

Vol. 62 No. 2 | Spring 2015

# the Serran



“Behind and before every vocation to the priesthood or to the consecrated life there is always the strong and intense prayer of someone: a grandmother, a grandfather, a mother, a father, a community....

—Pope Francis on the meaning of Mt. 9:38

## The Serran Calendar

**April 26, 2015**

World Day of Prayer  
for Vocations

June , 2015

USA Council Annual Meeting,  
Grand Rapids MI

**July 1, 2015**

Feast Day of Blessed Junípero Serra

**July 30 - August 2, 2015**

Serra's 73rd International Convention,  
Melbourne, Australia

**Oct. 25, 2015**

Priesthood Sunday

**Nov. 1-7, 2015**

National Vocations Awareness Week

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### ON OUR COVER:

The Toronto Ordinandi  
Class of 2015 stand before  
St. Augustine’s Seminary in  
Toronto. From left to right:  
Rev. Mr. Eric Mason, Rev.  
Mr. Rick Lorenz, Rev. Mr.  
Rick Davis, Rev. Mr. Gerard  
Plant, Rev. Mr. David Twad-  
dle, Rev. Mr. Roque Meraz  
Photo by Emanuel  
Pires/Archdiocese of  
Toronto



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Fr. Chris Lemieux, Vocations Director for the Archdiocese of Toronto, addresses a packed room at the Ordinandi Dinner hosted by the Serra Club of Toronto on March 3, 2015.



## Ordinandi Appreciation, Toronto Style!

While formal appreciation luncheons or dinners showing appreciation for seminarians, postulants, priests, and religious men and women are common throughout the Serra world, the Serrans of the greater Toronto area have taken things to an entirely new level. What began 25 years ago as a small dinner for the ordinandi of the Archdiocese of Toronto has grown into a two-part daylong event in Brampton, Ont., involving over 2,400 Catholics. The day began with a luncheon that gave over 800 secondary school students (ages 14-18) a chance to meet the ordinandi and religious sisters, and some insight into their lives and spiritual journeys. Then, 1,650 people attended a dinner to honor the ordinandi and their families. Thomas Cardinal Collins, Archbishop of Toronto, spoke at both events and praised the work Serrans do to foster, promote, and affirm vocations in his archdiocese. The ordinandi shared their vocation stories during the dinner, illustrating how men from such radically different backgrounds answered the call to dedicate their lives to Christ. 🙏



**Left:** Six soon-to-be priests (names listed on p. 2) pose with Thomas Cardinal Collins and William T. McGrattan, Bishop of Peterborough. **Above:** Serra International Executive Director John Liston addresses the assembled at the Annual Ordinandi Dinner. **Above, top:** Catholic teens interact with a religious sister at the Ordinandi Youth Day luncheon. Photos by Emanuel Pires/Archdiocese of Toronto.



The author Rhonda Gruenewald, right, with Sister Anita Brenek, CDP, Associate Vocations Director for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston pose for a photo at the Serra Rally in Houston, January 2015. Rhonda's new book is *Hundredfold: A Guide to Parish Vocation Ministry*. Photo by Greg Schwietz.

# The New Vocations Movement: Time to Kick It up a Notch!

by Rhonda Gruenewald

**H**ow did someone who did not know what the word “vocation” meant three and a half years ago come to love vocations work?

I was Telephoned-by-Name. Literally. The call that started it all happened in the fall of 2011. St. Cecilia Catholic Church’s brand-new, filled-with-the-Holy-Spirit parochial vicar Fr. Victor Perez had seen my husband and me around campus and at Mass, so he called to see if we could attend a meeting about priests and such. Though he was vague in his invitation, how could we say no? I did not know much, if anything, about how priests and religious were formed or what the definition of “consecrated” was, but after hearing Father Victor’s enthusiasm for the success of the committee that he felt was one of the most important at any parish, I was hooked!

