



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

January 2023
Volume 4, Issue 1

www.jocoserra.org

Serran Sphere

MSGR. VINCE KRISCHE: A VOCATION THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

I had the privilege of participating in an event on September 30, 2022. A text invitation from my friend, David Trotter, Director of Philanthropy at FOCUS, asked me to attend a gathering at the Lawrence, KS, home of Msgr. Vince Krische on the occasion of the presentation of an award to Msgr. Krische by the Catholic Campus Ministry Association, recognizing Msgr. Krische's contribution to Catholic campus ministry. I wondered why I had been asked to attend. Then—"Father Vince," as everyone knew him, arrived at the St. Lawrence Center in 1977, the year I departed KU as an undergrad for an academic year abroad in Scotland. While I knew of Father Vince, I never really knew Father Vince.

My knowledge deficit was quickly filled. In a brief 90 minutes (or so) I came to know now-Msgr. Vince Krische and the beautiful priestly vocation he has lived for more than 50 years. The gift of the September early afternoon encounter became entirely mine to unpack.

The group surprised Msgr. Krische at its arrival. "I'm not dressed for guests," he acknowledged with a smile and an invitation to come into his home.

Several folks—it was obvious that each was special in an individual way to Msgr. Krische—were present for the occasion. Among them was Archbishop Joseph Naumann. Another was Dr. Michael St. Pierre, Executive Director of the Catholic Campus Ministry Association, an organization itself initiated with Msgr. Krische's influence.

At the outset, Msgr. Krische addressed a request from one of the group members to describe his arrival to the St. Lawrence Center.

"It was 1977 and I was at Washburn," he began. "Things were good there," he continued, adding, "and then the Archbishop (Strecker) called and said, 'I want you to go to KU.'" At this, Msgr. Krische wrinkled his brow and his face looked as though he might have caught an odor of sulfur. "That's too big of a place for me," he replied to the Archbishop, politely declining the request.

A week later, the Archbishop called again. This time he said simply, "Bishop, I don't think I can do that." Then Msgr. Krische added insightfully, "You know, a real person of God can see beyond, can see what you sometimes don't see," implying that, over time, he realized fully the reasons behind the Archbishop's repeated request. Msgr. Krische's emotion surfaced in his countenance.

"So you told him no twice, is that what you're telling us?" someone in the group chided. He laughed.

A third phone call eventually came and, once again, Msgr. Krische declined. "Bishop, I just can't do this." At this point in his story, Msgr. Krische cracked a smile and said, "He (Archbishop Strecker) said, 'Well, let me tell you this. You're going!'" Laughter all around. Krische's emotion was evident again in his face. He was visibly self-conscious of this.

See Krische p. 3



Msgr. Vince Krische receiving an award from CCMA, pictured with Archbishop Joseph Naumann (L) and Dr. Michael St. Pierre, Executive Director, CCMA



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Meet a Seminarian..... 2
- Great Chili Cook-off..... 3
- Calendar of Events 4

MEETING/EVENT DATES:

- **1/3/2023—6:00 PM,**
First Tuesday Holy Hour for Vocations—**Curé of Ars**
- **1/5/2023—6:30 PM,**
General Membership Meeting/Great Chili Cook-off — **Curé of Ars**
- **1/6/2023—11:00 AM,**
First Friday Holy Hour—**Holy Spirit Church**
- **1/12/2023—7:30 PM,**
Thursday Rosary for Vocations—virtual/on-line
- **1/19/2023—7:30 PM,**
Thursday Rosary for Vocations—virtual/on-line
- **1/23/2023—7:00 PM,**
JOCO Serra Board Meeting, **Holy Spirit Church**

Meet Deacon Timothy Skoch



Transitional diaconate ordination, May 21, 2022

During my sophomore year of college at KU, I found myself in conversation with Fr. Scott Wallisch, the vocation director of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas at the time. Father Scott and I were discussing what gave me the greatest sense of purpose in life. He asked me to identify that about which I was most passionate. When I was honest with myself, I realized it was contemplating the life of St. Philip Neri.

