



The Serra Club of Johnson County
Region 9 District 12-2 Central Club

September 2022
Volume 3, Issue 9

www.jocoserra.org

Serran Sphere

SERRA AND FOCUS:

A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN!

Part III of our series on the mission similarities of Serra and FOCUS. This month we hear from 10-year FOCUS missionary veteran and fellow Serran, JohnMarc Skoch, who writes about why Serra is the perfect sequel to FOCUS. MICHAEL SKOCH, MD

As newly-minted members of the Serra Club of Johnson County, my wife Kelsey and I are excited to support the crucial work of praying for and fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life. A current FOCUS missionary (my wife was one as well), I see the mission of Serra closely aligning with the mission of FOCUS: “to know Christ Jesus and fulfill His Great Commission.” Put even more simply, at the heart of the mission of FOCUS is the universal vocational call to holiness, just as it lies at the heart of Serra.



In last month’s issue of the **Serran Sphere**, my younger brother, Thomas, shared his story of coming to know Christ during his time in college at KU through our conversations. I remember being concerned for my brother and the activities about which he seemed passionate, because I knew that, unless he first knew Christ, ultimately nothing would satisfy him. Thomas’ story is one among thousands of stories of college students encountered by FOCUS missionaries on college campuses each year. A true encounter with Christ makes all the difference one’s pursuit of holiness.

The Serra mission involves the same effort in fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Holy families and holy communities provide an authentic witness of Christ’s love to all people and challenge others to give everything in their relationship with Jesus. I know the challenge of that witness well, being part of a team as a FOCUS missionary on campus, and I can see how it continues to play out through my family and in our membership in the Serra Club.

It can often be misunderstood that a call to the priesthood and/or religious life is only for “holy” people.” This cannot be further from the truth. God first calls each of us to be holy and to give him everything, whatever our state of life. If that leads to priesthood or religious life, then praise God. If it leads to marriage and family life, then . . . praise God!



JohnMarc and Kelsey Skoch, members of the Serra Club of Johnson County, pictured with their children, Sophia (held by Kelsey), Eleanora, Arimathea, and James Michael (3 weeks old, held by JohnMarc). JohnMarc is a 10 year FOCUS veteran, currently a regional director covering college campuses in Kansas. Kelsey retired from FOCUS in 2018.

See FOCUS p. 5



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MEETING/EVENT DATES:

- **9/1/2022—6:30 PM,** General Membership Meeting—**Cure of Ars**
- **9/19/2022—10:30 AM,** C.O.R.E. Golf Event—Nicklaus Golf Club at Lionsgate
- **9/20/2022—6:45 AM,** Faith in Life and the Workplace—Church of the Nativity
- **9/25/2022—**Priesthood Sunday
- **9/26/2022—7:00 PM** JOCO Serra Board Meeting

MEET A SEMINARIAN

Jonathan Fox was a junior in college when he first recognized God's call to consider a vocation as a priest. "I had just transferred to Pittsburg State University that year. I wandered into the Catholic Student Center (CSC) to print off a term paper I had to turn in," he said. "I was blown away by being immediately welcomed by a student in the CSC who happened to see me enter and noticed I looked lost," he added, noting also that, "she genuinely wanted to know how I was really doing and how she could help. Ultimately, she invited me to return for a meal and a talk being given by the chaplain that evening."



Admitting his sole motivation was the free food and the cute girl, he attended the talk, "which became my first exposure to the theology of the body," Fox attested. Enamored by how much sense the topic made, he asked the chaplain, Fr. Adam Keiter, if he could follow up with him one-on-one with some questions. These meetings eventually transitioned into spiritual direction. "Fr. Keiter dispelled many lies and excuses I had told myself for why I blindly assumed my calling was to the married life," Jonathan observed. Excuses included, "I'm not good enough to be a priest," "my past sins are too awful," and "I don't pray enough," among others.

The local parish in Pittsburg has a perpetual Adoration chapel and needed adorers for the wee hours of the morning. Wanting to have more dedicated time for prayer, Jonathan began filling a 3 AM slot on Saturday mornings. "I fell in love with the absolute silence and intimate time with the Lord," he related. "The silence allowed me to hear God's voice telling me that He wanted me to go to seminary." Fox finished his senior year and started seminary the next fall.

To those considering a vocation: "Get off the fence. Passive discernment can only reveal so much. Eventually you must actively discern. Get a date. Visit a convent. Check out a seminary. Do something!" And, a final note, "You cannot discern without prayer. Find some quiet time with God!" ~Jonathan Fox

Fox credits his encounter with his college chaplain, Fr. Adam Keiter, as the turning point for revitalizing his relationship with Christ. "I really see that, after veering off the right path in college and seeing the folly in that experience, I unconsciously began to pursue a path emulating my dad, instead of pursuing the empty pleasures of the world. My parents have a beautiful and vibrant witness of the married life and in spite of my most recalcitrant efforts, they instilled in me the value of self-sacrificial gift," Fox observed, adding, "I saw the joy of their life together even in the most simple, innocuous moments and desired that true joy also."

