



Vermillion - Yankton Serra Club Newsletter

July Meeting

We held our July meeting on the 21st, with Msgr. Carlton Hermann offering Mass for our club. We will work on a presentation to give at Masses at our area parishes to gain interest in Serra. We set Saturday, September 13th, for a club planning session and retreat. It will be held at the meeting room at Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton, and we will join the sisters for lunch.

We discussed our priest appreciation supper and charter celebration. Fr. Mark Lichter suggested that Sunday might be a better day for priests to attend. We were pleased that the evening went well and was an enjoyable event.

Sister Eileen has videos and media available with positive information on religious life. For our program she showed a video called, "Taking Jesus to the Streets."

August Meeting

We met on August 18th at Sacred Heart in Yankton, beginning with Mass offered by Msgr. Carlton Hermann. We discussed plans for our club retreat and planning session to be held at Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton on September 13, 2008. Fr. John Fischer will do the retreat for our club. He is one of our former chaplains. We are looking into the college connections program, but have not received any information yet. Our dues will increase by \$3 per member.

Father Tim Lange was our speaker. He is a retired priest from the Omaha archdiocese. He retired in June, and lives with his brother Bud at Majestic Bluffs. His life story was very interesting and had much variety. He was born near Crofton, NE. At the age of six months he had whooping cough and pneumonia and almost died. He went to Catholic School through eighth grade in Menominee, graduated from Yankton High School in 1950, tried pre-med at USD for two years, and during that time daily Mass at St. Agnes nurtured his vocation. Then he studied pharmacy at UNL, and played piano for the Bobby Lane band. In the fall of 1954, he went to Conception Seminary and loved it. He studied theology at St. Bernard's in Dubuque and was ordained in 1961. While serving at St. Michael's in South Sioux City, he studied music at Briar Cliff College and received his BA in music. In 1974 he received his MA in organ from USD. He served many parishes, and also as chaplain at the Norfolk hospital, and studied and received certification as a chaplain. He is enjoying retirement, and continues to teach music lessons.

Deputy District Governor Sam Nastase and his son Mike were also guests at our meeting.

September Retreat

Saturday, September 13, 2008, we had our club retreat at Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton. Father John Fischer, of St. Agnes parish in Vermillion, provided the retreat, and we had 13 Serrans and a guest, Sister Victorine, in attendance. The first session was about St. Paul. He told us St. Paul was a well-educated Jew and Roman citizen, and probably a Pharisee. He grew up in Tarsus. After his dramatic conversion experience (told in Acts 9: 1-19), he became the apostle to the Gentiles, and his travels were extensive. He was sometimes fiery, sometimes gentle. He had a strong vision of his mission, and formed our notion of what "church" is. He was courageous and died at the place where the church St. Paul Outside the Walls now stands. His challenge to the people of his time and to us is to embrace the cross, and he calls us to holiness. Father John stated that God calls each of us personally and in a special way. He asked us to consider three questions. How did God change you? How did God touch you? How is he calling you today?

Our second session was on the Eucharist. The scripture was 1 Corinthians 11: 17-33. There was an evolution of understanding of what Eucharist is about. It was in the context of a meal. Christians were considered pagans because they only had one God. There was divisiveness among the various churches.

We feel a sense of unworthiness to receive the Eucharist. Have we looked at our lives? Have we prepared our hearts? We have a covenant relationship with God. We need a sense of hunger and longing for the Eucharist. It's all about encountering the Lord Jesus. Do we see Eucharist as gift or burden? The word Eucharist means thanksgiving. We need to ponder and ruminate. Our call is to be Christ centered and reflect Christ in our lives. It was an inspiring morning.

We had a lovely lunch provided by the Benedictine sisters. We were seated two Serrans to a table of sisters. We had wonderful visits with them.

The afternoon planning session was called to order by President Tim Tracy. After announcements, he had us break into four groups: membership, vocations, programs, and communications. Each group was to come up with new ideas for the coming year. Then we came back together and shared the ideas with the group. Those in attendance found it a very productive day.