I first discovered the life of Saint Philip Neri during my freshman year at KU. My encounter with him happened when Sr. Clara, from the Apostles of the Interior Life, one day handed me the movie, "I Prefer Heaven," in passing at the St. Lawrence Catholic Center. In the movie, I observed Neri's character to be full of goodness and, despite a couple powerful yet slightly cinematized miracles, I saw that he lived a simple life. I found myself wanting to emulate him. In retrospect, it comes as a bit of a surprise to admit that, as I became more and more attracted to the simple life of Saint Philip Neri, I was, not coincidentally, in my first season as a student manager for the KU Men's Basketball Team, essentially living out what had been a dream of mine since middle school. Life was really anything but simple!

My conversation with Fr. Scott about a sense of purpose pierced my heart and, by God's grace, I allowed God to begin speaking into my situation at KU toward the end of that first basketball season. I began the application process to the seminary after attending the 2014 FOCUS Leadership Conference in Dallas, Texas. Little did I know that, for all that the process involved, it permitted me to think deeply regarding my vocation. Furthermore, stepping into it actually helped me realize that this was not the right time to pursue a vocation. I realized I had been awarded this opportunity by KU Athletics, the dream of hundreds of kids in their youth (mine, too!) and now I found myself thinking about a vocation to the priesthood? Perhaps not! At least, not now!

This was not a surprise to my mother. When I told the family about my consideration, she thought my choice seemed a little impulsive. I was relieved at Fr. Scott's support of my decision to hold off my application to seminary and his affirmation of my goal to complete my time at KU. For the time being, my focus returned to finishing strong in my last two years at KU, and fulfilling the student manager role to the best of my ability. In retrospect, I believe it

*"Lord Jesus Christ, please set me free to be who you want me to be. Please set me free to belong only to You."
~Deacon Timothy Skoch*

was a good decision.

Over time, I realized also many important blessings of the decision to hold fast, not the least of which are many priceless memories and forged friendships - both in athletics and beyond.

When I graduated from KU, I hugged my mom and told her that I was now free to go live my life for Jesus.

The first years of the seminary journey were foundational - and here I give many thanks to close seminary brothers and my spiritual director, with whom I was able to process my life journey. Relating my experiences to Scripture, I can say I wanted His words to His disciples "Follow me" to apply to my life. The seminary path, which promotes the sacramental life and the silence one needs to follow Jesus intimately, can feel like a big and scary step to a young Catholic man. However, at every opportunity, God has been very present to me over the years.

During the required 30-day silent retreat at the conclusion of the first year, my spiritual director encouraged me to pray, "Lord Jesus Christ, please set me free to be who you want me to be. Please set me free to belong only to You." I prayed this with much fervor, leading me to experience a great sense of freedom and true spiritual poverty. My desire to make a choice out of love for God and neighbor grew. I continued the journey in making a simple return to seminary at the start of the second year, to begin philosophy studies. The two years of philosophy were my favorite of seminary.



A photo of my mom and me at KU Basketball Senior Day in March 2016. Graduating student managers were honored along with KU basketball seniors.

See Skoch, p. 5



PLAN NOW TO BE AT THE JANUARY SERRA CLUB
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
AT CURÉ OF ARS
6:30 PM THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2023

*Calling all expert (and novice) chili-makers!
Compete for prizes and help raise \$\$ for vocations!*

*Bring your best pot of chili (and your friends!)
We will share chili and fellowship while we support vocations!*

Krische, cont. from p. 1

"I think when you get to be in my situation, you weep a lot! That's because you have so many wonderful memories!" Msgr. Krische declared in an effort to explain himself, despite the reality that explanation was not necessary. His humility was undeniable.

