



# Savannah Serra Club NEWSLETTER

April 2004



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## Serrans hear about Hands of Christ Ministry

### Joseph Ebberwein speaks at March meeting

Joseph Ebberwein, founder of Hands of Christ Ministries spoke to the Serra Club of Savannah on March 20, 2004. Joseph falls into a special category of a lay person with a religious sounding vocation. He has never taken Holy orders but is called to a life of prayer and service to the community.

When founding Hands of Christ, he did not want to duplicate efforts and decided to focus on prayer rather than social outreach as covered by existing programs. He explained that Hands of Christ offers prayers of intercession for those who come to the ministry. In Joseph's words,

"The thrust of this ministry is prayer for individuals. We have teams of lay ministers who pray with people who may be going through a rough time in their life- they may be battling physical disease or need emotional healing or they are searching for answers in the midst of life's challenges. Our approach is very simple, we offer Jesus as the Way to healing, and He has never let us down."

Joseph and his volunteers also act as a referral source to clients in need of basics such as food, shelter or medical treatment.

Professionally, Joseph works full time as a CPA for Islands Home Health Care. The Hands of Christ office is located at 1809 Bull Street. An intercessory prayer group meets there every Tuesday evening. To prepare for his vocation in prayer, he completed a Master of Pastoral Ministry via the LIMEX program in Savannah from Loyola University in New Orleans.

Beyond talking about his ministry, Joseph took time to offer some thoughts about deriving the greatest benefit out of Holy Week.

"I challenge you in the coming Holy Week to enter into beauty of the Liturgy of this week, where we witness, with the apostles the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem for this sacred Passover on Palm Sunday. Reflect on your own life and what this Holy Week means to you. How do the events of this week in the life of Jesus affect you two thousand years later? Put yourselves in the lives of those involved as the week unfolds. There is a part of Judas and Peter and Pilate and Mary and Jesus in all of us as we live our lives."

As aids to pondering the mysteries of Holy Week, he brought music CDs as gifts to the Serrans. The meditative music on the CDs carries the listener through the events and moods of Holy Week. Praise hymns sung by the Taize choir ([www.taize.fr](http://www.taize.fr)) in the first few songs remind us of the celebratory atmosphere that greeted Jesus on Palm Sunday. Later songs draw the listener toward the sorrowful. We are reminded of the sorrow inherent in Good Friday by a stirring violin rendition of "O, Sacred Head". Covering the theme of resurrection, the last few songs on the CD return to hymns that exemplify praise and awe for our Christ and God.

For those of you who missed Joseph's talk, he recommended some websites that present Holy Week meditations. You might want to



check these out:

- [www.goarch.org/en/ourfaith/articles/article8430.asp](http://www.goarch.org/en/ourfaith/articles/article8430.asp)
- [www.justpeace.org/hlywk.htm](http://www.justpeace.org/hlywk.htm)
- [www.rc.net/wcc/readings/lent.htm](http://www.rc.net/wcc/readings/lent.htm)
- [www.newadvent.org/cathen/07425a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07425a.htm)

Joseph explained the call to vocations very well when he said, "God has a divine purpose for each of us that He places within us before we are even conceived. He has chosen to bring His Kingdom of love by using each of us to accomplish our own specific mission from Him."

If you are interested in staying in touch with Joseph or becoming a prayer volunteer, you may reach him at [HandsofChrist@aol.com](mailto:HandsofChrist@aol.com) or 912-234-7504.

## Adopt a Priest

There is no other way of life so highly revered as the Priesthood. Chosen by God to represent Jesus Christ to us, his entire life is dedicated to saving our souls and helping us attain eternal salvation.

A few years ago, Mary Aranda, a Cathedral parishioner started a ministry of encouraging people to pray for their priests. Today there are over 75 people throughout the diocese who have



been assigned a priest to pray for each day

"Our priests are always there for us so let us be here for them. This is a way to show respect, caring and love for our priests by adopting a priest and praying for him daily, says Mary.

For more information about participating in this ministry please call Mary Aranda at (912) 786-7267

## Serra Club Elects Officers

On Saturday, March 21, 2004 the following slate of officers was elected to serve from June 2004 through May 2005.

- President.....Don Waters
  - President Elect.....Byron Stephens
  - VP Programs.....Suzanne Aviles
  - VP Membership.....Graham Crawford
  - VP Vocations.....Joe Hasbrouck
  - VP Communications.....Peter Paolucci
  - Secretary.....Sandy Humphrey
  - Treasurer.....Marilyn Stephens
  - Trustee.....Julio Aviles (three year term)
- Frank Saponaro was elected as Trustee last year for a three year term

The officers will be inducted at the meeting on May 15. Pat Carden, the Serra District Governor, will be down from Atlanta to do the honors.





