



The / SERRAN

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Serra Club of Lincoln
Volume 2023, Issue No. 2

S E C O N D Q U A R T E R

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Calendar of Events

April

- 7 First Friday – Good Friday No Meeting
- 21 Third Friday – Meeting at Madonna Lunch: 12 noon. Speaker-Essay Contest Winners

May

- 5 First Friday Meeting at Madonna and Lunch: Rosary 11:40 a.m.; Mass 12 noon
- 19 Third Friday Meeting at Madonna: 12 noon. Speaker- Fr Gary Coulter
- 26 Deacon Ordination at Cathedral: 7 pm Reception following Ceremony
- 27 Priest Ordination at Cathedral: 11:00 am Reception following Ceremony

June

- 2 First Friday Meeting at Madonna and Lunch: Rosary 11:40 a.m.; Mass 12 noon.
- 5 Golf Outing for Priest Appreciation at Hidden Valley
- 16 Third Friday Meeting at Madonna Lunch: 12 noon. Newly Ordained Priests

Letter from President Jim Wathen

Hello Fellow Serrans:

I hope all are getting through Lent with anticipation by now. The triduum and Easter are upon us. May you experience the fullness of the Easter celebration. Besides, Christ's great victory over sin and death, we get to experience all the new Catechumens and others converting to the Catholic faith.

We are excited to announce that our Serra website is LIVE! So, you can witness for yourself by logging on at Serracluboflincoln.org address. Mike Davis has worked well with our web designer, Christa Pichler, to make this happen. Let him know what you think. We feel the website will greatly improve advertising and, improve registration for the regional meeting. The theme will be "Fostering the Encounter" as has been announced. Please save the dates, Sept 8-10, 2023, for the Serra Regional conference. This will be a great opportunity to see how Serra works at another level and tap into the great program.

I hope all of you are glad to be Serrans and feel we are making a difference. In addition to the work we normally do for vocations, our website and articles in the Southern NE Register and other publicity helps to spread the word about who we are. We need these types of profile-raising activities; I am continually taken

aback at the people who have not heard about the Serra Club and our patron Saint Junipero Serra. Let's make more effort to let people know who we are and what we do.

I hope you have been able to read about Serrans helping the Epiphany House discernment program that is being sponsored by the School Sisters of Christ the King. Their innovative program is yielding new vocations, 2 CK postulants during the last year. The Serra Board feels this is fostering vocations when we can help this program financially. As my recent email described, Serrans are giving in other ways as well.

Recruitment is a priority this year! Our goal is fifteen (15) new members (10 under 35). Please make the effort to meet new members, and guests. Also, it is a good idea to invite guests to luncheon meetings to let them experience a Serra event. Let's make everyone feel welcome!

Ordinations are being planned as we will have three (3) new Deacons and five (5) new priests this May. Please be on the alert for notifications for the Vocation Holy Hour and prayer times leading up to those events. We will need help from Serrans with the receptions too!

I encourage all of you to pray daily for our seminarians, religious, priests, and those discerning a vocation. The Serran prayers are the PRAYER FOR PERSEVERANCE OF VOCATIONS and the SERRAN PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS. If you need copies of them, please let me know.

Finally, I want to encourage you to get involved in our Serran activities. We are always happy to see new members help with programs and join committees. Or, if you have been a member for a while and have seen a shift in your responsibilities at home and/or at work, maybe you should consider looking for more ways to be involved in the Serra club. Let me or one of the Board members know as our names and emails are available on the new website. I promise that when asked, we will help get you to understand the various opportunities and get plugged in. Thanks.

God bless each of you. Saint Junipero Serra, Pray for us.

Serra Club Donation

The Serra Club of Lincoln presented the School Sisters of Christ the King with a \$1,600 donation to help support the Epiphany House Program in Lincoln, which the Sisters offer for young women desiring to grow in their relationship with God in the context of community.



President Jim Wathen presents Mother Margaret Marie with a check.



