Serra Club News

The Serra Club of Wheeling, WV Fall 2022

Upcoming Events

Friday, Sept. 16, 2022
Guest speaker:
Fr. Justin Golna
Prayer Leader:
Rico Ruiz

Monday, Oct. 3, 2022
Guest speaker TBA
Prayer Leader:
Elsie Reyes

Monday, Oct. 17, 2022
Guest speaker:
Kate Marshall
House of Hagar
Prayer Leader:
Mary Carter

Beginning in October, the Serra Club will meet at noon on the first & third Monday of the month.

We are trying this new day to see if it will enable more members to join us for meetings.

Serra initiates new members at Priest Picnic

Bishop Mark Brennan congratulates the six Serrans who were initiated at the August Priest Picnic. From left are Rich Brosh, Rico Ruiz, Elsie Reyes, Bishop Mark E. Brennan, Jacob Manning, Art Bertol and Mary Carter.

The induction of six new members was a highlight at the Serra Club of Wheeling's annual Priest Picnic. Serra President & Treasurer Dr. Frank Carenbauer, III and Membership VP Larry Bandi welcomed members Rich Brosh, Rico Ruiz, Elsie Reyes, Jacob Manning, Art Bertol and Mary Carter.

The Most Reverend Mark E. Brennan, Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, once again attended the event. He reminded Serrans that his participation in our 2020 Priest Picnic was one of the first events he attended after being named our bishop. He said he has a special appreciation for Serra Clubs, as he has twice served as chaplain to Serra Clubs before he became a bishop.

Cindy Freeman, Serra VP for Programs, chaired the picnic, which was once again a wonderful event. She thanked her committee, including Chris Freeman, Frank Carenbauer, Julie Blust, Judy Bertol, Mary Carter, Mark Carter, David Soloninka, Art Bertol, Karen Dobkin, Elsie & Romey Reyes and many others for their help.

Larry Bandi, Serra VP, Membership, offers a prayer as part of the induction ceremony. (Photos by Joe Pangilinan)

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Priest Picnic 2022

Photos by Joe Pangilinan

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Bishop's Burse Dinner supports seminarians' education

Seminarian John Soplinski of Weirton delivered a stirring message about the importance of prayer to Serrans, clergy and other guests at the Serra Club Bishop's Burse Dinner in July. Soplinski, who recently entered his third theology year at Mt. St. Mary Seminary, thanked the Serra Club and other organizations that remember him and his fellow seminarians.

"The prayers and support from the Serra Club, from the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Daughters and thousands of parishioners are truly humbling," he said.

While he felt the call to become a priest as a young child, his path to the priesthood was not a traditional one. He worked for years in Pittsburgh City Schools before entering the seminary.

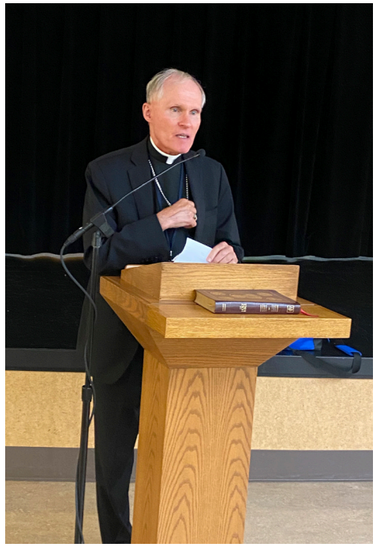
"I waited a long time and had to learn some very difficult lessons," he said. "Praise God that my ears are still open because there's so much to learn."

He said the prayers he and other seminarians receive are vitally important, and promised to pray for us as well. "Please know of my prayers for you and my sincere and humble desire to serve you as a priest of Jesus Christ."

He noted that he looks forward to continuing his journey to the priesthood. At the end of this year Soplinski will be ordained a deacon.

Serra Club President Frank Carenbauer presented Bishop Mark Brennan with a check for $5,000 to support seminarians' education.

Seminarian John Soplinski was the keynote speaker at the 2022 Bishop's Burse dinner.



The Most Rev. Mark E. Brennan, Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston

Father Brian Crenwelge, DWC Vocations Director, introduced the Diocese's nine seminarians to Serrans.

Dr. Frank Carenbauer, III, Serra Club President and Treasurer

-Photos by Maricris Pangilinan

Lunch with the Bishop is back!

Bishop Bernard Schmitt had a theory about vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

He believed that the reason that some young men and women did not think about pursuing a vocation is that no one ever asked them to consider it.

Our beloved late bishop started "Lunch with the Bishop" to plant a seed in the hearts of high school students. Once a month eight or ten students and several Serrans were invited to lunch at the Bishop's home to talk about the priesthood and religious life.

Lunch with the Bishop has not been held for more than a decade, but the Most Rev. Mark E. Brennan recently re-started the program. He invited girls and boys from Wheeling Central Catholic and Weirton Madonna high schools to join him and Serra Club members.

Serrans Larry Finneran, Rich Brosh and Joe Pangilinan attended the first boys' Lunch with the Bishop, along with Fr. Joseph Wiley and Deacon Paul Lim.

Our dear departed Serran Judy Goudy attended the first girls' Lunch with the Bishop, along with Judy Stadler, Mary Lou Kent, and several sisters from the Daughters of Holy Mary of the Heart of Jesus.

Nurturing vocations is a vital aspect of our mission as Serrans. The Lunch with the Bishop program gives us great opportunities to get young men and women to consider whether they have a calling. Please try to attend one of our future lunches with the bishop.

Photos by Joe Pangilinan

A summer of outstanding programs

We had a wealth of great speakers this summer, including our chaplain Monsignor Gene Ostrowski; Daniel A. Maul, director of Faith Formation & Mission for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston and our own President & Treasurer, Dr. Frank Carenbauer, III, who discussed the fascinating history of Wheeling parishes during the 19th century.