Group consensus was that the St. Lawrence Center became a great model for other Catholic campus ministries. While Msgr. Krische led the Center's development process, he offered a humble response to this recognition: "I was just an instrument." "Instead of becoming just a campus ministry, we became a Catholic ministry in higher education," Krische observed.

SEMINARIAN BIRTHDAYS
December/January
Will Carey Jan 28

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

Msgr. Krische quoted John Henry Cardinal Newman, who said, "Any university that does not have a theology faculty is not worthy of the name, 'university.'" It was apparent that John Henry Cardinal Newman deeply influenced in Msgr. Krische's vocation. "He (Newman) went back to the source," Krische added in direct reference to Newman's conversion from the Anglican Church to Catholicism. Newman also said, "To live is to change, and to change often is to become more perfect." Msgr. Krische is a living example of this truth.

Msgr. Krische has touched hundreds if not thousands of lives through his priestly vocation during his time at the KU St. Lawrence Center. Several in the group attested to his influence in their lives through his zeal for the faith, his ministry in the liturgy and the Sacraments, and his ability to meet people on their turf. Marriages, religious and priestly vocations, baptisms, and confirmations—many such blessings happened during his tenure.

REMINDER:

**General
Membership
Meeting**

**Thursday, Jan 5, 2023
6:30 PM**

**CURE of ARS
CHURCH**

The Great Chili Cook-Off!

Msgr. Krische pulled out a card with a quote from Jean-Baptiste Henri Lacordaire, OP, entitled, "Thou Art a Priest Forever," acknowledging, "I want to have this quote used on a prayer card at my funeral."

To live in the midst of the world with no desire for its pleasures; to be a member of every family, yet belonging to none; to share all sufferings; to penetrate all secrets, to heal all wounds; to daily go from men to God to offer Him their homage and petitions; to return from God to men to bring them His pardon and hope; to have a heart of fire for charity and a heart of bronze for chastity; to bless and to be blest forever.

O God, what a life, and it is yours, O Priest of Jesus Christ! Amen.

As I acknowledged at the outset, though I initially had no idea why I'd been invited, the gift of the day—Msgr. Krische's priestly vocation story—was entirely mine to unpack. With gratitude, I count mine among the lives God has touched on this earth through Msgr. Krische!

Let us pray for Msgr. Krische and for all our retired priests!

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
Thomas and Nicole Skoch

Membership
Joane Wilkerson

Programs
Larry Ryan

Communications
Michael Skoch

Trustees
Len Chmelka
Ray Zielinski
George Len

District Governor
John Caton

Date	Agenda	Location
January 2-6 Mon/Fri	FOCUS/SEEK23	St. Louis, MO
January 3 Tuesday	First Tuesday Holy Hour for Vocations 6:00 PM	Curé of Ars Church Leawood, KS
January 5 Thursday	JOCO Serra General Membership Meeting Great Chili Cook-Off 6:30 PM	Curé of Ars Church Leawood, KS
January 6	First Friday Holy Hour for Vocations 11:00 AM	Holy Spirit Church Overland Park, KS
January 12 Thursday	Thursday Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Virtual See website calendar for details
January 19 Thursday	Thursday Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Virtual See website calendar for details
January 23 Monday	JOCO Serra Board Meeting 7:00 PM	Holy Spirit Church Overland Park, KS
January 26 Thursday	Thursday Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Virtual See website calendar for details
February 2 Thursday	JOCO Serra General Membership Meeting New Member Initiation 6:00 PM	Curé of Ars Church Leawood, KS
February 3	First Friday Holy Hour for Vocations 11:00 AM	Holy Spirit Church Overland Park, KS
February 7 Tuesday	First Tuesday Holy Hour for Vocations 6:00 PM	Curé of Ars Church Leawood, KS
February 9 Thursday	Thursday Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Virtual See website calendar for details

Don't forget!
***GREAT CHILI COOK-
OFF***
Thursday
January 5, 2023

SERRA RALLY – JANUARY 12-15, 2023, Irving, TX!