Serra Club Donates a Chasuble to each of newly Ordained Priests.

Fr. XXXXXX

Congratulations on your ordination to the priesthood. We have enjoyed supporting you during your years in the seminary. As a token of our appreciation for you answering God's call, it is our privilege to pay for your diocesan chasuble.

Serra Club of Lincoln

Jim Wathen
President

Bill Graeve
VP of Vocations

Judy Vandenberg has made the chasubles for us for 16 years!



MEMORIES of 1st Quarter 2023

January 20, 2023

Sr. Amy Marie, Vocations Director for Marian Sisters



Sr. Amy Marie, Vocations Director for the Marian Sisters, gave her vocation story. She grew up on a farm near Dorchester and remembers the CK Sisters teaching CCD at Crete. She attended SHY Camp with the Marian Sisters at Camp Kateri and remembers the joy of the Marian Sisters finding this appealing. She started going to daily Mass the summer before her Junior year of High School. During Mass that summer she heard Jesus say to her “I am you for myself.” She went to college at UNL and got involved with the Newman Center.

Sr. Amy Marie then gave us the history of the Marians in Lincoln. They started with running the Orphanage. They now have 40 Marians and work in medical, social work and education.

She recruits for the Marian Sisters by visiting colleges, high schools, middle school and elementary schools. She said that wearing the Marian Sisters Habit is a hugely positive reaction!

When asked what the Serrans could do for the Marian Sisters, she was told “landscaping” in particular a retaining wall at the Mother House.

**Our New Website:
Serracluboflincoln.org**

February 17, 2023 Fr. Stephen Graeve on Becoming a Spiritual Director



Fr. Stephen Graeve explained the need for more priests trained in how to be a Spiritual Director. The propaedeutic stage at St Gregory the Great Seminary, will require more spiritual direction as a result.

The Institute for Priestly Formation was founded to assist bishops in the spiritual formation of diocesan seminarians and priests in the Roman Catholic Church.

The Institute responds to the need to foster spiritual formation as the integrating and governing principle of all aspects of priestly formation. Inspired by the biblical-evangelical spirituality of Ignatius Loyola, this spiritual formation has as its goal the cultivation of a deep interior communion with Christ; from such communion the priest shares in Christ’s own pastoral charity.

In carrying out its mission, the Institute directly serves diocesan seminarians and priests as well as those who are responsible for diocesan priestly formation.

Each summer the Institute, in collaboration with Creighton University, conducts a residential summer program for diocesan seminarians and/or priests.

Program Goals

1. To demonstrate a knowledge and practical application of Ignatian discernment of spirits.
2. To identify the connection between human development and Christian spiritual development with a particular focus on sexuality.
3. To distinguish the unique characteristics of diocesan priestly ministry
4. To explain the relationship of personal and liturgical prayer.

March 17, 2023 Scott Williamson, Gift Director of Madonna Foundation

Scott Williamson has been a Gift Director for a year. He gave an overview of the renovation of Madonna. The old 59 hospital rooms were small and needed to be brought up to date with the need for larger rooms because of patients using motorized wheel chairs and the old rooms did not have showers.

The old hospital rooms will be remodeled to be apartments for families to stay while their loved ones are in the new hospital.

The kitchen and cafeteria were moved to under the new hospital. Scott gave a tour of the new hospital after the meeting.



March 10-12, 2023 Discernment Retreat



54 young men, 25 from the Lincoln Diocese and 29 from other Dioceses, who are considering a priestly vocation visited the seminary. Bishop Conley spoke the group on March 10. This retreat, which began on Friday and ended on Sunday, gave young men who are high school juniors and seniors, as well as college students and recent graduates, a chance to spend time with priests and seminarians at St. Gregory the Great.

March 26, 2023 Table of St Gregory

A record of 200 attended this now an annual event. This event was started 5 years ago and its purpose is raise funds for projects, like a new gym.