We also welcomed Sister Jennifer Berridge, who discussed the global Synod and its implications, and attorney Rob Krall, who spoke about his journey to becoming a deacon. Seminarian John Soplinski stopped in to update us on his life and that of fellow diocesan seminarians, and Sister Kathleen Durkin discussed "Laudato Si," Pope Francis' encyclical on caring for the earth.

Karen Dobkin introduces her friend and former teacher, Sister Kathleen Durkin.

Sister Kathleen Durkin, CSJ

Seminarian John Soplinski

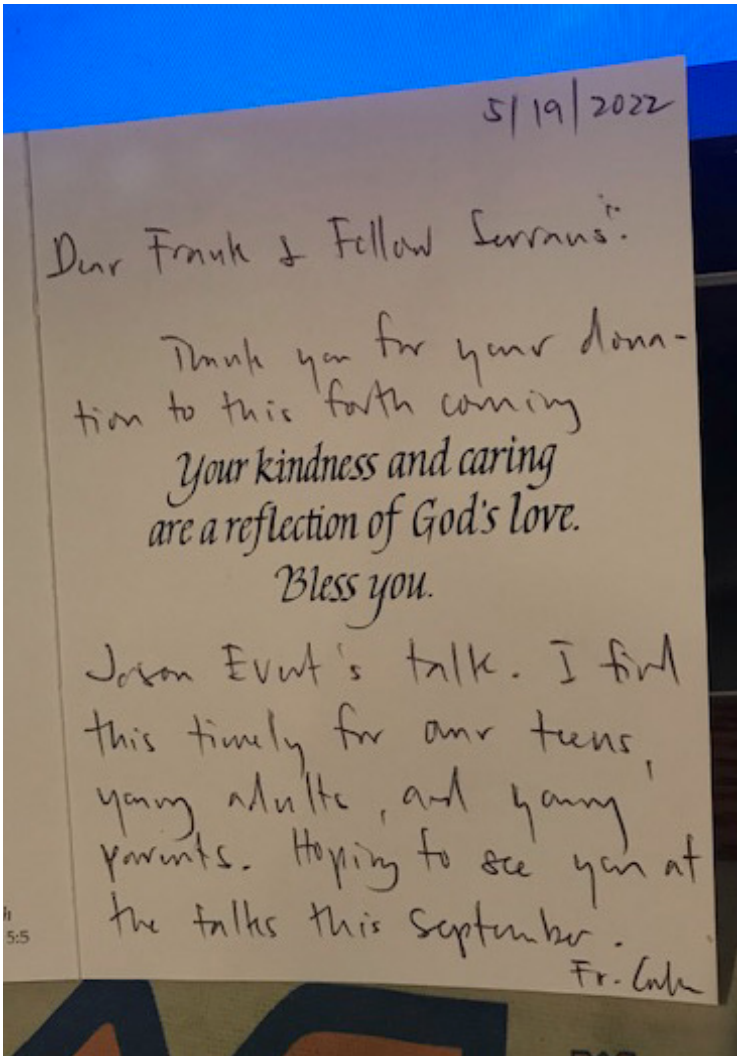
Photos by Joe Pangilinan

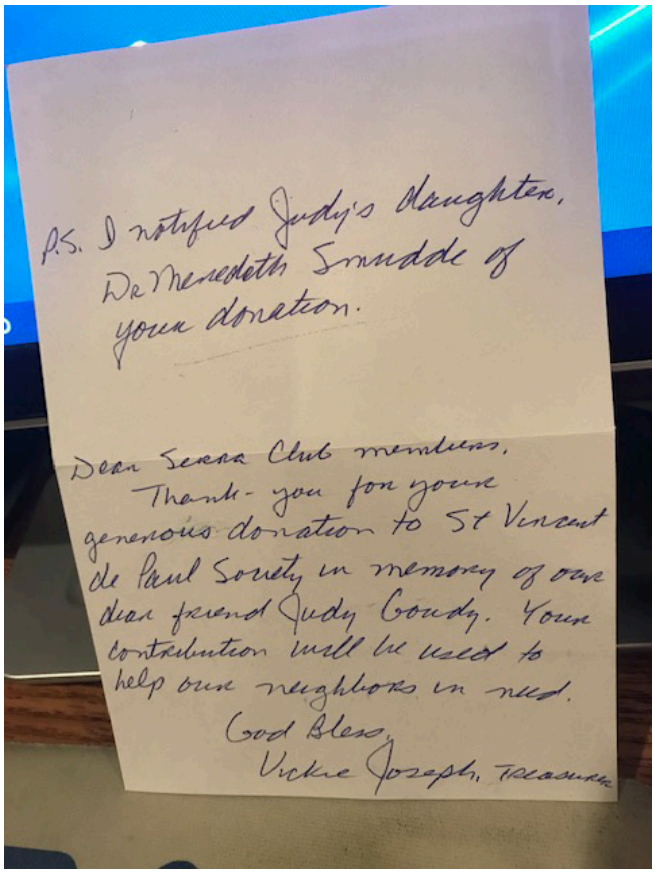
Club Notes

To: Wheeling Serrans,

My humble thanks for the opportunity to address all of you (twice) this month. Your prayers and support are essential to all of us Seminarians. As we welcome five new men, I pray we are all embarking on a new era of hope provided by Jesus Christ.

Best,
John Soplinski





Dear Serrans,

In my retirement, I am preparing to move to our Dominican Motherhouse in Columbus. I have not been with you all since Covid because of my role as Caretaker for my sister. Thank the Serrans for me as I journey on.

Once a Serra Member, always one.

Peace to all gathered.

Sr. Ellen Dunn, OP