



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

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Serran Sphere

JOCO SERRA AND SERRA KCK JOINT SEMINARY VISIT TO ST. JOHN VIANNEY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN DENVER A BIG SUCCESS

Twenty-one members of the Serra Clubs of Johnson County and Kansas City in Kansas enjoyed a beautiful fall day in Denver, CO, on Tuesday, October 11, 2022, during a visit to St. John Vianney Theological Seminary (SJV). This was a first-time visit for some, and positive comments about the experience were heard all around.

The day began with a morning tour of the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in downtown Denver, pictured right. Our guide, Antonio, spoke about the Cathedral's inception and construction, including the difference between a cathedral and a basilica, with the latter designation representing an edifice that is "near and dear to a pope." In the case of the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, the title "basilica" was conferred by Pope Saint John Paul II. The tour concluded as the group was treated to a presentation of the Cathedral organ, and a short program played by the Director of Sacred Music and Cathedral organist, Phil Bordeleau.



After a short drive to SJV, we were greeted by Fr. Daniel Eusterman, a seminary professor and formator, who spoke about the facility's history and the richness of seminary life. He described the formation of men not only as priests, but as men, identifying the four dimensions of seminary life: academic, pastoral, human, and spiritual. Relating the necessity that seminarians come to know the love of Jesus in a very personal way, he said, "They cannot give what they have not received."



About 100 seminarians from 15 dioceses across the country are in formation at SJV, including 10 men from the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. Because most men enter SJV with a college degree, the first year of seminary life at SJV is spent in a Spirituality Year (SY) centered on prayer and retreat from the world. Access to technology (cell phones and computers, in particular) is limited to Saturdays in the effort to lead men more deeply into relationship with Jesus. Five of our seminarians are currently in the SY.

After Fr. Eusterman's presentation, Deacon Colm Larkin provided a tour of the seminary, with focus on the beautiful Christ the King chapel. He related key details of the chapel's architecture, stained glass, and interior design, all details reflecting the process of seminary formation.



Our group stayed for Mass with the seminarians in the chapel before moving to the refectory, where we enjoyed a delicious lunch of steak, roasted potatoes, and asparagus, along with great conversation at table with the seminarians.

In the afternoon, we toured a formation house at Christ the King Parish. Deacon Timothy Skoch explained the role of the formation house in building community among the men. SJV, with the cooperation of the Archdiocese of Denver, houses second-, third-, and fourth-year theologians in three formation houses around the Denver area. At the house, the seminarians live with a formator, essentially a priest role-model, and from there, they navigate to seminary classes daily, and to parish assignments each weekend.

See SJV p. 5



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MEETING/EVENT DATES:

- **11/3/2022—6:00 PM,** Mass and General Membership Meeting—**Cure of Ars**
- **11/6—11/12/2022—**National Vocations Awareness Week
- **11/10/2022—5:30 PM,** Deo Gratias Appreciation Dinner
- **11/28/2022—7:00 PM,** JOCO Serra Board Meeting, **Holy Spirit Church**
- **12/1/2022—6:30 PM** General Membership Meeting, Memorial Mass, Curé of Ars.

MEET WILL CAREY



I have discovered that there seems to be a relationship between locations of Catholic churches and locations of First Watch restaurants. This month, I was privileged to have a First Watch breakfast with seminarian, Will Carey, who is in the midst of a Pastoral Year at Blessed Sacrament/Christ the King parishes in Kansas City, KS, an experience that also includes some teaching at Bishop Ward High School. Our meeting took place after 6:45 AM Mass at St. Agnes in Roeland Park.

We launched right into conversation as though we'd known each other for much longer than a first meeting. "These are my old stomping grounds," Carey acknowledged, adding, "St. Agnes would have been my home parish as a kid, but I wasn't raised Catholic." We interrupted our dialogue and ordered our breakfast, a Frittata Rustica for Will, and a Pumpkin Pancake Breakfast for me. We agreed to split an order of Million Dollar Bacon, before jumping right back into things over a first cup of coffee.

"So?" I began.

"So how did it happen?" Will finished my question, returning directly to the point at which we'd stopped our conversation before ordering our food.

A graduate of Shawnee Mission East High School, Carey is the first of three boys. He was about 2 years old when the family moved to Westwood Hills. "I grew up loving running and singing. Singing was my forte - musicals and choir. I played a lot of guitar but singing was great passion of mine," he smiled.

"I was basically an academic failure," he followed. "I didn't like doing homework, and had difficulty applying myself." After high school, Will said, he spent four years at Johnson County JUCO, acknowledging with humor that it was a course that most students completed in two years. "It doesn't take most people four years to get their associate degree," he said wryly.