Bishop Conley said that is very proud of the priests who received their college seminary years at SGG! At the US Bishops Conference in Baltimore, talked with 25 Bishops about sending their seminarians to St Gregory the Great. This year SGG celebrates 25 years!

Save the Dates:

- **June 5**
**Priests Appreciation
Golf Outing and Dinner
At Hidden Valley**
- **September 8-10**
**Serra Central Region
Conference in Lincoln**
- **October 8**
**Sister's Appreciation
Dinner served by
Serrans at North
American Martyrs**

GETTING TO KNOW THE SEMINARIANS - IN THEIR OWN WORDS

SEMINARIAN SPOTLIGHT

Derreck Sumner
College 2 – SGG
St John - Lincoln

Parents- My parents are Dominic and Anne Sumner.

Growing up- I loved sports and was in a sport practically each season. Summer was for baseball, fall was for cross country, winter was for basketball, spring was for track and getting ready for baseball in the summer. Baseball was my favorite sport by far, and everything I did was for baseball. I also was interested in my faith and that passion ran alongside the passion for baseball. I also have one brother a few years younger.

Altar boy- This passion for the faith led me to want to be the best altar boy I could be. I could not wait until we were trained, two years from then! When I finally was trained in fourth grade, I could not have been more excited! Every time my family would go to Mass, I would see if I could serve. When I was up on the altar, I felt so much closer, so much more involved, with the Sacrifice of the Mass that was going on around and through me.

Leadership Camp- I was generously offered the opportunity to attend leadership camp but unfortunately was never able to attend.

When did I start- Fall of 2022, after studying two semesters at UNL.

Biggest adjustment- The biggest adjustment in my life, I would say, was going from always having baseball in my life to not having it. This came in the fall of my freshman year of high school. As I mentioned baseball was my passion in life and everything I did was done for baseball. All of my time was spent surrounding baseball, whether that was in practice or weightlifting, or pre-season, or in a game. I injured my shoulder (tearing my labrum) and it put an end to my baseball dreams. I now had a plethora of time on my hands that I didn't know what to do with. And so, I dedicated this newly found free time to growing in my relationship with God through Mass, prayer, and the sacraments, which through a series of events has led me to the seminary!

My greatest blessing God has given me- The greatest blessing that God has given me is quite simply Himself. Especially in the Eucharist. If He had never given me Himself, nothing else would matter or even exist.

Influences- I have had countless influences throughout my life, from coaches, to teammates, to classmates, to teachers, to coworkers, to strangers, to friends, and everywhere in between. I am grateful for all of those influences and interactions but I believe that those who have influenced me the most, and for which I am most grateful have been my family, and close friends, and, leading into the next point, my guardian angel, Mother Mary, Jesus, and the saints, specifically St. Francis, St. Joseph, Pope John Paul II, and Padre Pio!

Favorite saint- I absolutely love all of the saints as they each bring something so vastly different to the human experience, but if I had to pick only one, as I do, my favorite would be Saint Francis of Assisi. He has always caused me to wonder. I find his radical way of life, and conversion, his radical love for God very attractive and I have tried to emulate him as much as I can. I especially like to (try to) emulate his total and unreserved dependence on God for "his daily bread."

Divine Office- Before entering the seminary, I did not like the Divine Office. It was very complicated, confusing to follow, and simply an inconvenience. One Hail Mary, one Glory Be, and One Our Father, if I was awake, was good enough for me before going to bed. But then one day I found, or rather it found me, an audio version of night prayer and I started listening to it. It was beautiful! Each time I would listen to it I would fall asleep immediately and sleep very well all night. I got to the point where I could not sleep without it! Then when I entered the seminary and started praying it three times a day with my brother seminarians, I have absolutely fallen in love with it!! It is one of the highlights of my day. No matter what the day is like, I have the Office as a constant in my ever-busy life. It, along with Jesus of course, is my spiritual anchor; I always have the Office to go back to, to fall on regardless!

