



The Lubbock SERRAN

Volume 10 Issue 1

July 2006

President's Message Footsteps In The Sea

By Carl Sundell

What you will notice when walking the ocean shore is that waves soon wash your footsteps out of the sand. If you try to retrace your steps, you cannot find them. The poet William Cowper reminds us of this in his great verse:

*God moves in mysterious ways,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.*

A fellow Serran asked me what the Serra Club had done recently to get vocations for the diocese of Lubbock. He was looking for footsteps in the sand ... trace evidence that as Serrans we exist for a purpose and have served our purpose well.

I could not give this Serran a direct answer. I don't know any Serrans or non-Serrans who have gone into the religious life because of Serra. Then again, perhaps many uncounted men and women have gone into the religious life because Serrans worldwide have prayed for vocations. How are we to know? God alone knows.

The first Serra Club was founded in 1934 and Serra Lubbock began in 1963. Those early and present Serrans have been praying for vocations all along. We may not produce many vocations locally, but we may be getting our prayers answered in God's mysterious ways.

Even though an increase in vocations is rarely to be found in the United States, the universal Church has experienced recently a 76 percent increase over the number of vocations for 1978.

How do we know whether the priests in our diocese from Mexico, Ireland, India and Holland are not God's "footsteps in the sea"? How do we know whether the nineteen deacons ordained last year and the three new seminary candidates for the priesthood, all from the Lubbock diocese, are not the result of Serrans and others riding a world-wide storm of prayers?

Perhaps we cannot expect always to judge the results of our labors in ways that are plainly evident. As Bishop Fulton Sheen used to say, God *always* answers our prayers in one of three ways: "Yes ... No ... Wait." It's the third answer that is not plainly evident. Yes, we have a shortage of priests, deacons, and nuns. Yet vocations are now coming to us from those in their mid and late years. Even from Serra Lubbock we have two members discerning a vocation to the Diaconate ... Pete Paniagua and Benny Phillips.

What more can we do? We can ask our bishop and priests what they have in mind. I know we are already helping in certain ways. We pray for vocations. When asked, we take up collections for the needs of the

seminarians. We offer the clergy a monthly forum in which to express their needs and to suggest specific ways we can help. We offer to make the Serra presence felt in every parish to the extent that pastors welcome us. Perhaps one day soon Serrans in every church, raising high their banner, will escort the priest to the altar at least one Sunday a month.

Most of all, we need to spread the word about Serra. We do not know why Serra has been kept a secret. Footsteps in the sea lead somewhere. God knows ... and is entitled to His secrets.

*Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.*

New Officers Installed



New officers installed at the May 26 meeting are Marty Martin, Membership Vice President; Jim Gibbler, Vocations Vice President; Pete Paniagua, Programs Vice President; Carl Sundell, President; Ed Quitevis, Secretary; Bob Goyette, 3 Year Trustee; and Tony Buxkemper, Treasurer. Other new officers not pictured are Judy Simmons, Communications Vice President; Elmus Beale, 1 Year Trustee; Elroy Simmacher, 2 Year Trustee; Dave Buescher, Foundation Representative; and Gary McDonald, Past President.

Sisters Corner

STAGES OF INITIAL FORMATION FOR CONSECRATED LIFE

What a privilege “crew” we are! Unlike Marriage, those women who respond to a call to the Community of the Franciscan Mission Sisters go through several phases before making a final commitment.

There is the Affiliate Phase, a time in which a young woman lives outside the community discerning her call to our style of life. She is guided by one of the Sisters in her inquiry process, her discernment and decision to ask to be admitted into the next phase, the Postulancy.

The time of postulancy is a period of transition which prepares the candidate to enter the novitiate. In this phase, while living within the community, she continues the process of discerning her call, becomes acquainted with community members, and endeavors to form herself as an authentic Christian while at the same time she is given classes on the life of St. Francis and the Franciscan Way of Life. This lasts a period of six months to a year.

Once the Postulancy phase has been completed the young woman may request to be admitted to the next phase which is the Novitiate Phase. This period consists of a two-year program during which the Novice learns the essentials of Consecrated Life so she can commit herself to Christ and His Church in the spirit of this Franciscan Community. During the first year she concentrates on inner growth with God and self. The second year consists of formative ministry and education thus helping the Novice integrate prayer, community life and ministry.

