



SERRA NEWSLETTER

from the Chaplain's desk...



Dear Serrans,

It is a privilege for me to accompany the Serra Club of Markham-Scarborough as their chaplain. The Lord calls many to follow him, and the prayers of the

Serrans help to make that call heard in a special way.

During my time at St. Augustine's Seminary, I saw the fruit of prayers for vocations to the priesthood and the diaconate, and I daily see in the parish people responding to and living their vocations to married life, consecrated life, and vocations of service to Church and society. The Lord is gracious in allowing us to be part of making his voice heard.

I am looking forward to being part of the Serra mission to encourage those whom the Lord calls to respond with generous hearts. Let us give heartfelt thanks to God for 15 years of the Serra Club of Markham-Scarborough, and ask him to continue to bless our efforts.

With prayers,
Fr. John-Mark Missio
Chaplain, Serra Club of Markham-Scarborough

President's corner



As the leaves fall during the Autumn season, let us in our daily prayers affirm and support vocations in our Catholic Church - the priesthood, the consecrated religious life and the diaconate. Let us also remember the words of

Saint Junipero Serra "Always forward, never back."

The Annual Bishop's Altar Server Awards was held at St. Bernadette's Parish in Ajax on Saturday, October 19, 2024. The award recipients consisted of 64 altar servers from Scarborough parishes and 51 from Durham parishes. Bishop Vincent Nguyen celebrated the Mass along with other priests representing their parishes.

Serra Club of Markham-Scarborough (SCMS) will celebrate its 15th Charter Anniversary from Serra International with a Dinner/Dance to be held on Sunday, December 8, 2024, at Precious Blood Church Hall. Cost of the ticket is \$55 per person, and a memento will be provided.

SCMS will have the Monstrance of Pope Benedict from Serra International on December 7 and December 8 as we celebrate our 15th Charter Anniversary. The Mass on Saturday, December 7 at 8:00 am will conclude with Exposition, Adoration and Benediction using the Monstrance of Pope Benedict.

From my family to yours, I wish all our members a holy and blessed Christmas season this year, thankful to our Lord Jesus Christ for all that He has given us and continues to give us as we keep Christ in Christmas.

In Christ,
Dennis Wahking
President, Serra Club of Markham-Scarborough

37th Annual Bishop's Altar Server Awards Eastern Region



It was indeed a Serra well-organized 37th Annual Bishop's Altar Server Awards Ceremony held at St. Bernadette Parish in Ajax, Ontario, on Saturday, October 19, 2024.

This event was sponsored through a collaboration of two Serra Clubs: Durham and Markham-Scarborough.

There were 14 parishes from Scarborough and 8 parishes from the Durham Region who participated in the awards ceremony. Approximately 114 Altar Server Awardees attended this event with their parents & families. These altar servers were recognized for:

- Appreciating and understanding their responsibilities at the altar,
- Showing dedication and leadership in their parish community, and
- Being visible witnesses of their faith, and role models in both their parish Masses and their school Masses.

Congratulations to all the Altar Server Awardees from the Eastern Region who received the Bishop's Medal for Service from the hands of the Most Reverend Bishop Vincent Nguyen, Auxiliary Bishop - Eastern Pastoral Region of the Archdiocese of Toronto.

The Mass was well attended with the presence of the Pastors from different parishes in Scarborough & Durham region. The Eucharistic Celebration was very solemn and the church was at full capacity. Our sincerest gratitude goes to Rev. Chris Lemieux, Pastor, of St. Bernadette Parish, the church choir and their Catholic League Ladies Group for their generous support in making the 2024 Bishop's Altar Server Awards ceremony and reception a success. Thanks!

Blessings,
Maria-Luz Manalo
Treasurer, Serra Club of Markham-Scarborough



Bishop's Altar Server Awards Medals blessed by Bishop Nguyen



Maria-Luz prepping the Altar Servers



SCMS (L-R): Evelyn, Fran, Olivia, Zenaida, Francine, Nenita & Bebe

Global and Local News: Announcements and Reminders



Brought to you by Felisa (Baby) Pulumbarit, Trustee for Vocations, Serra Council for Canada; Past District Governor, Ontario, Canada; Charter President, Serra Club of Markham-Scarborough

Serra US Rally - January 23-26, 2025

Now is a great time to sign up for the 2025 Serra US Rally! Retreat to sunny, warm Miami this winter! Serrans from around the country gather to pray, learn, and be inspired to promote vocations in new ways. We have registered already for this US Rally and we encourage anyone to experience this event in order to:

1. Make new connections with other Serrans
2. Get new ideas to create a culture of Vocations
3. Experience Miami's culture and the beautiful weather
4. Join a special event with the Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary, one of the fastest growing religious communities in the US today.

