



The Serra Club of Johnson County
Region 9 District 12-2 Central Club 949

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www.jocoserra.org

Serran Sphere



Refocus: why we do what we do

(myth-busting 101 . . .)

New Year? New Resolutions? Big deal?

Responses to such questions are varied. For the serious-minded, it is a big deal, particularly in today's social climate. Refocus, being intentional about periodic self-assessment, is essential in the spiritual journey.

Myth: the spiritual journey doesn't matter.

Is not the spiritual journey the most important of journeys we will make in our lifetime? Proverbs tells us: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." (Prov 3:5-6) In speaking to the Pharisees, Jesus said, "I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I AM, you will die in your sins." (John 8:24) What more can we add?

Pondering why we do what we do – especially in the spiritual life – is never wasted energy. Ideally the exercise moves us forward with better vision. But what does this have to do with Serra and vocations?

Myth: Serra isn't relevant. It doesn't matter, either.

In 2022, nothing really matters except one's opinion, right? Wrong.

The Mission of Serra is threefold: to promote and support vocations to the priesthood of the Catholic Church; to promote and support vocations to religious and consecrated life in the Church; and to assist one another in a personal response to God's call to holiness.

Foundational to the Serra mission is the personal call to holiness, a call that we each received in Baptism. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us Baptism is a sacrament of faith. "But faith needs the community of believers. It is only within the faith of the Church that each of the faithful can believe." (CCC 1253) Living holiness in 2022, a worthy New Year resolution, will be met with challenges. We need each other more than ever. Holiness, as I was reminded in a recent retreat experience, grows in the little things. Begin each day by saying "Good morning!" to Jesus. Invite Him into your day. Offer Him the day's joys, works and sufferings. This is holy work – the work of the Church, my work and yours.



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MEETING DATES:

- 1/6/2022—General Membership Meeting, Curé of Ars, 6:30 PM. Annual Chili Cook-off (see p. 4)
- 1/24/2022—Board Meeting, 7:00 PM, Cornerstone Companies
- 1/8/2022—Serra meets Bill Donahue, 11:00 AM (check the website calendar for Zoom details)
- 2/1/2022—General Membership Meeting, Curé of Ars, 6:30 PM



Colm Larkin
Theology III

MEET COLM LARKIN

I caught up with seminarian, Colm Larkin, just after Quo Vadis, where he had spent the weekend with his seminary brothers and young men in the discernment phase. Beginning his Christmas holiday break from studies at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver, CO, Colm took some time to answer a few questions about seminary life, his family, and his anticipated ordination to the transitional diaconate in May 2022.

“Both of my parents have been faithful Catholics their whole lives,” Colm stated. Colm is the youngest of four Larkin children. His father, Dennis, worked for the Small Business Administration prior to retirement. His mother, Jean, worked in a bank before she retired. Larkin expressed gratitude to his parents, acknowledging that his Mom stayed home to raise the kids and, “then went back to work as we got older to help pay for Catholic school tuition.”

While Colm grew up in Omaha, NE, his parents are now living in Atchison, KS, after a stint in the Overland Park area. “My parents are retired and enjoying their first grandchild, a grandson, Aidan,” he observed. Colm is the youngest of four Larkin children. The eldest, a brother Liam, is

“If a young man or woman is thinking about a priestly or religious vocation, the most important thing to do is to be faithful to the Lord in prayer.” ~Colm Larkin

WEBSITE UPDATE

Have a look at the Johnson County Serra Club’s website! You can find it at [Serra Club of Johnson County \(jocoserra.org\)](https://www.jocoserra.org)

Find out the latest news, check the calendar, learn about how Serra can benefit you while your work in Serra benefits others.

STILL LOOKING FOR HELP

It’s not hard! If you have an interest in being part of the communications team for the Serra Club of Johnson County, we have need of help.

We look to develop a social media presence with FaceBook and Twitter.

Please email interest to contact@jocoserra.org, or call or text 402-462-0305.

Check us out on the web @ <https://www.jocoserra.org>

the father of Aidan. A sister, Molly, is now Sister M. Maria Stella, of the Franciscan Sisters of the Martyr St. George. Another sister, Clare, teaches at St. James Academy and is engaged to be married in July 2022.

