



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

March 2022
Volume 3, Issue

www.jocoserra.org

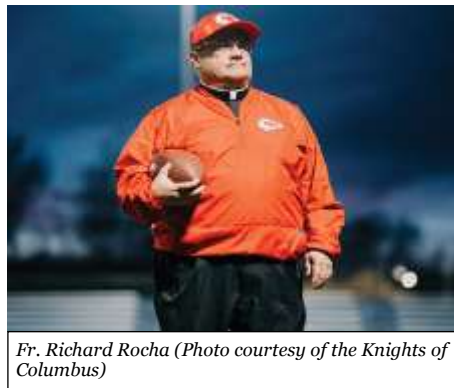
Serran Sphere

FR. RICHARD ROCHA TO SPEAK

Serra Club of Johnson County is thrilled to announce that the guest speaker for our March General Membership meeting will be Fr. Richard Rocha, Chaplain of the Kansas City Chiefs, and the Kansas City Royals. Read on to learn more about Fr. Rocha.

‘Coaching on God’s Team’

Very few people have a Super Bowling or a World Series ring. Father Richard Rocha has both. The pastor of St. Robert Bellarmine Catholic Church in Blue Springs, Mo., Father Rocha has served as Catholic chaplain for the Kansas City Chiefs since 2017 and for the Kansas City Royals since 2006. Before entering the seminary, he was a football coach for 14 years at the high school and college levels; he later he served as vocation director for the Diocese of Kansas City–St. Joseph (2009-2017). A Knight since 1981, Father Rocha also served as Missouri state chaplain from 2004 to 2006.



Fr. Richard Rocha (Photo courtesy of the Knights of Columbus)

“I am one of five children born to Robert and Mary Rocha. I grew up in a devout Catholic family with a strong love for God and devotion to Our Lady Guadalupe, St. Joseph and the saints. We were blessed to have attended Catholic schools. In fifth grade, the local Knights of Columbus bought us playground equipment, and I remember a football coming out of the bag. From that moment, I fell in love with the game. I played in junior high and high school, and then got a scholarship to play at Benedictine College in Atchison, KS.

After my sophomore year, my father died suddenly. My high school coach, who was like a father to me, said, “Son, why don’t you come home and help me with the team, and finish your degree at the local university.” I was 20 years old when I started coaching at the high school level.

We were watching film one Thursday night, and he said, “Why don’t you join me at holy Mass tomorrow? It’s First Friday.” I thought, “What’s First Friday.” I thought, “What’s First Friday?” But I joined him and thought, “That wasn’t so bad.” So I started doing that on Fridays, then every day during Lent. Then I said, “I wonder if I can do this every day.” There was just a pull, a love for Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist.

I went on to Northwest Missouri State and coached there for two years. After coaching at two other colleges, I became a head football coach on the high school level. I instilled into my players the “3F” philosophy that my high school coach taught me: Your faith has to be first, followed by family, and only then football.

I really felt that football and being married with a family was where God was calling me. But there was that pull again. I was struggling, not being able to sleep at night, so one day after daily Mass, I told the priest, “Monsignor, I am struggling with the fact that I don’t know if I should be coaching. I’ve been coming to Mass earlier thinking, ‘Maybe God wants me to spend more time in front of the Blessed Sacrament.’”

See Fr. Rocha p. 3



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meet a Seminarian.....	2
Calendar of Events	4
Seminarian Birthdays	5
Sr. Meghan Roush.....	5

MEETING/EVENT DATES:

- 3/3/2022—General Membership meeting, 6:30 PM, **Curé of Ars**
- 3/28/2022—JOCO Serra Board Meeting , 7 PM, **Cornerstone Companies**
- 4/7/2022—General Monthly Membership Meeting, 6:30 PM, **Curé of Ars Church**



Brian Jacobson
Theology I

MEET BRIAN JACOBSON

The first time he wanted to be a priest was when he was about 6 or 7 years-old, “and I realized that priests don’t have to kneel during the consecration at mass, but I did because I was in the pews,” Brian remarked. “While I don’t think this was exactly the best reason to want to become a priest, I think God opened me up to the possibility at a young age,” he added. Jacobson remembers “playing mass” when he was young. He relates that, because of the support of, and conversations with his parents, whom he considers the primary formators of his faith, he never dismissed this possibility, even as he desired to do other things with life. “I also went to vocation day events as a kid, like Project Andrew and homeschool-organized events, and I remember how it struck me when Fr. Mitchell Zimmerman once told us all that we could be brother priests together one day,” Jacobson recalled. The appeal of that idea stuck with Jacobson quite a long time.