Finally, there is a period of temporary vows which extend from five to nine years before final Commitment. This leads to my final announcement:

Sister Patricia Esparza is spending the summer months as her immediate preparation for life vows, or final commitment. She will make her Profession of Life Vows on Saturday, July 29, 2006, at a special Liturgy celebrated by Bishop Placido Rodriguez, CMF. Because Sister Patricia has been assigned to ministry at St. Patrick’s Church here in Lubbock, it was decided to choose St. Patrick’s Church to celebrate this special occasion. The Mass will take place at 10:30 A.M. followed by a dinner/
(See **Sisters Corner** Page 4)

New Members Inducted



Gary McDonald and Louise Sundell welcome new members Mary and Ken Bulin and Mike O'Donnell.

The Lubbock Serra Club recently inducted four new members. The new members are Mike O'Donnell, Cindy Ward, and Ken and Mary Bulin. The new members bring a wide variety of experiences and interests to the club.

Mike O'Donnell was raised in Fabens, Texas. His father was Irish Catholic and his mother a convert. Mike married Sarah Harris from McCamey, Texas in 1981. She is Vice-President of My Bank in Lubbock. Mike and Sarah have three children, a daughter in Odessa who has three children, and two sons attending Texas A&M University. Mike served 26 years as a state trooper with the Texas Department of Public Safety. He retired in

New Officers

On May 26 the Lubbock Serra Club held its monthly dinner meeting at the Catholic Renewal Center. The evening started with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist by Fr. Bill Anton, Serra Chaplin. Following mass, the new officers for 2006-07 were introduced and sworn in.

New officers are: President, Carl Sundell; Vice President for Programs, Pete Paniagua; Vice President for Vocations, James Gibler; Vice President for Membership, Marty Martin; Vice President for Communications, Judy Simmons; Secretary, Ed Quitevis; Treasure, Tony Buxkemper; Trustee, 1- year, Elmus Beale; Trustee, 2- year, Elroy Simmacher; Trustee, 3 – year Bob Goyette; Serra Foundation Representative, David Buescher; and Past President, Gary McDonald.

After the swearing in ceremony the club shared dinner and fellowship.

2004 and is currently working on a teaching certificate in the Physical Sciences. Mike likes to read books on history, civics, and Catholic literature, and has a special interest in the pro-life movement. He is a Knight of Columbus in the Holy Spirit Council and was Grand Knight for five years in Van Horn, Texas.

Cindy Ward is a member of Holy Spirit Parish, where she sings in the choir. She has one daughter and a grand daughter living in Austin. Cindy has a graduate degree in art studies, and is currently proprietor of the Vintage Rose shop at Cactus Alley. Cindy enjoys working out and is actively involved in fund raising. Her involvement in fund raising for the TTU Music Department includes performances with the Lubbock Chorale and an annual silent auction as part of the annual POPS concert. Cindy is a supporter of the Texas Tech Museum Arts Series where she shares her knowledge of antique clothing.

Ken and Mary Bulin have been married for 47 years. They have four children and five grandchildren. Mary attended Catholic schools, and after graduation went to work as a switchboard operator and engineering secretary until she got married. She loves reading, crossword puzzles, bike riding, baseball and traveling to all major league stadiums. Mary was a Eucharistic Minister for five years and counted money for the Church for four years.

Ken went to public schools and graduated from Marquette University. He pursued an engineering career which included considerable international travel. He enjoys reading, golf, baseball, biking, and travel. At his previous parish in Mesquite he was a collection counter, usher, and food pantry volunteer.

Welcome all.



Louise Sundell and Cindy Ward

Priest Profile - Fr. Nelson Diaz

By Larry Craig

If you want an example on one serving God and the faithful with joy and total dedication then talk to Father Nelson Diaz pastor of San Ramon Church in Woodrow and St. Francis of Assisi in Wolfforth. Fr. Nelson's story is one of following a path that involved many twists and turns, facing many challenges, dealing with barriers and yet has come to a beautiful point.

The story begins in San Domingo, Dominican Republic in 1944 with Fr. Nelson's birth into "a beautiful family with lots of love and open to all people." He had a brother and 2 sisters who were all close. Fr. Nelson's father was his role model for loving and serving God.

After completing school, Fr. Nelson and close friend planned to enter the seminary, however the death of his father forced him instead to go to work to support his mother and siblings. Fr. Nelson became a policeman. Later, he moved to New York City, where his entire family had relocated.

