



The Serra Club of Arlington
Minutes for Tuesday 01 March 2022 | Luncheon Meeting
The Portofino Restaurant | Arlington, Virginia



GUEST SPEAKER – FATHER GUILLERMO GONZALES (BLESSED SACRAMENT CATHOLIC CHURCH)

Father Guillermo Gonzales, is a Parochial Vicar at Blessed Sacrament Church. Father Gonzales was born in El Salvador in 1989, was ordained in 2020, and so he truly is a baby priest! He and his family came to the US when he was 13 years old. His parents live in Centerville.

In 2008 he graduated from Westfield High School in Chantilly and started seminary with the Community of The Disciples of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The Disciples have their Motherhouse in Madrid but run Our Lady of Angeles in Woodbridge.

Father Gonzales started thinking seriously about his vocation at age 17, when he was a junior in high school. He studied in Madrid at the Ecclesiastic University of San Damaso from 2010 to 2018 during which time he also taught religion and English at a school called Stella Maris La Gavia in Madrid. In 2018 he graduated from the university San Damaso with an *Sacrae Theologiae Baccalaureus* (STB) in Sacred Theology.

During 2014 in the United States, he studied an academic year at Saint John Vianney Seminary in Denver, Colorado, and helped with pastoral work at St Mary's Catholic Church in Littleton, Colorado. In 2016 he studied an academic year at Catholic University of America. In 2017 he transferred from the Community of the Disciples of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary to the Diocese of Arlington.

He was ordained a deacon at Saint Leo the Great in Fairfax, VA, on January 26, 2020 and served as a Deacon at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Winchester, VA. Father Gonzales graduated from Mount St Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD with an Master of the Arts (MA) in Moral Theology in May, 2020. He was ordained a priest for the Arlington Diocese at the Cathedral of St Thomas More on June 6, 2020 and named parochial Vicar at Blessed Sacrament on June 25, 2020.

His hobbies are hiking, playing soccer and reading books.

Highlights from Father Gonzalez presentation were with respect to Ash Wednesday and Lent and include:

- Lent is an opportune time for sowing goodness in view of a future harvest. All too often in our lives, greed, pride, and the desire to possess, accumulate and consume have the upper hand as we see from the story of foolish man in the Gospel parable, who thought his life was safe and secure because of the abundant grain and goods he had stored.
- The first to sow is God Himself, who with great generosity “continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family.” It summons us to become God’s co-workers by making good use of the present time to sow seeds of goodness.
- Saint Paul; “Anyone who sows sparsely will reap sparsely as well, and anyone who sows generously will reap generously as well.” In God, no act of love, no matter how small, and no “generous effort” will ever be lost.
- The word of God broadens and elevates our vision: it tells us that the real harvest is eschatological, the harvest of the last, undying day.
- Let us not grow tired of doing good. Let us not grow tired of praying. Let us not grow tired of uprooting evil from our lives. Let us not grow tired of doing good in active charity towards our neighbors.
- If we do not give up, we shall reap our harvest in due time. Each year during Lent, we are reminded that “goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day.”
- Christ’s resurrection enlivens earthly hopes with the “great hope” of eternal life, planting the seed of salvation in our present time.

- *The Seven Corporal Works of Mercy*: Feed the hungry; Give drink to the thirsty; Clothe the naked; Shelter the homeless; Visit the sick; Visit the imprisoned; and Bury the dead.
- *The Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy*: To instruct the ignorant; Counsel the doubtful; Admonish sinners; Bear wrongs patiently; Forgive offenses willingly; Comfort the afflicted; and to Pray for the living and the dead.
- Father Gonzales became a priest as a result of “hearing the calling” when he was on silent retreat on a Friday but didn’t know how to pray. Read a book on St Ignatius that night and prayed on Saturday. Attended confession and was told to “think about becoming a priest.”