One of the first and most valuable lessons Fox learned in seminary early on was that there are many ways to pray and that personal prayer changes over time. Fox said he had to learn early on that his relationship with God isn't transactional, such as thinking, 'if I sit in chapel and pray then God will give me consolation.' His perspective is that one's relationship with God is not limited to one's emotions; one can give Him one's intellect and free will also.

For Fox, among the most impactful of seminary experiences is the exceptional brotherhood that develops between seminarians. Surrounded by a wide variety of backgrounds and skill sets, all pointed to a singular mission of discernment together, the unique bonds are incredibly life changing. Fox concludes that this brotherhood continuously holds brothers up as seminarians walk this leg of the journey to eternity together.

Jonathan's folks, Danny and Beth Fox, are retired. They owned and operated Lawrence Automotive Diagnostics which they opened in 1994. The business has now been acquired by Jonathan's older brother, Justin. He is married to Melissa and has three sons, Landon, Julian, and Arnold. His younger brother, Drew, is married to Kirsten, who teaches at St. John's Catholic School in Lawrence while Drew is an IT security technician. His youngest brother, Blake, lives in Lawrence and works with Justin in the family business.

Fox graduated from Lawrence High School in 2008 and started college at Wichita State studying aerospace engineering. His collegiate experience took him to Johnson County Community College and, ultimately to Pittsburgh State, where he finished a business degree. He then did two years of pre-theology studies at Conception Seminary College and finished one year of theology at Kenrick School of Theology before leaving seminary studies, suffering the burn-out that sometimes accompanies academic studies. He spent almost four years discerning outside seminary, with a good amount of that time spent as a Catholic campus minister at Missouri State University.

To young people contemplating a religious vocation, Fox provides this bit of wisdom: "Get off the fence. Passive discernment can only reveal so much. Eventually you must actively discern. Get a date. Visit a convent. Check out a seminary. Do something!" And, a final note, "You cannot discern without prayer. Find some quiet time with God!"

Seminarian Send-off a great success!



SEMINARIAN BIRTHDAYS

September/October

Landry Weber Sept 19

Bob Rooney Sept 28

Michael Santamarina . . Oct 6

Keegan Colburn Oct 13

Will Sutherland Oct 20

Mark your calendar with Seminarian Birthdays and pray for the seminarian's intention.

Photos: above, left, the congregation participating at Mass at Holy Spirit; above, left center, Msgr. Michael Mullen, who recently celebrated 60 years of priesthood, receiving the Blessed Sacrament; above, right center, Archbishop Naumann conferring the ministry of Acolyte upon seminarian, Benjamin Reinhardt; above, right, Archbishop Naumann conferring the ministry of Lector upon seminarian, Brian Jacobsen; below, right, the crowd enjoying dinner at the Holy Spirit School gymnasium.

The annual Seminarian Send-off occurred Wednesday, August 10, at Holy Spirit Church. Archbishop Naumann celebrated Mass for a crowd estimated at about 120 people. Sponsored by the archdiocesan Serra Clubs, the event acknowledges the gift of vocations and the response of the young men to discern God's call.

In his homily at Mass, the Archbishop spoke of his desire, indeed every bishop's desire, to ordain every seminarian. Yet he poignantly reminded the congregation of a more important perspective: his prayer that seminarians will know God's will and follow it. He encouraged all to adopt that perspective.

The Archbishop also identified the opportunity and the need for courageous priests and laity in the wake of the failure of the Value Them Both amendment initiative. The need for courageous, sacrificial love is greater than ever.

Pray for our seminarians as they begin a new academic year. May they know God's will in all things.



**Serra Club Picnic!
Saturday, September 17**

Hosted by Don and Janice Arth

**At the Arth Farm
Sedalia, MO**

**(about 1 hour, 45 min east of
Overland Park)**

**See website calendar for de-
tails and to register!**

BBQ dinner at 4:00 PM

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**SERRA CLUB
OF JOHNSON COUNTY**