He worked as an accountant and did some private investigating work on the side.

He married and later had 2 daughters. In 1985 his wife died and he was left to raise his 10 and 12 year old girls. He described that period as very difficult but God was with him.

After the girls were raised, Fr. Nelson felt the call to become more involved in the Church and sought out information about the possibility of entering the diaconate. His pastor told him that he had the potential to become a priest. This surprised Fr. Nelson, because, in the Dominican Republic his age and the fact that he had been married would have prohibited entry.

Fr. Nelson entered the seminary at Hales Corner, Wisconsin under the sponsorship of his New York bishop. Later he was able to transfer to a seminary in the Dominican Republic where he spent an entire year in poor health. He returned to New York where doctors told him not to go back.

Still yearning for the priesthood, Fr.

Nelson applied to the Diocese of Lubbock and was interviewed by Msgr. Gene Driscoll. Fr. Nelson was strongly discouraged by his New York contacts citing discrimination, hostile environment and a generally bad place to go. Nevertheless he entered Assumption Seminary in San Antonio and was ordained June 30, 2001.

After 6 years as a priest Fr. Nelson describes his life as a great experience where he feels he is growing spiritually and personally, and his desire to serve others is being fulfilled. He says he has learned that, "if you love and care for others they will respond in kind."

In addition to his pastorships, Fr. Nelson heads the Charismatic program in the Diocese.

By the way, the predictions by his New York contacts about life in West Texas have proved inaccurate.

Fr. Nelson remains close to his family and just returned from a visit with his daughters and 4 grandchildren ages 13, 11, 10 and 1.

Member Profiles - Judy & Gary Simmons

By Elmus Beale

Judy Brzezinski and her identical twin, Jody, were born July 21, 1955 in Chicago. Judy was raised along the Fox River in the Chicago suburbs of Elgin and St. Charles. Though her father was born Catholic, he left the Church and Judy was raised as a Lutheran. One can imagine that this did not set well with her paternal relatives who were staunch Polish-American Catholics.

Following high school, Judy attended Peabody College in Nashville for two years followed by two years at Ole Miss where she graduated with a degree in journalism. She liked writing and art—so much so that she bought her first painting when she was only 13 years old. Her favorite course in college was art history, but "journalism seemed more practical." She pursued her love of art for a time after graduation by working in an oriental antique shop in Nashville where she developed an expertise and interest in oriental art.

Gary was born November 11, 1954 in San Antonio. Gary's dad was in the Air Force. In fact, the Simmons family was stationed at Reese AFB, so Gary lived in Lubbock for a short time. It was Gary's father who influenced him to follow a military life. Gary attended West Point and



Gary and Judy Simmons

earned a degree in engineering, and that led to the Army Signal Corps which oversees military communications. However, Gary was unhappy with that choice because the Signal Corps "eats its own". Despite that generalization, Gary's commanding officer at Ft. Gordon, GA, Col. Julian Cole, was an outstanding leader and made it possible for Gary to take classes at Augusta College while teaching in the Signal Corps. That allowed him to get his prerequisites to enter medical school. Gary was later accepted into medical school at the Medical College of Georgia on an Army scholarship. He graduated in 1987 and did his internship, residency and Fellowships while on active duty. Gary is currently a radiologist with

Lubbock Diagnostic Radiology.

While at Ole Miss, Judy had joined the ROTC and chose the Army Reserves. She and Gary met while attending the Signal Officers Basic Course in Ft. Gordon, Georgia. Gary had just graduated from West Point and Judy from Ole Miss. But the army put their romance on hold, because after the Signal Officer course, Judy was assigned to the personnel office of a MASH unit outside of Nashville and Gary was sent to Germany.

Despite the temporary separation, they were married on October 4, 1979 in Copenhagen, Denmark. They were married in a civil ceremony with a group of approximately 30 couples. When it was their turn, the ceremony took only about a minute. After the honeymoon, the couple enrolled in a Pre-Cana class at the Catholic Church which was immediately across the street from the Bachelor Officers Quarters in Frankfurt. The young priest in charge of the class discovered that Judy, although baptized a Catholic, was not raised a Catholic and was confirmed in the Lutheran Church. He insisted that before the class progress that Judy forget her religious teachings up to that time and believe in the