The Larkins moved to Cedar Rapids, IA, during Colm’s high school years. A 2012 graduate of Cedar Rapids Xavier High School, Colm finished a biology degree at Benedictine College in 2016. His early plan was to go to medical school at KU. “The Holy Spirit had another plan,” he mused.

“I never considered a priestly vocation until college,” Larkin reflected. It was during his time at Benedictine College that he was most influenced, attribution a large part of his vocational discernment to Br. Leaven Harton of St. Benedict’s Abbey in Atchison. “He was my spiritual director in college and taught me to pray properly as he guided my discernment process.”

In response to a question about his ordination to the transitional diaconate in May 2022, Larkin said, “I am genuinely excited for ordination in May. It is what I have been looking forward to for many years now, and I am excited to make the total commitment to celibacy and the Church.” Larkin described a sense of awe about the event, adding, “that just speaks to the importance of what is to come.”

I asked Colm about memorable life experiences that contributed to his wonder about God’s call to the priesthood. “I don’t have too many concrete memories,” he said, “but I always knew the priesthood was something special as a kid. It was something set apart.” He observed that the Christmas and Holy Week liturgies provided opportunities to see the special role of the priest in the liturgy. Colm also credits the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) with influence in his life. “As a college student the annual SEEK conferences were very instrumental in my path toward the priesthood,” he mused. “They are very powerful conferences.”

Regarding advice he might have for a young person realizing a call by God to the priesthood or consecrated life, Colm said, “I didn’t start truly discerning until I learned to pray.” Again he credited his college spiritual director with teaching him to pray. “If a young man or woman is thinking about a priestly or religious vocation, the most important thing to do is to be faithful to the Lord in prayer,” he said. “Faithfulness in prayer,” he added, “results in the vocation rolling out before you.” The grace to accept it comes, too.

Larkin also shared encouragement for parents of a young man or woman considering a priestly or religious vocation. Using the words of Our Lord, he said, “Do not fear.”

“If your son has a priestly vocation or your daughter has a religious vocation, it is going to be the only thing that brings true peace to your son or daughter’s heart.” He recognized that it can be very scary for a parent to think of a son as a priest, or a daughter as a religious sister, “but it will be an incredible blessing in the child’s life and in the parents’ life, as well.”

MYTHS

Continued from p.1

Church, my work and yours.

I am reminded of a comment made at a recent Serra Club meeting by **Dale Romme**, President-elect of the Serra Club of Johnson County. He said, "I am inspired by people I meet at Serra meetings. The experience makes me want to be more holy!"

At the time of Serra's formation in 1935, the two great needs for the Church were for dedicated priests and religious and for informed Catholic lay leaders who understood and lived their own Christian vocations to service. These needs have not changed. In fact, it is hard not to recognize that these needs have actually increased in the last decade, certainly.

My wife, Ginny, and I have been Serra members since May 2021, shortly after moving to the Kansas City area. Serra has brought opportunity to meet wonderful folks who share a commitment to support one another in the quest for holiness, while supporting the work of the Church through prayer for, and support of vocations, priestly and religious. We have learned about the importance of praying for our Church, for vocations – not only priestly and religious vocations, but for each other in the personal vocation, the call to holiness. We have also learned about the importance of being members. Young people considering priestly or religious vocations need our prayers. Young people considering marriage vocations need our prayers. They need us. They need to experience Catholic Christians living out their vocations. They need to understand what the Lord may want to reveal to them about their vocational call through relationship with us.

"I am inspired by people I meet at Serra meetings. The experience makes me want to be more holy!" ~Dale Romme

Myth: Serra is for old people

The very work of Serra is focused on prayer for young people discerning vocations. While many Serrans are experienced in life, the work of the Church is not relegated to people above, say, age 40. Serra is an ideal vehicle for connecting lay adults of all ages in a unifying mission of prayer and mutual support in holiness.