*"Step out of the boat, over what seems like the abyss. Trust in God. Put it all in Him. Jesus is calling you to cross the water."
-Seminarian Will Carey*

"I lived with a lot of shame about the academic failure, and sort of went down the wrong path," he shared, mentioning drugs and alcohol before his voice trailed off. He then added, "It was a couple years into that experience when I passed out behind the wheel of my dad's car. Totaled it." He stopped a moment, seemingly in deep thought.

"That was rock bottom. There was a lot of darkness," he reflected quietly.

It was in the wake of that experience that he heard the Lord say to him, "There will be light."

"So, how did you encounter Catholicism?" I asked.

"It was still while at Johnson County (JUCO) that I was introduced to St. Paul's Outreach (SPO), and Joe D'Amato," he said, his smile returning. "It was there that I had a deep encounter with Jesus and His love for me." Carey spent a lot of time with that community, meeting others who were alive with faith, "even in the Catholic realm, so to speak," he concluded. He acknowledged that SPO, "really gave me this mission for evangelization." In the summer of 2014, he transferred to Emporia State, walked on to the Cross Country Team. He spoke about his curiosity about the Catholic Church.

"That was where I met Fr. Nick Blaha," he said. Fr. Nick was in his first year as chaplain at Emporia State, Will in his 5th year in college. "I was still kind of church shopping, and I knew that I needed to give the Catholic Church a look, so I started going to RCIA."

"That is the gateway drug, as you know," he said, without missing a beat. "I realized that this is Christ's One True Church." Carey further observed that, in RCIA, he learned in discussions of the Sacraments of Marriage and Holy Orders that "celibacy is a thing." "It was then that I first heard the call to the priesthood."

His immediate response?

"Well, I didn't want to join the Church because there would be a call to mission and a call to the priesthood, and I wasn't at all sure I wanted *that!*" his emphasis recognized. He laughed. I have become familiar with this laugh. It's the laugh of a joyful person recognizing in retrospect the futility of arguing with God.

"I joined the Church at the end of my junior year of college," he said matter of fact, "after having gone through RCIA."

"Throughout my senior year in college, I really felt the call to be a missionary for the Church," Carey continued, "despite the fact that I had accepted an internship with a CPA firm the following summer." He eventually became a missionary with SPO and landed on the campus of Benedictine College the following year. "A very Catholic place," he said, again with a smile.

See Carey, p. 3

Carey, cont. from p. 2

He then began to describe his experience of discerning celibacy, “with a group of the male missionaries in the household,” he said. “Living with a group of men I didn’t choose—a gift of SPO household—I found myself invited into the love of Jesus Christ. We were putting everything on the altar. Writing out a blank check. The discernment of celibacy is one of the hardest things for young men,” he concluded thoughtfully. Then, adding with humor, “We called ourselves ‘the fellowship of the ringless!’”

I was incredulous. I spoke it. “Wait a minute,” I blurted out, “I thought discernment of the priesthood came first and then celibacy followed. But you’re telling me you experienced the process the other way around. How did that happen?”

I noted that, in his response, he spoke so freely and filled with joy.

“That was the hardest thing, to discern a celibate call,” he continued, “and when I learned that He had given me a heart set aside just for Himself, then the question is, where is that supposed to be?” He said he knew from his time at Benedictine College the potential to become a monk there. “But having met Fr. Nick Blaha and his great image of the priesthood and his example in living the diocesan priesthood, well-read, and a normal guy,” before interjecting, “I got to bow hunt deer with him,” Carey’s smile flashed again, “and the life he was living was really attractive to me.”

“In the fall of my second year as a missionary, I visited Denver, and there was a lot of peace. I knew I could live there.”

God had another plan.

“I was late in the application process and Denver was full. They couldn’t accept me. So I was assigned to St. Louis,” Carey said.

“That old will of God thing,” I commented.

“Exactly,” he replied, his eyes twinkling, “I *am* the Will of God!” He laughed once again, and I caught the pun he intended.

“Will-iam?” I asked.

“Yes,” he replied, “I am William, though I go by Will.”

What does he most look forward to in his priesthood? “I look forward to shepherding a flock,” he said, “with this heart that God gave me, that I’ve known for a long time was made for Him. I’ve got a great dad. Without the full, Catholic understanding of fatherhood, however, I couldn’t have known what it meant to shepherd a flock in this way. Not only as family, but to guide and protect. I was the one, outside the 99, I was so far astray, and He came for me in the darkness. The Good Shepherd came for me, and now He’s inviting me to be a shepherd to His people. There’s such excitement for the mission that he’s given to me.”

There were now two sets of eye sockets leaking at that breakfast table. I hoped our server wouldn’t appear, asking if we needed anything.

When we could talk again, I asked Will about his advice for anyone discerning their future. His response was no less eloquent than all that he had shared with me in the preceding hour we had spent together. “Step out of the boat, over what seems like the abyss. Trust in God. Put it all in His hands. Jesus is calling you to cross the water.” To young men, he added, “Become fishers of men. And that doesn’t necessarily mean become a priest,” he clarified.