Fran and I will take this opportunity to go on a Cruise while in Miami, as our winter getaway. I am also joining the Nominating Committee of Serra International during the US Rally.

Vocation Awareness - November 3-9, 2024

While we pray for vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life every day as our Serra mission, I invite you to reflect, and to ponder the question, 'Who cares about these things?'

Priests are our spiritual fathers - fathers from whom we ask advice, and to whom we can also give advice so that they may live their lives more faithfully as consecrated. If the priest is doing something wrong, tell him personally and with great charity. Woe to him who murmurs behind any priest or brother of the community! As Serrans, we have to protect, support and love these priests. Remember that priests are not perfect, they also have good and bad days, so let us give them our utmost understanding. The priest's family is made up of the "staff", the work team, the Pastoral Council and all the faithful.

Let us pray for our priests: Almighty and eternal God, in Your unfailing love, You provide ministers for Your Church. We pray for those whom You call to serve the Church as

priests, and inspire in them a generous response. Grant them courage and vision to serve Your people. May their lives and service call Your people to respond to the presence of Your Spirit among us that, faithful to the Gospel and the hope of Jesus Christ we may: announce glad tidings to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives, set prisoners free and renew the face of the earth. Amen.

Advent 2024

Are you ready for the coming of the Baby Jesus? Have you considered attending a Retreat to prepare your hearts? Most



of our parishes offer the Advent Retreat, there is also a Retreat available in Manresa (<https://www.manresa.ie/>). The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem will have theirs on December 1, 2024. Otherwise, please check Youtube for many Advent Reflections.

I invite you to our 2024 Dawn Masses at 5:30 am at St Patrick's Church in Markham from December 16 to 24, 2024. Light breakfast is served after the Mass.

This December, starting on the 1st, I am very excited for the arrival of the Pope Benedict Monstrance from the Serra International Office of John Liston and his staff, in time for our SCMS 15th Charter Anniversary. If you want to schedule the Monstrance in your parish in Markham and Scarborough, please contact Baby at 416-557-4757 / 88chalice@gmail.com. Thank you Serra International for this opportunity, we are grateful and blessed indeed to reach this milestone with the presence of this Monstrance of Pope Benedict. Thank you Lord for guiding us along the way to our 15th year as Serrans. We are truly blessed to be workers in Your vineyard for vocation to the priesthood and religious life.

On behalf of Fran and our family, we wish you all a very merry Christmas and many blessings for the New Year 2025 (Jubilee),

Felisa (Baby) Pulumbarit

Charter President of SCMS

Chair for the 15th Charter Anniversary

Trustee for Vocation (Serra Council for Canada)

Vocation Stories

On November 2, 2024, our Club had the privilege of celebrating Mass officiated by Fr. John Egbert, following our monthly Eucharistic Adoration at Precious Blood Catholic Church. Fr. Egbert was also our guest speaker at our Club meeting.



Fr. John Egbert Baes Dumali was born on June 19, 1988, in Roxas City, Capiz, Philippines, the second of three children of the late Egbert F. Dumali and Yolanda B. Dumali. Baptized on August 29, 1988, in Pilar, Capiz, he began his formative education at Pilar Central School, where he graduated in 2001. His

secondary education was completed at St. Pius X Seminary, the minor seminary of the Archdiocese of Capiz, where he graduated from high school in 2005.

Fr. Egbert, as he is fondly called, earned his Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Sancta Maria Mater et Regina Seminarium in Cagay, Roxas City, graduating in 2009. He pursued further theological studies at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, where he completed his degree in Sacred Theology in 2012.

He was ordained to the diaconate on October 30, 2013, by then-Archbishop of Capiz, Jose Cardinal F. Advincula Jr., who is now the Archbishop of Manila. After more than seven months of humble service as a deacon, Fr. Egbert was ordained as a priest on May 19, 2014, at the Most Holy Trinity Parish in Pilar, Capiz.