After that first meeting with Fr. Victor Perez, I went home and scoured the Internet and read anything I could about vocations. I found several websites with various activities, but nothing comprehensive about

how to start or revive a parish-based committee, just bits and pieces. We had no guide to follow, but Fr. Victor was ready to set our parish on fire for Jesus and vocations by holding a wide variety of events that increased parishioners’ awareness of and interest in vocations. Most of the time I struggled, barely keeping my head above water, but I did not let this deter me. This work was too important.

Early on in our efforts, one of the decisions our group made was to change our name. Being without a Parish Vocation Committee for over five years, we felt the parishioners needed ministering to, so we decided to become a “Vocation Ministry.” This small but meaningful step gave us a mindset of compassion for all our parishioners.

Though it was a huge learning curve for me and all of our committee, I was having the time of my life. Who knew how much fun this work could be? Whether I was hanging around priests, sisters, or those in formation at a church function, or playing Pin-the-Miter-on-the-Bishop with the children at our parish festival, I was having a blast! Most importantly, I felt like the work our

ministry was doing made a real difference in the culture of our church.

I am just like many of you. I have the same struggles as those working on a committee at a parish—not having enough money and/or volunteers at times for a given activity. I do my small part to make similar sacrifices as you do to be the hands and feet of Christ. God called me as an unlikely author and speaker on vocations, and I am doing my best to follow his will.

### The Parish Vocation Ministry's Mission

Over the last few years, I have noticed that when I meet new people who also labor in this field, I am asked, “How many seminarians are from your parish?” I have to be honest and say that this is not the goal of our Vocation Ministry. Yes, we want more seminarians and religious, but instead of counting how many religious sisters and brothers and how many seminarians come from a parish, let's approach success in a new way.

The duty of any Catholic parish is to help its members fulfill their primary vocation—to grow in holiness. Within this broad context, the Vocation Ministry has a narrower task: to help parishioners discern God's will for their specific vocations. Let's focus on enriching the environment for vocations so that the individual parishioners are more open to the call. If the ministry concentrates its efforts on this mission and encourages each parishioner to pray, asking God what He wants for their lives, our seminaries will be full, religious orders will be full, and marriages will be holier.

The guiding scripture for our ministry is “Some seed fell on rich soil and produced fruit yielding thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold” (Mark 4:8). We must prepare the soil in our parishes with prayer, awareness and education, and affirmation. Unfortunately, so many of the 17,400 parishes around the country are without an entity promoting vocations.

Take a moment to think about your own home parish and answer these questions:

*If a family walked in on any given Sunday, would they know that vocations is a priority?*

*If that same family walked in on the weekend of Priesthood Sunday or World Day of Prayer for Vocations, would they know that vocations is a priority?*

Some of you will answer “Yes,” but I am afraid the majority are like most Catholic parishes and are not reaching that yield. To prepare the soil in all the parishes in the United States and around the world, we must start a movement for a new wave of vocations right now! Ser-

rans have been working in this field for decades, and now is the time to kick it up a notch!

Let us take our cue from Pope Francis, who said, “No vocation is born of itself or lives for itself. A vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people...”

Now is the time to create good, rich soil where vocations can blossom, but where do vocations begin? The family! And a Parish Vocation Ministry is best equipped to encourage and promote vocations to the family. We have the perfect opportunity to connect in a real way with the families, especially the youth, of the parish which is the seedbed of vocations.

Another reason that involving the families in this mission is vital is because young men and women are thinking about their future most when they still live with their family. According to a recent survey, the majority of young men and almost as many young women consider a religious vocation between 13 and 18 years of age. Furthermore, a third of those surveyed considered it first in their pre-teen years. This highlights the importance of engaging and encouraging religious vocations at this time of life, when these young people are still at home and more active in family and parish life.

**When I meet new people who also labor in this field, I am asked, “How many seminarians are from your parish?” I have to be honest and say that this is not the goal of our Vocation Ministry.**

## **Hundredfold: Your Guide to Vocation Ministry**

We must encourage and develop vocation ministries in every parish, and to help with this endeavor, I have written *Hundredfold, A Guide to Parish Vocation Ministry*. The aim of this new book is to inspire anyone starting or re-viving a Vocation Ministry and to give them tested activities to bring about a culture of vocations in their parish. It is written for the ordinary Catholic who wishes to get involved in vocation work, either by starting a brand new ministry or reinvigorating a long-standing committee with fresh ideas that attract new workers to God's vineyard.