Outside of Class- Outside of class, I love to walk around the grounds here at the seminary. It is such a serene and refreshing environment filled with silence, which allows for the perfect place for personal reflection and discernment. It allows me to reconnect with God the Creator and His gift of nature. I also enjoy my prayer time, especially when I am alone in the silence of the chapel. There is nothing like it! When I can, I try to visit family or friends as well.

Advice- In an attempt to be as general as possible, if you can allow yourself to be pursued by the Lord Jesus, and to fall in love with him more and more, all desires become one, and that one desire is to be with Him forever. And, as when Peter kept his gaze on Jesus, so too can we walk on the waters of life. We can have true peace in the midst of the storm.

Serra Club- I have just become introduced to the organization this year and I am incredibly humbled to have such support from such amazing people! To know that we have people praying for us, and supporting us monetarily, is an incredible consolation and allows us to focus on our discernment of the priesthood without having to worry as much about temporal matters. The prayers give us the strength to continue when times get difficult and the grace to be thankful when times are easy.

GETTING TO KNOW THE SEMINARIANS - IN THEIR OWN WORDS

SEMINARIAN SPOTLIGHT Colter Fulton College 2 – SGG St Mary, Nebraska City

Parents- Terry and Melisa Fulton

Growing up- My family lived on a farm just outside of Auburn, NE until I was in 5th grade, and then we moved to Nebraska City. I attended Lourdes Central Catholic from 4th grade all the way through high school, and my parish is St. Mary's in Nebraska City. I have seven siblings, all of whom have played a big role in my life.

Altar boy- I started altar serving when I was in 3rd grade, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Auburn, NE. I continued to serve all the way through high school while attending Lourdes, and then became an altar server at the JPII Newman Center in Omaha, before coming to St. Gregory's.

Leadership Camp- I never attended leadership camp, and I wasn't even familiar with it until I was already in college. But I have heard great things about it!

When did I start- I entered seminary this past fall (August 2022) after spending 3 years studying at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Biggest adjustment- Seminary life definitely runs at a different pace than college life. In college, I

found myself very busy between part-time jobs, classes, studying, Mass, prayer, Newman Center involvement, Bible studies, other organizations, and, not to mention, trying to keep up some semblance of a social life and sleeping. St. Greg's is much less busy, especially this first year, and that is intentional. Sometimes, in the midst of busyness, I would become so distracted from God and find it hard to hear his voice or find his peace. So, in seminary, there is a deliberate attempt to strip away some of those distractions and free the seminarian up to pray, think, be in silence, study, and listen to God's voice. So, although it has been a good adjustment, it was difficult nonetheless. It is very easy to get sucked into a "work-a-holic" mentality, and to start feeling like I need to be "productive," which is usually just busyness and not productivity anyway. It has been a great opportunity to surrender those parts of my heart over to the Lord, and to rely on his comfort and his peace, rather than those of the world.

My greatest blessing God has given me- Definitely the friendships and relationships that I have been blessed to develop over my lifetime. I have found such great joy in getting to walk alongside people who not only love and care for me but let me love and care for them as well. On top of that, many of my best relationships are centered on Christ, and it is so beautiful to have the experience of journeying alongside someone in the spiritual journey.

Influences- There is no way that I could come up with an exhaustive list, because I have been blessed with so many. My family has definitely been one of the biggest influences in my life, both in my journey to seminary and my journey as a young Catholic man. I also had many teachers and coaches throughout my academic career, both in high school, and college, that have helped to teach me invaluable lessons and encourage me. I have many, many friends that I made at UNO, specifically through the Newman Center, that have encouraged and influenced me in ways that I can't even begin to describe. Of course, there have been many priests who have influenced me as well, in recent years Fr. Jim Morin, Fr. Taylor Leffler, Fr. Ryan Kaup, Fr. Andrew Roza, Fr. Tom Schultes, Fr. Matthew Rolling, Fr. Brian Kane, and many, many more, who have really walked with me in different ways

as I prepared to enter into seminary, and in the years leading up to that decision.