After going to college for a couple of years, enlisting in the Air National Guard and joining ROTC so he could pursue becoming an Air Force pilot, Brian realized that something was still missing in his life. “I loved being at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), loved my friends, dated wonderful women, but I had no peace about pursuing one of them completely,” he observed. After two years there, Jacobson knew he had to go to seminary to determine once and for all if God was calling him to be a priest.

“Be radical with your commitment to God’s call and know that, even if you give God just a little, He will work with that and bless you in more ways than you can imagine. Be humble and be bold.”
—Brian Jacobson

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Congratulations and welcome to the following new members since December 1 2020:

- **Larry and Kathy Ryan**
- **Dan Collard**
- **Lucy Skoch**
- **Thomas and Nicole Skoch**
- **Glenn and Sue Shain**
- **Sr. Ann Saji Varghese**

The Serra Club of Johnson County is fortunate to gain your participation and our seminarians and women discerning vocations will become the beneficiaries of your prayers and support!

God bless you and thank you for joining our club!

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

He considers his parents the primary influencers of his vocation and is grateful for their continual prayers and conversations. Interestingly, he was also influenced by playing basketball with the associate chaplain at the UNL Newman Center. Through this simple action, Jacobson says, “he became relatable and through him, I could see myself as a priest. Additionally, by the grace of God, I am still pursuing service in the military as a future chaplain for the Navy, God willing.”

After the decision to enter seminary, Brian first attended Conception Seminary College in northwest Missouri where he obtained a philosophy degree. One of the highlights of being there, practically in the middle of nowhere, was how quiet and peaceful it was. Living around the Benedictine monks who operate the place helped Brian see the beauty of humility and the simplicity of life. “I will forever be grateful for my time there” he fondly said. Jacobson is currently a Theology I student at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver, CO.

Another highlight of seminary life for Jacobson has been seminary basketball tournaments. “I went to three of them at Mundelein Seminary outside of Chicago during my years with Conception, and in February, I’ll be going to my first one in Milwaukee with St. John Vianney.” (The annual Mundelein tourney was canceled this year due to COVID, much to the chagrin of SJV’s basketball stars.) “It’s great to meet seminarians from across the country, reconnect with former classmates or friends from other seminaries and just play ball.”

Brian’s parents, Dan and Stephanie Jacobson, of Overland Park, KS, are the parents of five children including Brian, who is second oldest. An older brother is married and lives in Denver with his wife and two little girls. Brian has three younger sisters. Jacobson says that, growing up, school never really appealed to him, “but I was always fascinated by theological studies and apologetics.” His mother homeschooled Brian and his siblings. He recognizes the benefit of having these discussions with a parent while also witnessing her living the faith. Stephanie now works for the Holy Family School of Faith. Brian’s father, Dan, has worked in Corporate America for over 30 years, currently serving as the head of Customer Service for a Kansas City startup company. Brian recalls from a young age learning the value of hard work and integrity through his father’s example. Brian considers Church of the Ascension his home parish.

To any young person encountering a possible call from God to religious life or priesthood, Brian says, “Life is exciting!” He adds that, while the day to day can be sometimes difficult, “seeing personal growth in the long run is amazing!” Jacobson has been to places and met people he never would have without responding to God’s call. In ways never dreamed of, he has witnessed the love of Christ and experienced it. “Be radical with your commitment but know that even if you give God just a little, He will work with that and bless you in more ways than you can imagine. Be humble and be bold.”

