



# The Saginaw Serran

Where Vocations are Fostered

Vol. 2, Issue 3, March, 2006

Established June 20, 1951

## A Message from Our President

By BILL RUGER

Our club is answering the challenge of supporting seminarians in their quest of serving the church of the Saginaw Diocese. With the involvement of our members, and local Catholics, we are addressing an important mission of the Serra Club and the efforts of our Bishop, His Excellency Robert J. Carlson. We hope that our March dinner will raise funds for seminarians and will be the first of many successful club endeavors.



Efforts by club members have produced many excellent programs during the past quarter.

Presentations have covered diocesan services and an analysis of articles pertinent to the Catholic faith. The latest was an excellent presentation on Dan Brown's controversial novel "The Da Vinci Code." Dr. Thomas Renna, a history instructor from Saginaw Valley State University,

pointed out some of the inaccuracies in the book. All of the programs have addressed the objective of increasing our knowledge of our faith.

We need to concentrate on spreading the word about our club in order to expand membership. Our VP of Communications, Ray Bartels, has done an excellent job that hopefully has increased the visibility of the Saginaw Serra Club. We need to support his efforts by sharing information with our fellow parishioners and other Catholic contacts. Spread the "Good News!" Thanks to George Ayotte for bringing back information from his California trip about Fr. Serra. I know his visit to Fr. Serra's Carmel basilica strengthened George's commitment to our mission. See George if you want more information on the basilica.

We are studying the feasibility of hosting the Regional Serra Convention in late September 2007. We would expect around 125 fellow Serrans to attend and hope that all Saginaw members would assist us if we pursue this event. As warm weather approaches, let us also warm our hearts to the needs of our church and those who need our prayers and support in our community and the world..

## New Meaning to Religious Life...

By SR. CORRINE WEISS, SJ

I was taught by wonderful nuns throughout my school days in Detroit. Through their example I knew I wanted to be like them. My call also was a gift of the Holy Spirit. By 16, I was a postulant and well on my way to a life that has kept unfolding for more than 50 years.

Many of us can recall, with some trepidation and uncertainty, the many challenges and changes in the Church over these past decades, especially since Vatican II. Yet those of us who have had the grace to remain in the vowed life during this time continue to profess our commitment to the essence of religious life -- to discover God as our one requirement.

Has religious life changed? Yes. Do we still have a future? Yes!

So what is it that gets us up each morning, impasses our ministries and propels us forward? What are we called to do today?

While we still teach, minister to the sick and dying, reach out to the poor and marginalized, counsel the brokenhearted, and choose public professions, we are going through a shift. Despite our diminishing numbers and "ag-

ing," we believe religious life is more relevant than ever. Our unique way of following Jesus allows us to be a special voice in the crowd.

Someone in this world needs to convince others of God's unconditional love. Being part of a religious community gives us the freedom to do this. The Spirit surely has not abandoned our people. Our spirituality and hope speak to them and assures them God is alive and well in our world. But we are not alone in our quest to serve others. We gather workers with a common vision, lay people with profound faith. Only together can we risk to be different, to help plant seeds of equality, harmony and mutual interdependence. Nearly every order has lay associates who have a part in its prayer life and ministry. Together we keep the dream of Christ's special discipleship alive.

So, while we honor the legacies and traditions of our founders, we continue to contemplate and pursue our future. We are committed to the journey, wherever it may lead us. We know the courage we need only comes from ourselves, and is dependent on a deep prayer life. We hope to continue to articulate who we are in the world and how we are a gift to the Church. We look to the prophetic and mystical core of religious life and invite others to join us.

We're on the Web at [www.saginawserraclub.org](http://www.saginawserraclub.org)

**The Lenten Season**

By FR. RON DOMBROWSKI

Once again, on the first of March, we celebrate the Season of Lent. A time for all of us who need to come back to the Lord and change our lives. This can be done in many ways. The Church's Lenten traditions are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. This is always a good place for us to begin. We could ask ourselves:



**Prayer** -- What is my prayer life like? Do I spend time each day talking with the Lord? Am I communicating my joys, and sorrows, to the Lord? Do I take the time to have a heart-to-heart talk with the Lord? Do I take time to read and meditate on the Sacred Scriptures? Do I use the "Little Black Book" as a guide during this holy season?

**Fasting** -- This is an ancient discipline within the

Church which goes back thousands of years. Our Lord went away from everyday life to fast and pray and get closer to His Father. Do I spend time fasting and getting closer to the Lord?

**Almsgiving** -- We always have those who are in need around us. Do I think of ways that I can help the needy? Perhaps volunteering at the East Side Soup Kitchen by helping to prepare or serve a meal or just volunteering to help those who are in need and could use my help. Perhaps your parish has a food pantry. How can I assist the needy in my parish community? How can I put my faith into action? This is not an easy thing to do but we have the example of our Lord, the example of the saints who have gone before us reaching out to others. How am I going to leave my mark on the world?