Why be a Serra Club member? Paul's letter to the Hebrews gives us a reason: "We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works. We should not stay away from our assembly, as is the custom of some, but encourage one another, and this all the more as you see the day drawing near." (Heb 10:24-25). In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul speaks of "one body" and "many parts." He applies the concept to Christ's body, the Church, with a final word of encouragement to "Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts." (1 Cor 12:12-31) Being a Serra Club member provides a tangible means of knowing community, experi-

encing the support of another, encouraging each other in the holiness journey.

John Weber, President of the Serra Club of Johnson County, reflected on the significance of the personal encounter as it relates to Serra. "Walking the path to personal holiness and doing the work of the Church is effectively accomplished in community, and it begins with personal invitation. As Serrans, we rededicate ourselves to personal outreach, inviting others to the Serra way of life in 2022."

Serra demonstrates the importance of relationship with other, like-minded people, each working daily to live out God's call in their lives. Being a Serra Club member shows me that "holiness" is attainable and not something reserved for people, generally deceased, whose first names are "Saint." In Serra, one sees holiness in action. And it's fun!

Myth: I can't be a Serran. I don't have a club near me.

In this day of virtual connectivity, the ability to be part of a group extends beyond physical boundaries. Membership in a Serra Club is not bound by any geographic area. It never was. Prior to the virtual age, membership was naturally limited by geography because the opportunity to engage was limited by distance. No longer the case, membership in a Serra Club is open to anyone with the desire to participate.

"The other reality," observed **John Caton**, founding member of the Serra Club of Johnson County and current Vice President of Programs, "is that a Serra Club in proximity to its membership provides participation opportunities different from the virtual world. A new Serra Club can be developed wherever the need may occur." He added, "Serrans are eager to support new club development where it happens. In fact, we are working in such an endeavor right now."

If you are not a Serra Club member and have a question about becoming a member and/or starting a Serra Club in your area, [Contact Us](#). (email contact@jocoserra.org) Becoming a member is as easy as clicking on "Join Us" on the club's website, [Serra Club of Johnson County \(jocoserra.org\)](#) and completing the [Membership Application](#).

New Year? New resolutions? Refocus?

Yes, the New Year is a time to refocus. If already a Serra member but perhaps not as engaged as you might want to be, consider taking in the next regular monthly meeting, Thursday, January 6, 2022. General Membership meetings happen the first Thursday of every month at 6:30 PM Central Time at Curé of Ars Church in Leawood, KS. If not a member, consider a New Year resolution to join Serra in the work of the Church. Be our guest at a regular monthly meeting. You'll be glad you decided to do so!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**SERRA CLUB
OF JOHNSON COUNTY**

**2022
Officers**

President
John Weber

President Elect
Dale Romme

**Immediate Past
President**
Doug Leibbrandt

Secretary
Judy Rielley

Treasurer
Chuck Lillis

Vice Presidents

Vocations
Judy Mueller

Membership
Joane Wilkerson

Programs
John Caton

Communications
Michael Skoch

Trustees
Len Chmelka
Ray Zielinski
George Len

Date	Agenda	Location
January 6 Thursday	General Membership Meeting 6:30 PM Annual Chili Cook-off!	Curé of Ars Leawood, KS See website calendar for details
January 7 Friday	First Friday Holy Hour for Vocations	Holy Spirit Church Overland Park, KS
January 8 Saturday	Serra meets Bill Donohue	Zoom link—Website Calendar
January 13 Thursday	JOCO Serra Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Zoom link—Website Calendar
January 20 Thursday	JOCO Serra Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Zoom link—Website Calendar
January 24 Monday	JOCO Serra Board Meeting 7:00 PM	Cornerstone Companies
January 27 Thursday	JOCO Serra Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Zoom link—Website Calendar
February 1 Thursday	JOCO Serra Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Zoom link—Website Calendar
February 1 Thursday	General Membership Meeting 6:30 PM	Holy Trinity Church Lenexa, KS
February 2 Friday	First Friday Holy Hour for Vocations	Holy Spirit Church Overland Park, KS
February 2 Friday	World Day for Consecrated Life	Details forthcoming
February 8 Thursday	JOCO Serra Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Zoom link—Website Calendar
February 15 Thursday	JOCO Serra Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Zoom link—Website Calendar

*Men at the
Quo Vadis
experience
enjoy break-
fast with the
Little Sisters
of the Lamb
on Saturday
morning*



*The “monumental snack table” provided
by Serrans for the men at the Quo Vadis
experience*



QUO VADIS RECAP

The annual young men's discernment retreat, Quo Vadis, was held the weekend of December 17 – 19, 2021, at Savior Pastoral Center. Retreat master was Fr. Luke Ballman, a priest of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, who currently serves as Executive Director of the U.S. Bishops' Secretariat for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations (CCLV) since 2019.