To any young person encountering a possible call from God to religious life or priesthood, Brian says, “Life is exciting!” He adds that, while the

See Jacobson, p. 3

“He looked straight at me and said, “Coach, are you sure God’s not calling you to the priesthood?” I remember my face just falling into my hands, and full of tears. I said, “Maybe he is, but I don’t want to be a priest. I want to coach football. I want to be married. I want to have a family.”

And he said, “Coach, let me give you two pieces of advice. First, have you ever asked God what His will is for you? And second, don’t rule out the priesthood if you see yourself as a husband and a father, because God wants good strong men to be husbands to his Church and fathers to his people.” After he said that, a big weight lifted off my shoulders.

Later, when I told my mom I was entering the seminary, she said, “Ever since you started coaching, I’ve been praying a novena to Our Lady Guadalupe and St. Jude, that God might call you to the priesthood.” I think 14 years of tears fell right then and there, since that was my 14th year of coaching. It was a wonderful, joy-filled moment.

“It’s important to remind them that in this game of life, football will pass, as everything else will go away. God wants us to be hungry for the things of heaven, so how are you preparing yourself?”

When I later became vocation director, we had about 19 seminarians. I told my mom, “You gotta pray for more vocations since it’s my job now.” When I left, we had 37 seminarians. And when I became the Royals’ Catholic chaplain, I said, “Mom, throw the Royals in there, too.” She died in January 2015; the Royals won the World Series that November. The same thing with the Chiefs, “Mom I’m taking over the Chiefs, you need to start praying.” Obviously, she has a better seat now.

It’s just wonderful how her prayers and, obviously, God’s grace, drew me into the priesthood. Yet I figured that as a priest I’d never be involved in sports. I never would have thought that in a million years I’d be able to have an influence on professional coaches and players, bringing them close to God. It’s awesome how God works.

With the Chiefs, Mass and confessions usually take place on Saturday night, which is the big night. I’ll set up for Mass and just be available for players and coach-

es to go to confession. One of them always reads at Mass. And afterward, there’s an opportunity to interact with them. They always want to know if I’m going to be there at the game.

I try to go to most of the games. I’m not always there, but I’m there for them for their spiritual lives. It’s important to remind them that in this game of life, football will pass, as everything else will go away. God wants us to be hungry for the things of heaven, so how are you preparing yourself?

And being an NFL chaplain also connects to my parish work. I treat my Sunday homilies like a halftime talk — you’re coming here, you need to be fed in order to go out and get through the week to next weekend. It’s that kind of challenge: “Hey, we’re down by seven. We got to get out there in the second half and finish the game. It’s a game of life.” So there is a strong connection. I’m not coaching football on a particular team, but I’m coaching on God’s team.

I’m the chaplain for our local K of C council as well as our Fourth Degree assembly. I remember when I was entering seminary, right away a couple of councils called and said, “We want to sponsor you. Come talk to our group, our men want to know your story.”

And then after becoming a priest, I was asked to be Missouri district friar and then Missouri state chaplain. I truly love the Knights of Columbus. They do so much for our Catholic faith; they’re the right arm of the pastor. When you want something done, go to your Knights, and they get it done. They’re really performing the corporal works of mercy that God wants us to do.

These last two years with COVID, I haven’t had a pregame field experience. But to be on the field before a game is electrifying.

And, of course, a high moment was to go to Super Bowl when we played the San Francisco 49ers to end the 2019 season. When the game seemed to be slipping away, people were looking at me in my collar as if to say, “Do something.” And I remember breaking out the rosary beads and calling on my mother and Our Lady Queen of Victory. The rest is history.”

(This article appeared in the [January 2022] issue of Columbia magazine and is reprinted with permission of the Knights of Columbus, New Haven, CT.)

Join us Thursday, March 3, 2022, at 6:30 PM for the monthly General Membership meeting at Curé of Ars Church, when our program will feature Fr. Richard Rocha, Chaplain of the Chiefs and the Royals!

Jacobson, cont. from p. 2

day to day can be sometimes difficult, “seeing personal growth in the long run is amazing!” He further observed that he has been to places and met people he never would have without responding to God’s call. In ways never dreamed of, he has witnessed the love of Christ and experienced it. “Be radical with your commitment but know that even if you give God just a little, He will work with that and bless you in more ways than you can imagine. Be humble and be bold.”