(See **Simmons Page 4**)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- July 7** First Friday Rosary and Mass-CTK 6:35 A.M. Donuts and Coffee follows.
- July 11** Board Meeting Elroy Simnacher's Office 7:00 p.m.
- July 13** Lunch Meeting Lakeridge Country Club 12 Noon
- July 13** Holy Hour for Vocations Christ the King Cathedral 7:00 p.m.
- July 28** Dinner Meeting Catholic Renewal Center 6:30 p.m.
- Aug. 4** First Friday Rosary and Mass-CTK 6:35 A.M. Donuts and Coffee follows.
- Aug. 8** Board Meeting, TBA 7:00 p.m.
- Aug. 10** Lunch Meeting Lakeridge Country Club 12 Noon
- Aug. 10** Holy Hour for Vocations Christ the King Cathedral 7:00 p.m.
- Aug. 25** Dinner Meeting Srs. of St. Francis Mother House 6:30 p.m.
- Sept. 1** First Friday Rosary and Mass-CTK 6:35 A.M. Donuts and Coffee follows.
- Sept. 12** Board Meeting, TBA 7:00 p.m.
- Sept. 14** Lunch Meeting Lakeridge Country Club 12 Noon
- Sept. 14** Holy Hour for Vocations Christ the King Cathedral 7:00 p.m.
- Sept. 29** Dinner Meeting Catholic Renewal Center 6:30 p.m.

Judy & Gary Simmons

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real presence of the Eucharist without any form of explanation. That put the Pre-Cana training on hold until their son Patrick was born. Judy and Gary were married in the Church some years later when they went through Pre-Cana classes with the military chaplain, Fr. O'Keefe, at Fitzsimmons Army Base in Denver. Their motivation was to have their son, Patrick, baptized in the Church and have their wedding blessed by the Church. Patrick was born in Denver on August 14, 1987. This past spring he graduated from Lubbock High School with honors. While there, he was the president of the German club and ran cross country and track. This fall he will attend Texas A&M to major in biomedical engineering. In the meantime, he is flipping burgers at Whataburger.

Gary's last military assignment was in El Paso. Judy was a technical editor for the Air Defense Artillery School in El Paso where she edited training manuals. Gary decided to retire from the Army after 20 years of service. Of all of the places they looked, Lubbock was the most appealing. They moved here in 2002.

For hobbies, Judy likes going to the gym, shopping for and appreciating art,

and reading. Her creative outlet is home decorating with special attention devoted to the holidays. Both Gary and Judy like to travel, especially to artsy and historic destinations. Gary's major outlet is training for and participating in triathlons—which include swimming, biking and running. Gary competes annually in the Buffalo Springs Triathlon. He emphasized that he does not race to win but to finish the course. Gary and Patrick both like the outdoors, and were both active in Boy Scouts until Patrick received in Eagle.

Judy maintains a very busy schedule. Not only is she our new Communications Vice President, she is secretary of the Women's Organization at Christ the King Church. She is also active in the Junior League and the Lubbock Symphony Guild. In addition to his medical practice, Gary finds time to teach 9th grade CCD at Christ the King and serve as current president for the Catholic Medical Association of Lubbock.

Judy and Gary Simmons joined the Serra Club of Lubbock on May 27, 2005. They had never heard of Serra until Carl and Louise Sundell invited them to attend a recruiting dinner. We are blessed to count them among our number.

Sisters Corner

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reception in the Church's Gathering Place. Sisters, friends, family and Parishioners will be there to pray, celebrate and be a source of support as she takes this step in her call as a Franciscan.

My opening remark was that we are a privileged people called by God, but moving into a final commitment slowly and prayerfully while in the Marriage state the steps are quite different, yet we must admit that it is the grace of God that gives us all the strength, courage, hope and joy to use our gifts in the service of others.

Again, we ask the Serrrans to join us in prayer and celebration!

Sister Martha, OSF

St. Francis Mission Sisters

Prayer List

John Connors	Dan Prewitt
Paul Meyer, Jr.	Millie Callow
John Gaschen	Barbara Buescher
Bob Paikowski	Franklin Kitchen

Visit Often
www.serralubbock.org

The Lubbock Serran is published quarterly by the Serra Club of Lubbock Communications Committee. Judy Simmons- Vice President Communications, 9302 Quinton Ave., Lubbock, TX 79424, 794-4384; Elmus Beale, Larry Craig, Mike Custy, Bob Goyette and Gary McDonald.