October Meeting

We met on October 20, 2008. Father Bob Lacey offered Mass for us. He told us his vocation story. He is at present the associate at Sacred Heart in Yankton. We enjoyed his sense of humor as he told his story. He is from Dell Rapids, and there are five boys in his family. His Dad said it would be great if all of them became priests. Faith was an assumed foundation of his family's life. He said they went to Mass in spite of flood or blizzard. He said we need to pray for our families if we want good and holy vocations.

He served Mass and sang in the choir which helped him get through Mass. He was encouraged by his parish priest, Father Ken Koster. At 15 or 16 he went to a Project Andrew dinner and wondered what he had in common with those gray-haired priests and bishop. He wanted to be an electrical engineer. He went to the School of Mines and had lots of fun, girlfriends, and did most of the things all the college kids did. He enjoyed dirt bikes, motorcycles, and snowboards.

He was encouraged to go on a retreat, and went to a Youth 2000 retreat. They were told about vocations and careers. Marriage and career are usually different. For a priest, career and vocation are almost synonymous. During Eucharistic adoration, the priest carried the monstrance around in front of each person. He heard, "I'm calling you to a deeper devotion to me." He was upset at first, then glad, because God had a plan for him. He felt at peace at the seminary, and it's still there. He asked for prayers for himself and those who are discerning. He said, "Don't rule out the ruffians!"

We appreciated Father Bob taking the time to be with us, as he had a friend visiting that day. We held our business meeting after he left. We had committee reports and discussions. Doris Heine, membership chair, said she has plans for a coffee for a few couples from Saint Agnes to try to interest them in joining Serra. Mildred Cimpl had the new seminarian list, and we signed up for those we will pray for and contact. We also received the calendars with the names of seminarians, priests, deacons and wives, and religious sisters and brothers of our diocese. President Tim Tracy also provided us with the list of active members in our club and their contact information, and our schedule for the coming year. We will alternate meetings between Sacred Heart in Yankton and Saint Agnes in Vermillion.

Catholic Information

In addition to our Serra website, the internet has considerable information about our church available to those who have internet access at home or their public library. The Vatican website www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm has a wealth of

information. Another site is the information service of the Knights of Columbus, available at www.kofc.org/cis.

Membership

We continue to need new members, especially younger people. We must keep asking friends and fellow Catholics to consider becoming members.

One of the things we discussed at our planning session is seeing if we might have Confirmation students who could provide babysitting so young parents could consider joining without extra cost. If anyone knows students that would be reliable and willing to do this, please provide their names.

Priesthood Sunday

We tried in each of our parishes to have bulletin notices about priesthood Sunday. Some parishes had special activities for that weekend to honor their priests.

In Memoriam

We are sad to report the death of Dr. Gerald Tracy, a great advocate of Serra. He joined his heavenly family on December 2, 2008. His funeral was held December 9, 2008, at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Watertown. Survivors include his spouse Virginia, 8 children and spouses, 27 grandchildren, and 16 great grandchildren with 6 more currently on the way. Included in these numbers are several members of our club. Dr. Tracy helped our club to survive and grow, and we are thankful for the many things he did for us. We are confident that he will continue to be our advocate. We extend our prayers and our sympathy to his family.

A Prayer for Priests

O Jesus, I pray for Your faithful and fervent priests; for Your unfaithful and tepid priests; for Your priests laboring at home or abroad in distant mission fields; for Your tempted priests; for Your lonely and desolate priests; for Your young priests; for Your dying priests; for the souls of Your priests in purgatory. But above all I recommend to You the priests dearest to me; the priest who baptized me; the priests who absolved me from my sins; the priests at whose Masses I assisted and who gave me Your Body and Blood in Holy Communion; the priests who taught and instructed me; all the priests to whom I am indebted in any other way. O Jesus, keep them all close to Your heart, and bless them abundantly in time and in eternity. Amen.

Author unknown; taken from a calendar.