



The Serra Club of Arlington
Minutes for Tuesday 04 March 2025 | Luncheon Meeting
The Portofino Restaurant | Arlington, Virginia



GUEST SPEAKER – FATHER PHILIP BRIGGS

Fr. Briggs hails from the small town of Front Royal, Virginia. His parents brought forth nine children, six girls three boys, of which Father is the 4th in the lineup. He was homeschooled through high school, then graduated from Christendom College with a bachelor’s degree in Political Science and Economics. After graduation, he received work experience for three years while working at a Virginia winery, Rappahannock Cellars. During his time at the winery, he felt the draw to the priesthood that had been on his heart. He entered Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in 2016 and was ordained to the priesthood in 2022. He currently serves as the parochial vicar of St. Philip’s Parish in Falls Church, VA.

Highlights: Father Briggs summarized his reflections on his path to becoming a priest. In no particular order:

- Reflected on his time when working at Rappahannock Cellars in both the vineyard and wine production. He drew many analogies between the grape vine and that of God and his Faithful
- He realized that wine production involved about 90 percent cleaning
- Vines ceded their energy into the roots
- Spring pruning had a direct effect on quality and quantity of Fall fruit. Father Briggs drew a direct analogy to the Lenten season in terms of renewing ourselves to the Lord through fasting and alms giving thereby bearing fruit for the Lord
- There are two types of pruning: small cuts to the branches, and cane pruning where whole “arms” of the vine are cut off.
- Pruning correctly needs to be done through “hands on” and being “shown” how to do it. Pruning cannot be taught.
- Analogously, the Faithful need to be “shown” to surrender to God to be closer to God.
- Jesus is the “vine” (i.e., the trunk of the vine), and the branches bear the fruit (i.e., the Faithful). Father made this connection when discerning on his path to Priesthood.
- Meditation at the beginning of Lent, when we are “pruned” but have not borne fruit.
- His vocation path began in high school where he stayed close to God and God’s will gave him peace and happiness.
- He had a serious girlfriend in Christendom but evolved into a long-distance relationship. At the halfway point in the Seminary, his girlfriend got married, which was a turning point in his quest for God’s will. He went on to Priesthood and they maintained their friendship to the point where she attended his Ordination.