Favorite saint- St. John the Baptist is my confirmation/patron saint, and I have always felt a special relationship with him. Plus, when I was younger, I thought it was pretty cool that he wore camel's hair and ate locusts and wild honey. (And, to be honest, I still think it's pretty cool).

Divine Office- Before coming to seminary, I really only prayed night prayer on a regular basis, and even then I did not pray it every day. It has been good getting accustomed to praying the Liturgy of the Hours every day (at least morning, evening, and night prayer), especially in community!

Outside of Class- Outside of class I spend a lot of my time reading. I feel like I am making up for lost, seeing that I despised reading from about middle school until my senior year of high school. It has been a huge blessing. I also spend a lot of time in prayer, hanging out with my seminarian bothers, playing basketball, talking, getting ice cream, etc.

Advice- Begin to spend time in silent, meditative prayer every day (20 minutes, an hour, whatever you can manage). The Christian life is about a relationship with God, one in which we spend time with him in the Blessed Sacrament, in his Word, and in our own minds. It is the conversation, the back and forth between lover and beloved, that is developed as we spend more and more time listening to his voice, and revealing to him what is in our hearts.

Serra Club- Praise God for the Serra Club! I have felt very honored and blessed to know that seminarians like me have people, a whole organization, devoted to praying for us, sponsoring us, and helping to foster more vocations. It truly is a blessing, and I am very thankful for their work and support.

GETTING TO KNOW THE SEMINARIANS - IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Nicholas Hanus **College 1 - SGG**

Parents- My parents are Bill and Cynthia Hanus. My dad is from Bellwood, Nebraska and my mom is from Riverdale, Nebraska.

Growing up- I grew up on an acreage fifteen minutes east of Lincoln, then moved into town as an eighth grader. I attended St. Joseph Catholic School and Pius X High School. I am the middle of seven children.

Altar boy- I became an altar boy in fourth grade and continued until my freshman year of high school. As a college student, I occasionally had to dust off the old cassock and lend a hand serving as well.

Leadership Camp- I attended Leadership Camp for four years as a camper, and another four years as a counselor. The first time I considered the priesthood was as a camper. When I was a counselor, the reverence of the campers was extremely powerful for me to witness. Leadership Camp has been instrumental to my faith.

When did I start- I started at St. Greg's this year. I had spent the previous three years completing a little bit of college education and working as an independent contractor.

Biggest adjustment- The biggest adjustment to life in the seminary has been living in community. I value alone time, but I also have found it extremely beneficial to lean on my fellow seminarians. I'm still working on finding the correct balance.

My greatest blessing God has given me- The greatest blessing God has given me is purpose. While in college I had no direction, but good community and the sacraments have given me the most worthwhile thing I could do with my life. My purpose has been greatly influenced by all of the good people God placed in my life.

Influences- I have been influenced by my family, friends, and past experiences. St. Joseph has also been hugely important in my life.

Favorite saint- My favorite saint is St. Joseph, who was a large part of my ending up a seminarian.

Divine Office- Even after one semester at the seminary I am still adjusting to praying the Divine Office. I love that it provides a beautiful structure to pray daily, and it is a great way to pray in community.

Outside of Class- If I'm not in class, I enjoy reading, drawing, and writing. I am an avid outdoorsman, typically hunting, fishing, camping, or bowfishing.

Advice- I think the best advice I have is to be curious and give of yourself to others. Genuine curiosity can bring relationships, prayer, and learning to new heights. I've learned that by giving to others my interior is at peace.

Serra Club- I am so grateful for all the prayers and support of the Serra Club. I truly cannot even fathom how instrumental your prayers have been in my vocation thus far. Your donations have removed a lot of the burden that finances can bring. Thank you Serra Club!

SERRAN PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

O God, Who wills not the death of a sinner but rather that he be converted and live, grant we beseech you, through the intercession of the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, Saint Joseph, her spouse, Saint Junipero Serra, and all the saints, an increase of laborers for your Church, fellow laborers with Christ to spend and consume themselves for souls through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen



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