCDVD](#)).

Vianney Vocations is also a great asset for all sorts of materials used by Serra Clubs.

Vocation Pathway is a highly focused strategy to help vocation offices increase priestly vocations. It begins with forming and training of a robust Vocation Team, then identifying faithful young men and accompanying them as they discern their vocations. Vocation Pathway is a self-sustaining effort that funds itself, as well as contributing to the cost of seminarian

education.

Chris says it focuses on the seeds already planted by the Holy Spirit. And they make sure the vocation director is not alone in his work.

Their approach is to organize a team of priests to stay in touch with the discerners in the diocese. Then they accompany the discerners; they get in front of parishioners, and work on raising funds to educate the seminarians. Their effort is to get all priests promoting vocations, which, of course, is hard to achieve. The team of priests meet monthly by Zoom.

They break the program down into several parts. First is "Called by Name" – asking parishioners to recommend young men who might make good priests.

Second is to hold Discernment Events for these young men.

Third is Accompaniment – having priests interact with these young men and accompany them through the discernment process.

Fourth is to help those that are interested to apply to enter the seminary and go through the screening process.

They are now working with 13 dioceses on this program. One had over 1,000 names submitted to the Called by Name part of the program. Then 160 attended the discernment events. Then 75 chose to participate in ongoing discernment discussions. And 30 ended up applying to the seminary.

We appreciate the USA Council inviting Chris Kreslin to be our speaker; and we appreciate his time explaining Vocation Pathway to us.

You can watch the entire presentation, plus the business portion of the meeting, [here](#).

PRIESTS CELEBRATING ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to our priests celebrating anniversaries of ordination this month. We always include here any priests, from religious orders and other dioceses, who are working in our archdiocese. The asterisk (*) indicates "Retired."

**AKKARA, C.M.I., REV. OUSEPACHAN A. ,
1/2/94, 31 yrs**

**CHATHELY, C.M.I., REVEREND A. BIJU, 1/2/05,
20 yrs**

DIETZ, O.C.S.O. RT. REV. ELIAS, 1/25/03, 22 yrs

GEORGE, C.M.I., REV. SHEEJAN P., 1/5/08, 17

yrs

**GONZALEZ ROMERO, REVEREND JEANS,
1/2/04, 21 yrs**

ILLIKKAL, C.M.I., REV. GEORGE S., 1/2/05, 20

yrs

THEKKUDAN, C.M.I., REV. JOHNSON, 1/5/02, 23

yrs

A list of all our diocesan priests can be found [here](#). A list of other priests working in our diocese, from other dioceses and various religious orders, can be found [here](#).

CONSECRATED VIRGIN CELEBRATING ANNIVERSARY OF HER CONSECRATION

Congratulations to **Alex Schmidt**, who was “espoused to Christ” by Archbishop Joseph Kurtz in “the Rite of Consecration of a Virgin Living in the World” on **January 16**, 2022. She is a member of St. Thomas Parish living and working in Bardstown.

We have two consecrated virgins in the Archdiocese of Louisville. According to The Record, “The consecration of a virgin is an ancient rite in the Catholic Church in which a woman commits to living a life of ‘perpetual virginity’ and is ‘set aside as a sacred person who belongs only to Christ.’ Prayer and service to the church are cornerstones of this vocation.”

SEMINARIAN BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Happy Birthday to two of our seminarians this month:

**CUONG LE - JAN 18
THOMAS WICHMAN – JAN 18**

You can get more information on all our seminarians, as well as where they’re going to school, and other information by clicking [here](#).

JOIN US FOR OUR MONTHLY “ROSARY FOR VOCATIONS”

Our Saint Serra Club of Louisville gathers online by Zoom for a 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 874 8155 6033.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!
2026**

VOCATIONS IN THE NEWS

The gift of the priesthood – read the article [here](#).

Church data shows global Catholic population increasing but vocations falling – read the article [here](#).

Pope Leo says priesthood is a “total gift.” – read the article [here](#).

Record number of men discerns military chaplaincy at Baltimore retreat. – read the article [here](#).

“Leo from Chicago” – 52-minute documentary on YouTube – View the documentary [here](#).

Archdiocese of Dubuque to dramatically reduce number of Sunday Masses – read the article [here](#).

Four U.S. Military veterans on the path to sainthood – read the article [here](#).

Hundreds of Anglican priests have converted to Catholicism. – read the article [here](#).

Deacons' wives tell us what it's like married to clergy. – read the article [here](#).

ON HOLINESS AND SPIRITUALITY

The third part of our Serran mission statement is to further the holiness of our members. Here is some good reading to help us all:

Four Things I Learned from My First Month of Daily Mass – Read the article [here](#).

Our Struggles Make Us Human – Read the article [here](#).

Seven tips to free yourself from resentment, and forgive – Read the article [here](#).

A Rule of Life for the Heart: Creating a Spiritual Life Plan – Read the article [here](#).

Quote: “God continually puts us where we need to be – all we have to do is cooperate with His grace.” – Fr.

Dolan, Chaplain of the St. Serra Club of Louisville

Make Time for a Retreat – Read the article [here](#).

Pope Leo says the elderly are ‘a blessing to be welcomed’ and encourages evangelizing to them. – Read the article [here](#).

Friendship with Christ – Read the article [here](#).

What Is Heaven Really Like? – Read the article [here](#).

Pope Leo shows us why 70 is the perfect age to begin again. – Read the article [here](#).

Two Ways We Sin Against Hope – Read the article [here](#).

B.A.K.E.R. Method of Examination of Conscience – Gratitude Brings Grace – Read the article [here](#).

Our Two New Saints - Crucial quotes from Saints Acutis and Frassati – Read the article [here](#).