Following his ordination, Fr. Egbert received his first assignments at St. Pius X Seminary in Roxas City, serving as both the Spiritual Director and Sports Director. Concurrently, he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the Archdiocesan Curia and Assistant Chaplain at Roxas Provincial Memorial Hospital. After more than a year of performing his priestly ministry in the Archdiocese of Capiz, he was sent by his former Archbishop for further studies at the University of Santo Tomas, where he completed his Licentiate in Canon Law in 2020.

Upon his return to the Archdiocese of Capiz, he resumed his involvement at St. Pius X Seminary as Vice-Rector, Senior High School Director, and Sports Director, assignments he held from September 2020 until July 2024.

Fr. Egbert also took on the role of Pro-Chancellor at the Archdiocesan Curia from October 2020 to May 2021, was appointed Associate Judicial Vicar in June 2023, and shortly thereafter, as Censor Librorum in September 2023.

Currently, Fr. Egbert is on a study leave to pursue a Licentiate degree in Sacred Theology with a specialization in Patristic Studies at St. Augustine's Seminary in Canada..



Kathryne and Dennis thanking Fr. Egbert for being our guest speaker and sharing his uplifting vocation story

Vocation Stories *continued*

Our October Eucharist Adoration, Holy Mass and General Meeting was held on Saturday, October 12, 2024, at St. Martin de Porres (SMdP) Parish under the gracious invitation of Fr. Anthony Gonsalves. We thank him from the bottom of our hearts for his hospitality and for inviting us to his parish. We were also blessed by having some of the parishioners of SMdP join us in our celebration and to hear Fr. Anthony share his inspiring vocation story during our meeting.



Fr. Anastasio Anthony Gonsalves, was ordained at St. Michael's Cathedral on May 13, 1995, of the Archdiocese of Toronto.

He felt a calling at an early age but for one reason or another, put it on the back burner. Fr. Anthony, as he prefers to be called, was born in

Bombay, India. He attended secondary School and University run by the Jesuits in Bombay. He obtained an honours degree with a major in Microbiology and a minor in Zoology.

In 1976, Fr. Anthony immigrated to Canada and began working in a Laboratory in Rexdale for several years. In 1982, he enrolled in an undergraduate program at the University of Toronto, earning a B.Sc. Honours in Psychology and Biology with the intention of becoming a Clinical Psychologist. However, God had other plans for him. He decided to work at the Toronto Public school Board in the research department until 1989.

In 1989, he spent a year at Serra House before entering St. Augustine's Seminary, where he underwent five years of formation, leading to his ordination in 1995.

Fr. Anthony's first assignment as an Associate Pastor was at St. Margaret's Church in Midland, where he served for three years. He then became a Pastor at Holy Name Church on the Danforth until 2005. Following that, he was assigned to Canadian Martyrs Church at Woodbine and O'Connor, serving as Pastor for six years.

In 2011, Fr. Anthony transferred to St. Andrew's Church in Brechin, where he shepherded his flock until 2014. After taking a year-long sabbatical in India to study counselling, he returned and was asked to serve at St. Martin de Porres Church. Fr. Anthony has now been serving at SMdP for seven and a half years.

Everything that Fr. Anthony has achieved is by the grace of God, who has been with him throughout his journey, through all its ups and downs. As Fr. Anthony says, "God never abandons His children; He is always present. It is up to us to recognize Him and inspire others to seek Him through the example of our lives."



Fr. Anthony delivering his homily



Musicians @ SMdP: Adrian, Theresa, John @ keyboard



Fr. Anthony shares his vocation story with SCMS members & SMdP parishioners

Vocation Stories *continued*

Our guest speaker, Sister Lorie, at our September 21, 2024 meeting, was uplifting and heartening. This is Sister Lorie's vocation story.



Sister Lorie Java Nuñez, O.L.M., was born in the Philippines. She is the third child of six siblings in her family. Being part of a large family, at an early age of 5, she was already fully aware of the importance of helping others and being responsible.

During the persecution of the Filipino people under the Marcos regime, she became interested in joining Our Lady's Missionaries (O.L.M.) as a way of helping others. In 1991, she entered Our Lady's Missionaries and began her journey to follow Christ. She became active in an ecology awareness seminar and found the apostolate challenging and life giving.