There were 39 young men from around the archdiocese in attendance at this year's event according to Fr. Dan Morris, Vocations Director of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. Feedback from the men who attended the retreat has been very positive. One young man in college appreciated how although the retreat is for guys that are open to and may have even felt a call to seminary and even the priesthood, the talks and panels were more about giving discerners the tools to come to know and respond to God's will. Another first-time attendee had this to say: "I want to thank you again for a wonderful Quo Vadis retreat. It truly made a huge impact in my life. That is probably the best present I could have asked for and one I will never forget." Finally, another young man offered this: "This was by far the most challenging retreat I have been on and I've returned home with many things to pray with. It was great to see my brothers again and have many insightful conversations with them. I will be in touch with future steps I feel called to take with discernment."

Very pleased with the turnout, Fr. Morris was once again reminded how it takes the faith and efforts of so many—all members of the Body of Christ—to make for such an experience. Fr. Morris concluded by adding that it is because of the faith and efforts of all—Archbishop Naumann, Fr. Luke Ballman, our priests, seminarians, Serrans, and more—that a good number of the young men in attendance are already in the seminary application process. Please pray for these men, that they be given the grace and clarity to respond generously to what they have come to know as God's will.

"We are grateful to these young men for considering a call to the priesthood and sharing the Quo Vadis experience," Fr. Morris commented. He also expressed thanks to all who made this year's retreat a success, especially local Serra Club members who contributed once again to defraying expenses and creating another "monumental snack table," adding "the guys enjoyed great food all weekend!"

SEMINARIAN BIRTHDAYS

January/February

Deacon Sudheep Kodigandla

- January 13

William Rosson -January 22

Will Sutherland -January 28

Jonathan Fox -February 13

Kevin Weinand -February 27

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

IT'S CHILI TIME!



Calling all chili cooks! If you do chili, now is the time to get out your favorite Crock Pot, slow cooker, or cooking kettle. It's time for all chili makers to throw together their best chili for the 2022 Great Chili Cook Off with the Johnson County Serra Club. You bring the chili, we will supply all the fixings (cheese, chips, and drink.)

This year, the Great Chili Cook Off shifts a gear, with cooks competing for a prize (you'll be sure to want to win!). "Votes" for the best chili will be cast by "chili tasters" – all members and guests attending the Club's monthly General Membership meeting on Thursday evening, January 6, 2022. The event will take place in the Fr. Barak Room at [Curé of Ars Church](#) in Leawood.

"Vote" = "Cash" Tasters will vote with their pocketbooks. No vote is too small. No vote is too large. Winners (first, second, and third place) will be judged based on

cash accumulated for their entry. Tasters can "vote" for as many chilis as they might like. There is no limit. Be sure to bring your wallet to vote!

Cooks are asked to make known their intent to bring a pot (or two) of chili so we can plan accordingly. Enter the contest by going to the Club's website [Serra Club of Johnson County \(jocoserra.org\)](http://Serra Club of Johnson County (jocoserra.org)) and following the sign-up ("Volunteer") instructions on the website's [calendar](#) tab. Or, click this link: [Bring your best chili!](#) to get directly to the sign-up page.

If you are not a member, but wish to enter the chili cook-off contest, send an email of interest to contact@jocoserra.org or call 402-462-0305 and leave a message! Be sure to include your name, email address and a phone number.

Our program for the evening will be presented by Leah Conner, Executive Director of the Wyandotte Pregnancy Clinic in Kansas City, KS; and Diane Droughard, Executive Director of the Olathe Pregnancy Clinic in Olathe, KS. We will hear about their work with women in crisis pregnancies.

Don't miss this informative, fun, savory event! Guests welcome!