The Lenten Season is here once again and it is up to all of us; we will only get out of this Lenten Season what we personally put into it. Are we going to use this time to get closer to the Lord, or are we going to let this Lenten Season pass us by?

**Inaugural Serra Dinner for Seminarians**

By BERNIE COPPOLINO

Would you like to rub shoulders with our new Bishop, find out what's happening with Serra from the top man in the organization and contribute to seminarians' education all at the same time? Then the Saginaw Serra Club has just "the ticket" for you -- our Club's first annual dinner and program for the benefit of The Bishop Robert J. Carlson Seminarians Endowment Fund on Wednesday, March 22.

Guest speakers at this event will be Bishop Carlson and 17th Circuit Court Judge Dennis B. Leiber of Grand Rapids, MI, who also is president of Serra Club International.

Proceeds from this event will help pay for the education of Saginaw Diocesan seminarians. The evening starts with a 6 p.m. social, followed by the dinner and program. Tickets are \$30 per person, and can be obtained by calling Ray Bartels (790-1224), Bill Ruger (792-6473) or Jean Seman (792-2011) before Wednesday, March 15. See you there!

**Why I am a Serran** By ROBERT VITU, MD

I grew up in a strong Catholic family in Chicago. My parents were very active in their parish and we frequently had priests as dinner guests. I attended Catholic schools and graduated from the Stritch School of Medicine at Loyola University in Chicago in 1953.

When I was in the seventh and eighth grade, I seriously considered becoming a priest but eventually decided this was not my vocation. Monsignor Adams was disappointed.

After military service, I settled in Saginaw and

began my medical practice. One of my beloved mentors, Dr. Joseph Markey, introduced me to the Serra Club and I became an enthusiastic member, chairing the last Serra Vocations Institute in 1966.

By the early- to mid-1970's, I was up to my ears in medical staff committee meetings at St. Mary's Hospital, and regretfully resigned from Serra because I could no longer attend meetings.

I had always been aware of the vital necessity to encourage vocations to the priesthood. I have continued to pray for vocations and I rejoined Serra when I retired in late 1994.

**A Prayer for Our Seminarians...**

Lord Jesus, I ask your special blessing on all young men preparing for priesthood in our seminaries. I pray that they will grow in faith, hope and charity.

May their hearts overflow with your compassion, understanding and generosity, and may their desire to serve

you inspire others to answer your call.

Lord, give our seminarians the grace to follow you more perfectly. When they are lonely or discouraged, fill them with your peace

Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make the hearts of our seminarians like yours. Amen!

Fr. Joseph, S.T.

## **An Interview with Jose Maria Cabrera**

### **When did you realize you had a vocation to the priesthood?**

It was during August 1996. I was in my last year of Catholic high school and ready to go to college. I was part of the youth group in high school which helped me to share my faith in a wonderful way with other teens. I would say that my vocation was in its most primitive stage back then.

### **Who was most influential in your decision?**

My vocation history has two stages. First, Fr. Rosendo Huguet CM, has guided me as spiritual director since I was 14. I could see in his eyes the joy of a true disciple of Christ. I first became a Vincentian seminarian.

Once I arrived in the United States I met Bishop Ken Untener. I saw the same joy in his eyes and was very moved by his preaching skills. I said to myself, "God I want to preach your word that way!" I became a Saginaw seminarian. And here I am, happy and joyful to be on the way.

### **What surprised you most about seminary life?**

Back in 1997 I thought seminaries were filled with angelical people who were perfect. Seminaries are definitely places where called men work on overcoming their weaknesses and strengthen their talents, not for themselves but for the Lord and God's people.

### **What would surprise others about seminary life?**

I would say that others would be surprised at all the talents we find in seminarians. Many of the guys have given up very comfortable professional lives in order to become priests.

### **What other occupation would you consider if you weren't going into the priesthood?**

Being a psychologist would be a great option, because it would be helpful in counseling matters. But I have another dream too -- becoming a Bible scholar. However, I don't see myself doing anything else without being a priest first.

### **Do you have a favorite prayer or Biblical verse?**

There are many passages from the Bible that inspire me. Psalm 42 (1,2a) does it in a very particular way: "As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." This is an amazing image for the spiritual journey.

I also love a quote from Fr. Pedro Arrupe SJ. which says: "Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with your evenings, how you will spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love and it will decide everything."

### **There's a fire in your home, and you can only grab three things as you leave. What would you take?**

My Study Bible, the picture of my mother, and my passport!!! May I have fourth option? (the passport can fit in my pocket any way) – My computer.

### **What do you like to do if you have free time?**

Free time? (laughing) I love playing guitar with people that play other instruments, or sometimes just alone. I also love traveling and enjoy going to the movies, especially drama and real-life stories.

### **Is there a particular type of ministry you are drawn to, such as mission work or visiting the sick?**

Music ministry is my passion, although visiting the sick was a wonderful experience during my pastoral year at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Bay City. I enjoy migrant ministry as well.

### **What do you look forward to most following your ordination?**

I look forward to presiding over Mass. Liturgy is very important in my life and in the life of the Church.