In her journey to become a nun, she worked in the Philippines, Brazil and Canada, working with street kids, the plight of the indigenous community and ecology awareness. Sister Lorie has served as a missionary since September 8, 1992. She had her first vow on March 25, 1996, and final vow on September 15, 2001, in Brazil.

Shortly after her final vow, she accepted another challenge in the Philippines to provide the sisters of similar age the opportunity to experience community life together. In that time, it was also called the formation house. She lived there as part of the formation team from 2003 to 2005. As a team member, she was assigned to work as a vocation promotion directress of the O.L.M. Philippine Mission.

In 2012, she returned to Brazil and became part of the discernment as the Brazil Mission approached its closure. At this time, she saw so many blessings that sustained her in her journey, especially when she had to bid goodbye to the mission in 2013.

She returned to Canada and worked at St. Thomas More Parish in Toronto as facilitator in the rite of Christian Initiation of Adult Program.

In her vocation story, Sister Lorie shared that one spiritual reflection that encouraged her is prayer, all kinds of prayers: scriptural meditation, contemplative, Zen meditation. One of the sisters at O.L.M., Sister Elaine MacInnes, always encouraged her to do Zen meditation which is an incredible help to Sister Lorie.

She finds strength in her faith and loving more people, like Serrans, which is a diverse group. Each moment for her is an invitation to love and serve the Lord especially now that she is in the Presentation Manor Retirement Home. Every day, Sister Lorie spends time with patients with Dementia, by walking and talking with them; and just by bearing their burden. In Galatians 6:2, it urges us to bear each other's burden. Be aware that we are not the only ones struggling and to seek God's peace.

Sister Lorie loves the thrill and the challenges she experiences being with the poor and the marginalized. For her, the most meaningful encounter is to experience another culture.



Evelyn thanking Sister Lorie (left) for inspiring us with her vocation story

15th Charter Anniversary

- ◆ December 8, 2024: It's time to celebrate 15 years of being a part of this wonderful SCMS family!
- ◆ Join us for dinner with wine, desserts, dancing, incredible door prizes, and more.
- ◆ Don't miss out on a fun evening partying with your SCMS family, other Serrans, our invited priests and sisters.
- ◆ Attire: Semi-formal.
- ◆ Purchase your ticket soon (\$55.00) by contacting Maria-Luz at mlmanalo@sympatico.ca or Dennis at dwhaking@hotmail.com.



Petitions

Please pray for those suffering from illness or going through challenging times, especially:

- ◆ Maria Luz Manalo and Evelyn Manalo
- ◆ Aggie Gomez
- ◆ Patrick and Kay Booker
- ◆ Segunda Licudine Corpus (101 years old)



Divine Healer, we bring before you our illnesses, sufferings and challenges. We ask for your enduring strength and healing grace to sustain us in our journey. Grant us patience and faith as we navigate this difficult path. Please use this experience

to draw us closer to you and deepen our trust in your plan. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Immaculate Mary, Mother of Vocations, pray for us.

St. Junipero Serra, pray for us.

Rosary Sunday



Did you know that a handful of Club members pray the Rosary together weekly? We pray the rosary every Sunday at 7:00 pm, via Zoom. And we are blessed to have Francine McIntyre-Wheatley, our Club member, coordinate this prayerful time for us.

Please join us and invite your family and friends, as well. Send Francine an email at francine.pray247@gmail.com

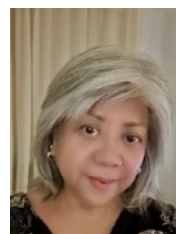
to be added in her email list.

Interested in learning more about the Holy Rosary? Shout out to Lydia MacPherson, our new SCMS member, for sharing this [website](#) to the Rosary Center & Confraternity.

A Note of Thanks

To our contributors, Fr. John-Mark, Dennis, Felisa (Baby), Maria-Luz, Bebe, Evelyn, and Kathyne, and guest speakers Sister Lorie, Fr. Anthony and Fr. Egbert, my heartfelt appreciation and thanks for your gifts of words, passion and faith. Your efforts have not only enriched our newsletter but also helped us draw closer to the spirit of Advent: a season of watchful waiting and joyful preparation.

May the blessings of this holy season fill everyone's heart and home with peace, hope, and the enduring joy of Christ's Love.



In Christ,
Theresa Vandenbroek
Contributing Editor
VP Communications, Serra Club of Markham-Scarborough
Secretary, Serra Council for Canada