Make plans now to attend the annual Serra Rally, "Serra: now more than ever!"
Register here for the event or go to <https://serraus.org/serra-rally-2023/>

*Held at the Westin Irving Convention Center in Irving, TX, this year's event features Serra International Episcopal Adviser **Thomas Cardinal Collins**, Archbishop of Toronto, **Fr. Jorge Torres**, Executive Director, USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, the **Most Rev. Edward Burns**, Bishop, Diocese of Dallas, and **Dr. Jonathan Sanford**, President, University of Dallas.*



Skoch, continued from p. 2

I spent the summer of 2019 working with Prayer and Action, a mission program with the youth of our archdiocese, in Nemaha County. During that summer, Jesus revealed to me the richness of His plan for my life, which began long before I ever dreamed of becoming a manager for the men's basketball team at the University of Kansas. The Lord makes this known to the prophet Jeremiah when he says, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you" (Jeremiah 1:5). The fact is, God had my vocation in His mind from all eternity, and only when I opened my heart to receive it did I know.

Both my parents were raised in Nemaha County, KS, an area where I had never spent any time apart from brief visits to see grandparents when I was very young. My siblings and I were raised in Hastings, Nebraska. And the significance of this, you ask?

St. Mary's Church in St. Benedict, KS, is a national historical landmark. During that summer of 2019, I was blessed to live in the church rectory, a large, two-story brick edifice that could, I am certain, withstand any Kansas tornado. Next door to the parish rectory, I discovered that my great-grandparents Venzle and Rose (Haeefe) Skoch are buried in the parish cemetery, along with my great-great grandparents, Frank and Anna (Baštýř) Skoch. I learned also that Rose and her siblings, including her older brother, Fr. John Anthony Haeefe, grew up in nearby Seneca, KS. Father Haeefe was ordained a Catholic priest for the Diocese of Leavenworth on April 7th, 1907. There was a Haeefe sister, named Katherine, who became Sister Florina Haeefe, OSB, joining the Benedictine community at Mount Saint Scholastic in Atchison, KS, in 1907, just two months after her brother's ordination to the priesthood. Religious vocations were a part of my family history!



*Sanctuary of St. Mary's Church
St. Benedict, KS*

The revelations did not stop there. Only six miles down the road to the west, my grandparents Paul and Eleanor Skoch are buried in Sacred Heart Cemetery, Baileyville, KS. God was beginning to make things abundantly clear to me: this is my home. This is where I belong. These are my roots.

The Skochs were generations of farmers. The family farm is still in the hands of my uncle, and lays just four miles northwest of St. Mary's Church. I now understood more how the supernatural hand of God had been at work for decades in the Skoch family—planting, watering and altogether cultivating a vocation to the priesthood in a field for which it is worth selling everything. To be another man among the family generations to be called to the priesthood, let alone ordained a priest this May, leaves me awestruck, to say the least.

"Humble confidence" were the words my metaphysics professor used to describe a healthy vocation; I beg God for the gift of humble confidence as the May ordination to the priesthood swiftly approaches.

Ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus!

*The annual **QUO VADIS** DISCERNMENT WEEKEND EXPERIENCE for high school age men of the Archdiocese was, by all indications, a huge success! **Fifty five (!)** high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors, young men from around archdiocese, attended the weekend experience. Once again, "the world's greatest snack table" was a hit with the men. Many thanks to Joane Wilkerson, VP Membership, for her dedication to the cause, and to all those who donated \$\$ or snack items for the table. May God bless all of you in your generosity!*

Mr. Daniel Schmidt (Pre-Theology II, Kenrick Glennon Seminary) and Mr. Brian Jacobsen (Theology II, St. John Vianney Seminary) have discerned out of the seminary. We thank these young men for their generosity in giving their time in discernment of the Lord's will for their lives. Let us keep them in prayer even as we continue to pray for vocations, that God will bless their lives with the joy that comes in knowing His will and following it.