Finally, Jacobson expressed thanks to Serrans, “for all your wonderful support and encouragement of us seminarians! Your generosity with your prayers, donations and even snacks encourage us to keep going when it gets difficult to persevere. We appreciate you more than you know!”

The Serrans are happy to oblige, Brian!

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
March 1 Tuesday	First Tuesday Holy Hour for Vocations 6:00 PM	Curé of Ars Church Leawood KS
March 3 Thursday	General Membership Meeting 6:30 PM	Curé of Ars Church Leawood, KS
March 4 Friday	First Friday Holy Hour for Vocations 11:00 AM	Holy Spirit Church Overland Park, KS
March 10 Thursday	JOCO Serra Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Zoom link—Website Calendar
March 17 Thursday	JOCO Serra Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Zoom link—Website Calendar
March 21 Monday	Runnin' with the Revs Charity Basketball Game 7:00 PM	Bishop Miege High School Roeland Park, KS
March 24 Thursday	JOCO Serra Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Zoom link—Website Calendar
March 28 Monday	JOCO Serra Board Meeting 7:00 PM	Cornerstone Companies Leawood, KS
March 31 Thursday	JOCO Serra Rosary for Vocations 7:30 PM	Zoom link—Website Calendar
April 1 Friday	First Friday Holy Hour for Vocations 11 AM	Holy Spirit Church Overland Park, KS
April 5 Tuesday	First Tuesday Holy Hour for Vocations 6 PM	Cure of Ars Church Leawood, KS
April 7 Thursday	JOCO Serra General Membership Monthly Meeting 6:30 PM	Cure of Ars Church Leawood, KS



Dear members of the Johnson County Serra Club:

Thank you so much for your generous donation of \$1,145 to the Heart to Heart Scholarship Fund. This fund exists to assist financially young women and men in the archdiocese as they respond to God's call to pursue the priesthood or religious life.

This year's scholarship recipients were Alex Rickert, who is in his fourth year at Cardinal Glennon College, and the Sisters of St. Anne, for whom the scholarship funded a

year of formation for one of their postulants.

We are so very grateful for your gift, and please know that your generosity will help support the formation of future religious and priests of the archdiocese. May God continue to bless you for being such good stewards of His gifts.

In Christ's peace,

Fr. Dan Morris

Fr. Dan Morris
Vocation Director

SISTER M. MEGHAN ROUSH MICHAEL SKOCH, MD



Growing up in Lawrence, KS, Sister Mary Meghan Roush (née Meghan Roush) admits that living a consecrated life wasn't always on her radar. "I first recognized that God might be calling me to consecrated life during my junior year of college," she said. "I thought I was called to marriage. A friend of mine invited me to join a group of women traveling to a couple of convents during spring break. As I wasn't officially dating anyone, I thought it sounded like a good idea to just go and pray about what God was calling me to before I jumped into a relationship."

A 2013 graduate of Lawrence High School, Sister Meghan enrolled at Benedictine College in Atchison, KS, where she found new friends and a different way of thinking about her future. "Despite my upbringing and my desire to become a saint as a child, I slowly got more and more tangled up in the world dur-

ing my teenage years. By the end of high school, I had pushed God completely out of my life. I had a reversion experience that began during the summer before I went to college and continued during my first semester at college," she reflected.

It was the spring of her junior year at BC that she accepted the spring break invitation to join in a tour of two religious convents, the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart of Jesus and the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. "I was surprised to arrive at the Carmelite Sisters of the Divine Heart and find the life of the sisters attractive." Sister Meghan recalls that, during a time of adoration there, she asked Jesus, "What do You want me to do?" Believing she I would be happy being a sister or getting married, she handed the question to the Lord. She admits to being frustrated with what she heard as the Lord's reply, "What do **you** want, my child?"