*Editor's note: Jose Maria Cabrera, 25, is a native of Peru, where his family still lives. He came to the U.S. in 2003 to stay with his brother who lived in Saginaw at the time. He attends The University of St. Mary of the Lake's Mundelin Seminary in Mundelin, IL. (www.vocations.org.) He is slated for ordination as a Deacon in November, and to be ordained to the Priesthood in June 2007. You may email him at [amigodecristojesus@msn.com](mailto:amigodecristojesus@msn.com)*

## **GIVE SO OTHERS CAN LIVE**

**By Mary Catherine Siers**

They" are adults, teenagers, children and infants who could be a family member, friend, coworker, neighbor, or parishioner.

"They" are among the more than 90,000 people across the nation -- including nearly 3,000 in Michigan -- needing organ transplants.

April is National Organ & Tissue Donor Awareness Month. What can you do as a Catholic and a Serran? Educate yourself on organ and tissue donation, prayerfully consider the issue and talk with your family about your decision.

The Catholic Church endorses organ and tissue donation as an act of charity and love. Pope John Paul 11 called it "everyday heroism". Pope Benedict XVI is the first pope to acknowledge that he is an organ donor.

The critical need for donors has resulted in an increase in living donations. Recipients can receive a kidney, a lobe of the liver and a portion of a lung from a living donor. Following death, doctors can harvest the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, pancreas, and small intestine, as well as corneas, skin, bone, ligaments, and heart valves.

I received a kidney from a living donor in March 2000.

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Jerry Talbot	792-4130
Bob Vitu	799-1236
Sharon Wahl (Trustee)	799-2925
Marty Wilson	790-2727

**Do you know someone who would like to know more about Serra? Call Bud at 989-792-5571, or email him at budcjrigh@aol.com**

**The USA Council of Serra International invites you to visit its website at [www.serrus.org](http://www.serrus.org) for up-to-date information on Serra and other great information.**

The Saginaw Serran is published four times each year in March, June, September and December. Please submit articles at least two weeks prior to publishing date. For question or comments please contact Ray Bartels at 989-790-1224 or email at raybartels@charter.net.

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A 2005 Michigan law ensures that if you have signed the Michigan Organ and Tissue Donor Registry, doctors will carry out your wishes.

People of all ages and medical histories are eligible as potential donors, with doctors determining which organs and tissues qualify for transplant.

A donation coordinator and family support person will meet with your relatives to answer any questions and remain with them throughout the process.

There is no cost to the donor or the donor's family, and the procedure does not interfere with funeral plans including open casket services.

For more information on organ donation or to sign the state registry, call 800-482-4481 or online at [www.giftoflifemichigan.org](http://www.giftoflifemichigan.org).

**Program Schedule**

March 7	Pam Cole - <b>The East Side Soup Kitchen</b>
March 22	Bishop Robert J. Carlson and The Honorable Dennis Leiber, President of Serra International - <b>The Role of Serra in Vocations</b>
April 4	Fr. Dennis Kucharczyk - <b>Experiencing Kuwait</b>
April 18	Mass
May 2	<b>Youth Appreciation Day</b>
May 16	Internal Meeting
June 6	Sr. Corrine Weiss, SJ - <b>Mission Reflection</b>
June 20	Charter Night - Swan Valley Banquet Center

All meetings (except board sessions) are held at noon at the Center for Ministry. The Rosary is said at 11:30 a.m.

Our Board of Trustees meets at 12:15 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at Yeo and Yeo, 3023 Davenport..

**Prayer List**

Jerry Breen	Fr. Gerald F. Kukla
Fr. John Ederer	Fr. John S. Sarge
Angelo Guerriero	Fr. Richard M. Filary
Fr. Richard VanMullenkom	

**Serra Mission**

Our mission is to foster and affirm vocations to the ministerial priesthood and vowed religious life in the Saginaw Diocese and through this ministry enrich and develop our members' common Catholic faith.

The USA Council of Serra International invites you to visit its website at [www.serraus.org](http://www.serraus.org) for valuable and informative information about Serra International.

**The Serra Club of Saginaw**

The Center for Ministry  
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**The Serra Club of Saginaw, MI**

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Phone/Fax: 989-790-1224  
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**The 1st Annual Bishop Robert J. Carlson Dinner for the Benefit of Seminarians**

The Serra Club of Saginaw will host The First Annual Bishop's Dinner for the Benefit of Seminarians on Wednesday, March 22 at the Center for Ministry, 5802 Weiss. The event will feature Bishop Robert J. Carlson and International Serra President Dennis B. Leiber as guest speakers.

"This event will focus on the need for religious vocations in our church, and in our Diocese, and the important role that Serra plays in the effort to realize more vocations.." Said Club President Bill Ruger.

A social hour is set for 6 p.m., followed by dinner and speakers. The cost of the dinner is \$30 per person. Call Bill Ruger at 989-792-6473 or Jean Seman at 989-792-2011 for tickets.

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**A special thanks to Bill and Janet Ruger for underwriting the cost of the invitations for our March 22nd dinner!**