Eucharistic Adoration: Things To Do During Adoration – Read the article [here](#).

Mary: My Hermitage – Read the article [here](#).

A simple way to achieve stillness in Christian meditation – Read the article [here](#).

Leader, Provider, Protector: A Man’s Mission – Read the article [here](#).

Edith Stein converted to Catholicism after reading this book. – Read the article [here](#).

Bearing one another's burdens is a skill we have to practice. – Read the article [here](#).

At 83, Harrison Ford's refreshing take on aging – Read the article [here](#).

VARIOUS ITEMS OF INTEREST

Pope’s Prayer Intention for the month of January - **For Prayer With The Word Of God** - Let us pray that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities, helping us build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

Serran Birthdays this month:

Bill Moriarity, Jan 2 Sarah Schurfranz, Jan 2
Bob Hublar, Jan 3 Lincoln Lewis, Jan 9
Norb Nopper, Jan 23 Ron Eades, Jan 31

Understanding our new pope - Pope Leo XVI was asked his favorite book (not by St. Augustine, since he’s with the Augustinians); and he said we could understand his spirituality best by reading “Practicing His Presence” by Brother Lawrence. It’s available many places online.

January 1 is World Day of Peace. To read the Pope’s message for this occasion click [here](#).

Celebrate seven important dates pertaining to vocations

1) World Day for Consecrated Life (WDCL) – The Sunday coincident with or immediately following February 2 (the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord). In 2026 this is expected to be celebrated in parishes around Sunday, 2/2/26.

2) National Catholic Sisters Week (NCSW) – Celebrated March 8 to 14 each year, regardless of the day of the week on which March 8 falls. This was just created in the last few years. It’s part of Women’s History Month. It starts on March 8, which is also International Women’s Day.

3) World Day of Prayer for Vocations (WDPV) - Usually observed on “Good Shepherd Sunday” the fourth Sunday of the Easter season (i.e., the third Sunday after Easter). In 2026 this is Sunday, 4/26/26.

4) Religious Brothers Day – May 1 each year.
5) Priesthood Sunday - The last Sunday of September each year. In 2026, this is Sunday, 9/27/26.

6) Deacon Sunday – The second Sunday of October each year. The next one is Sunday, 10/11/26.

7) National Vocation Awareness Week (NVAW) The week beginning on the first Sunday in November each year. In 2026, this is the week beginning on Sunday, 11/1/25.

Thanks to
Lynn Haner
and
Charlie Francesconi
for proofing our newsletters.

FRIENDS OF SERRA - Affiliates of the Saint Serra Club of Louisville

PROMOTING VOCATIONS THROUGH PRAYER AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

WHAT IS THE SAINT SERRA CLUB? WHAT DO WE DO?

We are an international lay group of men and women, who do what we can to support all people who have chosen a religious vocation. We also promote future vocations, and try to develop the faith formation of our Members.

We usually meet twice a month (first and third Mondays for lunch, usually at the same location each month), with speakers at almost all our meetings.

In addition to prayers for vocations, we have organized annual luncheons for women religious; sponsored send-off luncheons for our seminarians in August of each year; sponsored the Men's and Women's Archdiocesan Conferences; Coordinated with the Vocation Office for the Vocation Poster and Essay Contests (providing certificates and cash prizes); promoted the Newman Connection, which keeps college students in touch with the Church through campus ministry or nearby parishes; sponsored the pictorial seminarian prayer card for the Archdiocese; sent birthday cards to our seminarians; promoted the Traveling Chalice Program and the Traveling Crucifix Program in schools and parishes; given boxes of candies to 500 sisters for Christmas; promoted the 31-Club of parishion-

ers each picking a day of the month to pray for vocations; promoted Adopt-A-Seminarian and Adopt-A-Priest programs; promote Priest Appreciation Day and Deacon Appreciation Day; and much more.

About \$4,000 of our budget is spent on these items. Member dues (\$110 every six months) help cover the cost of the many things we do. Also, about 42% of our Member dues help support Serra International and the USA Council of Serra International.

WHO ARE FRIENDS OF SERRA?

Some Serra Clubs have "Friends of Serra" for people who are unable to become full Members due to time constraints or the physical constraints of getting out of their homes.

The Saint Serra Club of Louisville has decided to start a Friends of Serra program, asking for donations of **at least \$50 per year.** (That's less than \$5 per month.)

Our club could do so much more if we had additional financial support. This would include increasing prizes for vocation poster and essay contests, doing more for Clergy Appreciation Day, senior women religious, seminarians, etc.

BENEFITS OF BECOMING A FRIEND OF SERRA

1 - You never have to attend meetings, pay Member dues, or pay national or international dues.

2 - If you ever choose to attend our meetings, you can attend at Member Prices, instead of the higher price we normally charge non-Members.

3 - You will receive our monthly Club Newsletter.

4 - You can provide input to our Club and its Board of Directors. We always welcome ideas on how to improve the methods to achieve our mission.

5 - Financial support is tax deductible.

6 - We will recognize you as a Friend of Serra in our newsletter. (Of course, anyone wishing to remain anonymous can do so.)

7 - You'll have fellowship with other like-minded Christians who care about the future of the Catholic Church.

8 - Through interaction with our Club and its Members, you can learn more about Serra and hopefully consider becoming a full Member at some later date.

IF YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION ON BECOMING A FRIEND OF SERRA, PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM.

You can mail it to Bob Hublar (our Secretary) at 300 East Daisy Lane, New Albany, IN 47150.

Or you can just call Bob at (502) 216-0945.

Or you can email the information to Bob at RJHublar@Bellsouth.net.

Name: _____

Nickname: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____