# HIDDEN TREASURES

By Suzanne M. Avilés



Have you ever walked into a room where the silence is palpable? Inside the chapel at the Carmelite Monastery that kind of silence co-exists with a deep sense of peace. Ask the people from every walk of life who attend Mass to celebrate the Carmelite Triduum - three days of prayer during July that lead up to the feast day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Like swallows returning to Capistrano, many worshipers faithfully revisit each year. Sharing the annual observance with the Carmelites brings a sense of the sacred into secular lives. For most the three evening Masses rejuvenate their spirit as they unite with the Carmelites in honoring Mary, Mother of Carmel.



During the rest of the year, Benedictine and deanery priests alternately offer daily Mass in the chapel for a community of Discalced Carmelite Nuns who live in the monastery. The home of these con-

templatives sits on the bank of the Forest River on the south side of Savannah. Normally the idyllic grounds are closed except for occasions such as the Triduum or to volunteers who assist by mowing the lawn, pulling weeds, or generally cleaning the yard. With volunteers assisting, the sisters can concentrate more on their daily chores and spending uninterrupted time in their vocation of contemplative prayer.

If you were unaware that Carmelites have lived in Savannah since June 1958, then you have plenty of good company. Informally poll your friends and you may find that the religious orders most often remembered are visible because of their service as priests, teachers, healthcare workers, or social advocates. Whereas all priests and religious under gird their ministries through daily prayer, Carmelites engage in contemplative prayer as a ministry to benefit the entire church and world. News about the world's

needs arrives through the same media channels we all use – television, newspapers, magazines, internet, etc... - giving them a window to the world for which they pray. Giving up social occasions and church meetings may reduce their visibility to us, but we continue to be very visible to them.

Even if the monastery is news to you, most of us know some of the more famous Carmelite saints. To name a few: St. Therese of the Child Jesus (the Little Flower), St. Simon Stock, St. Albert, and Edith Stein renamed St. Teresa Benedicta. If you need more input, surely you remember St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. Because of reforms they initiated during the 1500's the latter two saints carry the titles of Mother and Father of the Discalced Carmelites. The pair of reformers wrote prolifically to



instruct Carmelites on spiritual matters. An unexpected popularity for their writings grew among lay people and many of their works are well known today through book discussions and parish study programs. Some examples of often used books include St. Teresa's "The Way of Perfection" and St. John's "Spiritual Canticle."

Under leadership of Sts. Teresa and John, the Discalced Carmelites returned to a simplified observance of the Rule of St. Albert. In the early 1200's the Rule of St. Albert was approved by Pope Honorius III as the way of life for a group of hermits



who, because they lived on Mt. Carmel, became known as Carmelites. The basics of the Rule required the Carmelites to:

- live a life in allegiance to Jesus Christ,
- seek union with God through contemplative prayer,
- mediate on the Word of the Lord,
- exercise a spirit of poverty by using material goods with gratitude to God and in a non-possessive manner,
- love the Creator by showing great reverence for his church, all people, and creatures,
- conform to the will of God through discernment.

Although the Rule of St. Albert has been described as the shortest of all Rules given to any religious order, short and clear does not mean the way of Carmel lacks challenge.

Because those who live the charism of Carmel explain it best, a few quotes follow for you to ponder.

“Let us see life as it really is ... It is a moment between two eternities.” St Therese of the Child Jesus

“For contemplation is nothing else than a secret, and peaceful, and loving inflow of God.” St. John of the Cross

“Prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God.” St Teresa of Avila

“It always seemed that the Lord was keeping something for me in Carmel which I could find only there.” St Teresa Benedicta (Edith Stein)



Is there a collective sound of “aw, isn’t that nice?” Yes, the benefits for the rest us of the sisters’ prayer life goes beyond nice. Their lives exemplify the teaching of St Paul in I Corinthians 12:4-11 where we learn that the many different gifts of God serve the one body of the faithful. Without empirical techniques to evaluate the results of prayer we cannot measure the good produced by the Carmelite vocation. We lack

documentation of miracles probably worked through their prayers. Without proof, some may be tempted to think that monastic life no longer serves the modern world. But ask yourself if you really want to know what our world might be like without our Discalced Carmelites or other religious.

To learn more about the Order of Discalced Carmelites you may want to visit the Carmelite Generalate website <http://www.ocd.pcn.net>. Besides basic information, the site provides a multitude of other links. To read more about the local monastery go to [www.savannahcarmel.org](http://www.savannahcarmel.org).