Men of faith must become fishers of men regardless their vocation. I walked to my car inspired, and grateful for young people like Will who courageously answer God’s call, whether to a priestly or religious vocation, or to marriage.

By the way, we crushed the Million Dollar Bacon.

SEMINARIAN BIRTHDAYS
November/December

Cesar Gomez Nov 26

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

National Vocations Awareness Week
November 6-12, 2022

Pray for Vocations

Check the website [Calendar](#) and the website [News](#) tab

Whoever Eats This Bread Will Live Forever
Catholic Foundation of Northeast Kansas
Deo Gratias Appreciation Dinner
Thursday, November 10, 2022 5:30 PM
Savior Pastoral Center

2022 Honorees

Distinguished Family: Don and Janice Arth

Distinguished Organization: Catholic Education Foundation

Join a wonderful evening event, honoring two of our very own, Don and Janice Arth, along with the Catholic Education Foundation, at the Deo Gratias Appreciation Dinner. A complimentary dinner will be served. Check the [website calendar](#) for details.

To directly register for the event, [click here](#), or call the CFNEK office at 913-647-3062.



November General Membership Meeting—Special Time!

Our November General Membership Meeting will include the annual Memorial Mass for deceased members, starting at **6:00 PM** at **Curé of Ars Church**.

The club meeting will follow in the Fr. Burack Room at the church. We will have a short business meeting. There will be no program. Please bring a light appetizer or dessert to share.

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

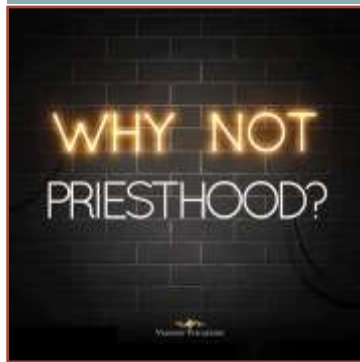
Membership
Joane Wilkerson

Programs
Larry Ryan

Communications
Michael Skoch

Trustees
Len Chmelka
Ray Zielinski
George Len

District Governor
John Caton



**Vocation Awareness
Week 11/6-12/2022**

Date	Agenda	Location
November 1 Tuesday	First Tuesday Holy Hour For Vocations 6:00 PM	Curé of Ars Church Leawood, KS
November 3 Thursday	JOCO Serra General Member- ship Meeting	Curé of Ars Church Leawood, KS 6:00 PM—Mass
November 4 Friday	First Friday Holy Hour For Vocations 11:00 AM	Holy Spirit Church Overland Park, KS
November 6-12 Week	Vocations Awareness Week	See the website for details
November 10 Thursday	JOCO Serra Holy Hour for Vocations	See website for Zoom link
November 17 Thursday	JOCO Serra Holy Hour for Vocations	See website for Zoom link
November 24 Thursday	JOCO Serra Holy Hour for Vocations	See website for Zoom link
November 28 Monday	JOCO Serra Board Meeting	Holy Spirit Church Overland Park 7:00 PM
December 1 Thursday	JOCO Serra General Member- ship Meeting	Church of the Nativity Leawood, KS MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT
December 2 Friday	First Friday Holy Hour For Vocations 11:00 AM	Holy Spirit Church Overland Park, KS
December 6 Tuesday	First Tuesday Holy Hour For Vocations 6:00 PM	Curé of Ars Church Leawood, KS
December 8 Thursday	JOCO Serra Holy Hour for Vocations	See website for Zoom link
December 15 Thursday	JOCO Serra Holy Hour for Vocations	See website for Zoom link

SJV from p.1

Deacon Tim took the group to the house chapel, the altar of which is pictured right. It was the 3 o'clock hour, and someone suggested the group pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, which we did. It was a wonderful, spur-of-the-moment recollection.

Together with the seminarians, the Serrans enjoyed a happy hour at the Lowry Beer Garden, a spot in southeast Denver that has apparently become a go-to place for the biennial seminary visit. From there, the combined group concluded the day at a local Italian establishment, Café Luca, enjoying a traditional 4-course Italian meal that was over-the-top wonderful!

More photos from the day follow below. Top (L to R): the altar of the SJV chapel, John Caton and Rosemary Weber enjoy conversation with seminarian, Jacob Cofer at Lowry Beer Garden; Dan Eliason and seminarian Andrew Buyle get acquainted; middle (L to R): Fr. Daniel Eusterman speaking to the group about SJV; Larry Ryan and seminarian, Zach McGuinness share a laugh; Cathedral organist, Phil Bordeleau dusts the pipes; bottom, a photo of the entire group at Café Luca, a local Italian establishment in Denver, where great food and great conversation capped off the day's visit.

