



SERRA CLUB OF CANBERRA

Newsletter February 2022

The Five Elements of Serra

- ✠ Spiritual growth in Christ
- ✠ Religious education of the laity
- ✠ Encouragement of church vocations
- ✠ Responsive lay leaders
- ✠ Association in Christian fellowship

PO Box 1070, Woden ACT 2606

Chaplain: Fr. Bill Kennedy

Pb: (02) 6214 2011

President: Michael Allam

Pb: (02) 62519333

Website: <http://www.serracanberra.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 Junípero Serra and all the saints, an increase of labourers for your Church, fellow labourers 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 for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer for the Perseverance in Vocations

O God, you have constituted your Only-Begotten Son supreme and eternal Priest for the glory of your majesty and the salvation of mankind: grant that those whom he has chosen ministers and dispensers of his mysteries may be found faithful in fulfilling the ministry they have received. We ask this through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Reminders

REMEMBER to say the Serran Prayer DAILY and 31 Club commitment.

Trustees Meeting

Thursday, 3rd March, 2022 5.30 p.m.

Rosary 6.10 p.m., Monthly Mass 6.30 p.m. Thursday, 10th March, 2022 at 6.10 p.m. Holy Trinity, Curtin followed by **dinner** 7.30 p.m. at the Private Dining Room Southern Cross Club, Woden.

Forthcoming Events

Every Friday: Evening Prayer and Adoration, Mary Help of Christians, Pearce 5.30 p.m.-6.00 p.m.

2nd March, 2022 (First Wednesday): Adoration St. Brigid's Dickson, **Serra commitment** - 12.00 noon-1.00 p.m.

4th March, 2022 (First Friday): Adoration at St. Christopher's Cathedral following 12.15 p.m. Mass.

5th March, 2022 – Serra Annual Retreat at The Carmel, 28 Mugga Way, Red Hill, 9.00 a.m. - 1.30 p.m. Light refreshments available.



MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE THIRTIETH WORLD DAY OF THE SICK – FEBRUARY 11, 2022

“Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:36).

Standing beside those who suffer on a path of charity.

Thirty years ago, Saint John Paul II instituted the [World Day of the Sick](#) to encourage the people of God, Catholic health institutions and civil society to be increasingly attentive to the sick and to those who care for them...

The theme chosen for this Thirtieth World Day of the Sick, “*Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful*” (Lk 6:36), makes us first turn our gaze towards God, who is “rich in mercy” (Eph 2:4); he always watches over his children with a father’s

love, even when they turn away from him. Mercy is God’s name par excellence; mercy, understood not as an occasional sentimental feeling but as an ever-present and active force, expresses God’s very nature. It combines strength and tenderness. For this reason, we can say with wonder and gratitude that God’s mercy embraces both fatherhood and motherhood (cf. *Ls* 49:15). God cares for us with the strength of a father and the tenderness of a mother; he unceasingly desires to give us new life in the Holy Spirit...

FEAST DAY – OUR LADY OF LOURDES – 11th February

Vail John Verrell

The Serra Club of Canberra has expressed condolences to Pauline (wife) and Fr. Luke Verrell (son) on the recent death of John. The Verrells will be known to most of you as they attended many of our John Stephen’s Memorial Lunches for parents of priests and religious. John served as an Acolyte at Star of the Sea Parish, Narooma NSW.

Always to go forward, never to turn back

Four Chaplains Day honors self-sacrificial World War II chaplains, including Catholic priest

By Katie Yoder - Washington, D.C. Newsroom CWN, Feb 3, 2022.

Four Chaplains Day, Feb. 3, recognizes the heroism of four World War II military chaplains who sacrificed their lives to save those trapped on a sinking U.S. Army transport ship.

“Their voices were the only thing that kept me going,” one survivor remembered of the fateful day in 1943. The four men — Fr. John P. Washington, a Catholic priest, Rev. George L. Fox, a Methodist minister, Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, and Rev. Clark V. Poling, a Reformed Church in America minister — died after ministering to civilians and military personnel on the sinking SS *Dorchester*.

The four first met in 1942, at the Army Chaplains School at Harvard University. Each chaplain held the rank of first lieutenant, [Columbia](#) magazine reported.

The ship, packed with more than 900 people, departed New York for an Army base in Greenland on Jan. 23, 1943, [Military Benefits](#) reported. A few days later, on Feb. 3, a German submarine torpedoed the ship in the middle of the night. The lights went out as the cold Arctic waters surrounded the soldiers.

Amid of panic, the chaplains remained calm — and sprang into action. Fr. Washington, who had celebrated Mass just hours before, now gave absolution, according to the [Army Historical](#)

[Foundation](#). The four offered their life jackets to men who did not have them, and helped as many as they could escape into lifeboats. They themselves stayed behind.

Several eyewitnesses later spoke of the chaplains’ bravery, [Military Benefits](#) reported.

At one point, Petty Officer John J. Mahoney remembered turning back to his cabin to find his gloves. Rabbi Goode halted him, saying, “Never mind. I have two pairs,” and handed him some.

Mahoney later realized that the rabbi had just one pair.

Off the ship and in the water filled with debris, oil, and dead bodies, Pvt. William B. Bednar remembered hearing “men crying, pleading, praying.” But then he heard the chaplains, who were “preaching courage.” Those voices, he said, kept him alive.

Another survivor, named Grady Clark, recalled the scene.

“As I swam away from the ship, I looked back. The flares had lighted everything. The bow came up high and she slid under,” Clark said. “The last thing I saw, the four chaplains were up there praying for the safety of the men. They had done everything they could. I did not see them again. They themselves did not have a chance without their life jackets.”

Another eyewitness, John Ladd, said, “It was the finest thing I have seen or hope to see this side of heaven.”

The ship sank in fewer than 30 minutes.

With the frigid air and water temperatures, many of the men died from hypothermia before they could be

rescued. Only 230 survived. Those who did remembered the chaplains linking arms and joining together in prayer and singing as the ship went down.

Today, they are remembered as “the four chaplains,” or “the immortal chaplains.”

In recognition of the chaplains’ heroism, Congress established Feb. 3 as “Four Chaplains Day” in 1988.

A year after their deaths, in 1944, Congress posthumously awarded each chaplain with a Purple Heart and the Distinguished Service Cross. In 1960, Congress also approved the Four Chaplains’ Medal, which was presented to the chaplains’ families the following year.

Throughout the country, the chaplains are remembered with monuments and memorials, including stained glass windows at the Pentagon, [Military Benefits](#) reported.

Their faces appeared on U.S. postage stamps in 1948, and, in 1951, President Harry S. Truman dedicated the Chapel of the Four Chaplains in the basement of Grace Baptist church in Philadelphia.

Today, the Four Chaplains Memorial Foundation, founded by the chaplains’ families and the ship’s survivors, continues their legacy, from supporting first responder chaplain programs to hosting student scholarship competitions.

Katie Yoder is a correspondent in Catholic News Agency’s Washington, D.C. bureau.

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