



Serra Club of Wabasha County -- November 2024 Meeting

Speaker

Fr Tojy Jose is Franciscan of the Order of Friar Minor, or OFM and spoke to the Serrans at the November meeting in Plainview MN at St Joachim parish. Father is the newly appointment pastor of St Joachim and he gave an informative summary of his vocation story, starting with an overview of India, his country of origin. India is a large and diverse country of 1.5 billion persons, with nine states and many languages and dialectics. He learned about St Maximilian Kolbe in his eighth grade and felt called to be a priest in his childhood and possibly a missionary. The Franciscan order of priests were missionaries in his state with several schools and parishes. He learned English as a child by reading stories and poems written in English. His state was in the South with a majority Christians. To be accepted as seminarian in the Franciscan order he pursued diligently a series of English courses and tests and eventually obtained a B.A and M.A. His superior appointed him as

principal in Northern India populated with Indigenous tribal people of a lower caste. Northern India is majority Hindu with some Muslims too and Christian experience persecution. After 6 years Father was reassigned to be the Director of Boys Home for 3 years. His next assignment was in the Holy Land where he ministered to Indian Catholic who were workers in Israel. That assignment gave his firsthand insights to the challenges and discrimination toward Christians in Holy Land. He spoke about the Catholic and Orthodox parish centers which are now places of refugee for 100s of Palestine Christians caught up in the Gaza war. He spoke about the Patriarchate (like an archbishop) in Jerusalem, now Cardinal Pizzaballa, who ministers to Cyprus, Jordan, Palestine, and Israel including the West Bank and Gaza.

Father was accepted as missionary international priest in the DOWR, with assignments to western parishes of Slayton, Worthington, and Fulda prior to being named pastor in Plainview MN. He expressed his boundless joy as a priest and his time in the DOWR. Pat Kolb thanked Father for speaking to the Serra Club and gave him an honorium.