**2022-23
Officers**

President
John Weber

President Elect
Dale Romme

**Immediate Past
President**
Doug Leibbrandt

Secretary
Judy Rielley

Treasurer
Chuck Lillis

Vice Presidents

Vocations

Membership
Joane Wilkerson

Programs
Larry Ryan

Communications
Michael Skoch

Trustees
Len Chmelka
Ray Zielinski
George Len

District Governor
John Caton

Date	Agenda	Location
September 1 Thursday	JOCO Serra General Membership Monthly Meeting 6:30 PM	Cure of Ars Church Leawood, KS
September 1 Thursday	Wyandotte Pregnancy Center Life and Hope Banquet 6:00 PM	Overland Park Convention Center 6000 College Blvd Overland Park, KS
September 2 Friday	First Friday Holy Hour For Vocations 11:00 AM	Holy Spirit Church Overland Park, KS
September 6 Tuesday	First Tuesday Holy Hour For Vocations 6:00 PM	Curé of Ars Church Leawood, KS
September 8 Thursday	Thursday Evening Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	See the website calendar for on-line link
September 15 Thursday	Thursday Evening Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	See the website calendar for on-line link
September 17 Saturday	Serra End-of-Summer Picnic 12 pm—6 pm	The Arth Farm Hosted by Janice and Don Arth Sedalia, MO (see website calendar)
September 19 Monday	Celebrate Our Religious Enthusi- astically (C.O.R.E.) Golf Event 10:30 AM	Nicklaus Golf Club at Lionsgate See website calendar for details
September 20 Tuesday	Faith in Life and the Workplace Presentation 0645 AM	Church of the Nativity See website calendar for details
September 22 Thursday	Thursday Evening Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	See the website calendar for on-line link
September 25 Sunday	Priesthood Sunday	See website calendar for details
September 26 Monday	JOCO Serra Board Meeting 7:00 PM	St. Isidore Room Holy Spirit Church
September 29 Thursday	Thursday Evening Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	See the website calendar for on-line link

Sunday, September 25

Priesthood Sunday

*Remember your parish priest
with a card and a prayer or a
spiritual bouquet!*

***Check the website for
details!***

FOCUS, continued from p. 1

As a FOCUS missionary, this is what I desire for every person I meet: a deep encounter with Jesus that leads to a whole-hearted “yes” in giving Him everything! As a Serran, the desire is the same for the community of Serrans, as well as for those young men and women for whom we pray: that all will know Jesus deeply and give everything to Him!

*Kelsey and I, and our family, are thrilled to be continuing the mission of knowing Christ Jesus and fulfilling His Great Commission by being part of the Serra Club. We hope to get to know our fellow Serrans and we pray that all will know the Lord deeply, because **that** makes all the difference!*

JOHNMARC SKOCH, FOCUS

Religious Sisters Appreciation Day

On Sunday, August 28, 2022, a crowd of more than 225 gathered to celebrate the religious sisters in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas and the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, MO. With over 100 sisters from area religious orders, priests, and Serrans from the greater Kansas City area, the afternoon was spent in conversation, playing bingo, and honoring the sisters and their work. Prayer preceded the late afternoon meal, along with a reflection by Archbishop Naumann. The group enjoyed Jack Stack BBQ for dinner, and festivities concluded with recitation of the Prayer for the Perseverance of Vocations, and the singing of the Salve Regina together.

Many thanks to generous benefactors and terrific volunteers who helped make this event possible, and a shout-out to Fritz Vertz and Gene Schreiner of the Serra Club of KCK for their leadership in organizing the Religious Sisters Appreciation Day.



Religious Sisters Appreciation Day (continued)

Photos, previous page, clockwise from upper left corner:

- Upper left corner, Archbishop Naumann addresses the crowd before dinner
- Top center, a photo of the crowd
- Upper right corner, Sister Marie Kathleen Daugherty, CSL, flashes her second winning bingo card!
- Right center, newest grandson, James Michael Joseph Skoch, born 8/10/2022, to Serrans, JohnMarc and Kelsey Skoch; James Michael will be baptized on September 5, 2022, by his uncle, Deacon Tim Skoch, on 9/5/2022 at St. Michael the Archangel Church
- Lower right corner, JOCO Serrans enjoying the company of two of the Sisters of Jesus in the Lord from Kansas City, MO
- Lower left corner, a group of Benedictine Sisters from Mount Saint Scholastica in Atchison, KS
- Left center, a group of Servants of Mary, from Kansas City, KS, studying their bingo cards

Center photos:

- Upper center— a group of Franciscan Sisters of the Martyr St. George, from Alton, IL, serving in the Kansas City area
- Lower center—Benedictine Sister Micaela Randolph, OSB, of Mount Saint Scholastica in Atchison, KS, pictured with yours truly. A total surprise, I'm working the crowd getting some photos, and I hear, "Mike!" I turn to my right and . . . Boom! Sister Micaela taught me in the 2nd grade in St. Mary's Grade School, St. Benedict, Kansas. I hadn't seen her in more than 10 years. Sister Micaela also taught me my first piano lesson and forever changed the course of my life. This was truly for me a blessed encounter!

Serra End-of-Summer Picnic (is back!)

Saturday, September 17, 2022
12:00 pm—6 pm

Hosted by Janice and Don Arth
At the Arth Farm

33848 Dilthy Road
Sedalia, MO 65301

About 1 hour, 45 minutes east/southeast of Overland Park

the Arth Farm is the perfect location for our late-summer Serra Club Picnic!
Bring the whole family!

Please RSVP by September 14th
to Janice Arth - 913-515-3975
or by email: donaldarth@att.net

OR - go to the JOCO Serra Website calendar
and register online! We will let the Arths
know you're coming!

The website also has directions to the Arth Farm, and other details about fun activities available for the family. Everyone is asked to bring a side dish or a dessert. BBQ & chicken dinner will be provided!