"I just wanted Him to tell me what to do," she admitted. Returning to campus, Roush spoke with her spiritual director about the experience. She described her director's probing questions that allowed her to examine the desires of her heart and recognize that the total gift of herself to the Lord in consecrated life was greater than a desire to be married. After this phase of discernment, she decided to join a convent to see if that desire would continue to grow, recalling that she was filled with peace and joy after making the decision. Enter the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT).

"My first encounter with SOLT happened while I was living in Wyoming after college," Sr. Meghan observed. Living in the countryside outside of Powell, Wyoming, she first found a book in the house written by Sr. Miriam James. "After that I ran into a woman who had discerned out of SOLT, a couple of SOLT sisters, and a SOLT lay family," identifying an apparent pattern at which she bemused, "because the nearest convent to me was a whole state away!" At the time, SOLT didn't really seem like the kind of community that I would enter, but I could not deny the Lord was telling me to make a visit. And the rest is now history. Sister Meghan, a novice with the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT), is preparing for profession of first vows. She is pictured here (third from right) with other novices in the community.

Sister Meghan credits her parents, Kevin and Donna Roush, with the laying of the foundation of her vocation. "I grew up in a practicing Catholic family. My dad works as an IT manager for an energy company and my mom is a stay-at-home mom. I am the third among six kids. I have two older brothers, two younger brothers, and a little sister. Growing up, we prayed the rosary together as a family every night. Every Sunday, after we got home from Mass, we would have religion. Beginning in first grade, we all had a religion book. Dad would read with us as we were still learning how to read, but once we could read on our own, we would read the next section of our respective religion books and then have individual time to talk about what we read with Dad. I remember my parents taking us to the Catholic Family Conference in Wichita which always got me very excited about becoming a saint. My mom would encourage us to go to adoration. My parents' faithfulness to God and to each other has had a huge impact in my life and in my vocation." Sr. Meghan is pictured here with her family, including her maternal grandmother.



She recognizes other significant influences during her formative years including regular reception of the Sacraments, time spent in adoration, her family life, friendships at Benedictine College, and "my experience and relationships formed as a Totus Tuus missionary were the most impactful on my response to God's call." She was a Totus Tuus missionary for two summers (2015-16) in the diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, MO. Sister Meghan's home parish was Corpus Christi in Lawrence. She attended St. John Elementary School and recalls that her family began going to Mass at the KU St. Lawrence Center when she was in sixth grade. Roush graduated from Benedictine College in 2017 with a bachelor's degree in theology.

When asked how she might encourage a young woman on hearing and responding to God's call to consecrated life, Sister Meghan had the following words of advice. "I would advise a young woman contemplating her response to God's call to consecrated life to go to daily Mass, commit to regular adoration of the Blessed Sacrament – spending time alone with Jesus, and . . . take a chill pill," she said with a bit of humor. "It is so easy to become anxious in discernment," she added. "The truth is, we don't know which moment is going to be our last."

Sister Meghan reflected on her own journey. "It has always been helpful for me in times of anxiety to recall how silly it would be to worry so much if today is going to be the last day of my life. The Lord knows how little and frail we are. He can handle it and he will give us everything that we need in His perfect timing."

"One must strive to be faithful to Him in the present moment and enjoy the journey. Living in that openness really helps in discernment." We could all take a lesson from Sister Meghan!

SEM-NAR-

IAN BIRTHDAYS

March/April

Alex Rickert -March 31

Colm Larkin -April 20

Daniel Schmidt -April 25

Timothy Skoch -April 30

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

**SERRA CLUB
OF JOHNSON COUNTY**

The mission of the Serra Club of Johnson County is to pray for and support vocations to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life of the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas.

Membership is open to lay Catholics inspired to join the mission of prayer and support for vocations.

Invite friends to email a note of interest in joining the Club to:
admin@jocoserra.org

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.

Prayer is the basis of Serra.

We pray like everything depends on God and work like everything depends on us!



Like us on Facebook: @jocoserra

Serra Club
of Johnson County
c/o Michael Skoch MD
11473 S Waterford Dr.
Olathe, KS 66061

Phone: 402-462-0305
Email: admin@jocoserra.org



PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Jack & Delores Fiorella
3602 W. 139th St.
Leawood, KS 66224