



**The Serra Club of Arlington**  
*Minutes for Tuesday 07 November 2023 | Luncheon Meeting*  
*The Portofino Restaurant | Arlington, Virginia*



**GUEST SPEAKER – FR MICHAEL ISENBERG – VOCATIONS DIRECTOR FOR THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON**

Reverend Michael C. Isenberg is a native of Buffalo, NY, though he moved to the Arlington Diocese when he was a young child and attended Our Lady of Angels in Woodbridge, VA. He graduated from Virginia Tech in 2003 with a degree in Computer Engineering and worked in the field for a few years before prayer and reflection slowly led him to consider the priesthood. In 2006, he entered seminary formation for the Diocese of Arlington, attending both Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD, and the Pontifical North American College in Rome. Following his ordination to the priesthood and his first Mass of Thanksgiving on his 32nd birthday in June 2013, Father Isenberg served as Parochial Vicar at St. Veronica Parish, Chantilly, VA. In June 2018, Father Isenberg was appointed as the Director of Vocations for the Diocese of Arlington.

**Highlights:** Fr Isenberg's talk centered around his path to the Priesthood beginning in his youth. This was preceded by a summary recap of the current state of vocations in Arlington and closing with a reflection on Advent and Bishop Loverde's long priesthood path. Below are some of the highlights of the talk:

- Currently, there are 47 seminarians of which, five are new.
- Formation takes seven years, up from six years prior.
- Current seminarians are "amazing." Some are interesting as they have a different way of thinking.
- Asked for prayers for Rev. Daniel Hanley, S.T.L. (primary formator).
- Two men to be ordained in June.
- Fr. Isenberg again thanked the members for the Spiritual Bouquet card as part of Priesthood Sunday
- Fr Isenberg realized his affinity for the religious life after his first Communion serving as an Altar boy. His call to Priesthood came in High School but suppressed it.
- Attended college for a degree in Computer Engineering, graduating in 2003. For three years afterward, "he had everything." "God gave me everything I wanted but I was unfilled."
- In 2006 he attended Adoration and "felt the calling."
- Fr Isenberg had a gift for "taking things apart and fixing them" in his youth, which carried over to his priesthood, as now he realizes the gift of taking apart souls and fixing them.
- Reflecting on the upcoming season of Advent:
  - Prepare the heart.
  - Where is God working in your life.
  - How do you start following God at Advent
  - Slowing down. What is God asking me to do?
  - God is constantly moving our heart.
- Give the gift or prayer. Recalled the time he prayed for someone he long forgotten then coincidentally met him the next day.
- Be generous with your prayers. Say, "I'll pray for you."

- Pray before bed thinking, “Where did I follow Jesus today?”
- Asked members to look up “Steps to Priesthood.”
- Reflecting on Bishop Loverde’s priesthood path:
  - 58 years of being a priest as of December 2023
  - Ordained in priest in Norwich CT on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1965.
  - Noted his wearing of the ring and cross.
- Closing key comments by both Fr Isenberg and Bishop Loverde was to “Let God work through you.”