



The Serra Club of Arlington, VA
Minutes for Tuesday 03 June 2025 | Luncheon Meeting
The Portofino Restaurant | Arlington, Virginia



GUEST SPEAKER – FATHER JAMES SEARBY

Father Searby was born in Queens, NY and left at the age of eight when his family moved to Vienna, VA when his father worked for President Reagan. He attended Bishop O’Connell for three years before graduating from Northridge Preparatory School in Chicago. He graduated from the University of Dallas earning a BA in History. After university, he worked a variety of jobs in the tech world in marketing and sales, and eventually ran away with the circus (literally) when he worked for Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey, and Disney on Ice. He started to discern a call to the priesthood and entered St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in 1999 for the Arlington Diocese. He was ordained in 2005. He has served as parochial vicar at several parishes and as Chaplain at George Mason University. He is currently parochial vicar at the Basilica of St. Mary. Father has an ongoing passion for the fine and performing arts, travel, and all things cultural. He oil paints as a regular hobby and has a podcast called “Holiness for the Working Day.”

Highlights: Father Searby spoke of what it is to be a priest. In no particular order:

- Thanked the Serrans for their prayers and made note that June 11th is his anniversary to the Priesthood.
- Came from York, England noting that the family “Searby” translates to “weavers.” Parents sold goods in the York market place. He had a Jewish mother at Baptism. Use to chant Jewish prayer since he had a Jewish identity. When Baptized as Catholic, it was giving identity to the child.
- Church echoes of the past is a lost memory, which gives you identity.
- Priest has the power to make what was once make present again.
- St Vianny once said that the priest “would die” if they realized what they are – “Christ.” That is, making Christ present again.
- Baptism – The Priest’s whole reason for being.
- Stories told us shape our identity. The Priest awakens within us “the story.” “Anamnesis” – the recalling to mind.
- St Margaret of Clitherow, harbored fugitive priests during the King Henry persecutions, for which she was arrested and imprisoned by hostile authorities. Recourse was had to every means in an attempt to make her deny her Faith, but she stood firm and was condemned to be pressed to death in 1586. Had Masses said in her butcher shop.
- Emphasized presence of the Lord in the Eucharist thwarts forgetfulness. The Priest brings parishioners to the Eucharist.
- His “vocation” began when he was ordained a Priest, not before. Pray for those “hiding Priests,” like St Margaret.
- Priests need to be reminded by the Faithful who and what they are as priesthood.