Think of *Hundredfold* as a *Farmer's Almanac*, but instead of farming, *Hundredfold* shares when, how, and why we are to prepare the soil for the Holy Spirit to plant seeds of holiness.

Now each Serran and vocation director can have a concrete, comprehensive guide to give to a parish priest, a committee that is already in place, or some active Catholic that does not know yet that he or she is interested in vocation work.

### **Key Elements of Hundredfold**

**A basic understanding of vocations.** We cannot promote well what we do not understand, and as you all know, vocations has a language unto itself. How can we relate the beauty of vocations to parishioners without a basic understanding of that language?

**Leadership training.** I give advice to those who are directing the ministry, which includes how to recruit and retain members, run a meeting, create a budget, and much more.

**Step-by-step instructions for 50+ activities.** Many readers will be most interested in the final four chapters, which are dedicated to the activities themselves. The overview of each activity should aid ministry members in evaluating which activities to implement, such as

time of year, funds needed, volunteers needed, among other information. In addition, step-by-step instructions lay out the process for each activity.

**Pre-launch and four phases.** The phases give the structure and underpinning to the ministry, making sure that the activities are not overwhelming for a new ministry and not repetitive for those established ministries. In each phase, activities become more complex and/or require more resources.

### **Implementation of Ideas**

To help ministries bring these activities to life in the parish, I have launched [www.vocationministry.com](http://www.vocationministry.com) where resources such as videos and tools are available to help all working in the field of vocations. In the book *Hundredfold*, each activity is explained in detail and in-

cludes a section on resources that can help a ministry to implement each activity within the parish. For example, if your new ministry would like to celebrate Priesthood Sunday, you would go to the website to find this event and down-

load and customize bulletin inserts, prayer drive sign-up sheets, small displays about the prayer drive in English and Spanish, a banner, cards for their priests, and much more.

With the book and website, we have an answer to the excuse of "I don't know how to do vocations work."

### **Expect the miraculous...**

I know that every diocese, parish, and ministry is different. Each parish just needs to start somewhere and move forward, doing more than they did the year before and keeping in mind that the goal is to bring about a more vocation-minded parish, one family, one individual, and one discerning youth at a time.

One of my heroes, Mother Angelica, went through many struggles and times of doubt when starting and running EWTN. She said, "Unless you are willing to

**“Unless you are willing to do the ridiculous, God will not do the miraculous.”**

**-Mother Angelica, EWTN**

*Continued on page 17*



Daniel Nicholas Cardinal DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston (left) poses with Bishop Andrew Cozzens and his parents, Serrans Judy and Jack Cozzens, at the Serra Rally in Houston last January. Photo by Greg Schwietz.

# “Humble, hidden means”

## Our Church

*The following is a summary of a talk delivered by USA Council Episcopal Adviser Bishop Cozzens at the Serra Rally in Houston on Jan. 17, 2015.*

by Kathleen Radford

**B**ishop Andrew Cozzens spoke to the Serrans gathered at the closing dinner of the Serra Rally in Houston, Texas. He expressed his “deep gratitude for all that each of you have done individually to serve Serra both here in the United States and internationally. “

“To my mind Serra is one of the most important lay or-

ganizations in the Church,” he said. “This is why I am so delighted to be the new episcopal adviser for the USA Council of Serra, because the mission of Serra is so central to the Church—to create a culture of vocations. We know that the Lord has a special call for many of the members of the Church, this incredible call to give up everything to follow him, this call to serve him totally in a religious vocation as a brother or sister or as a priest. The Lord desires to give this call, but he cannot if there is not a culture of vocation—it is our job to create the culture for this call to be heard.”

Bishop Cozzens said that Pope Francis declaring a Year of Consecrated Life clearly points out the centrality of

the consecrated life, the need for religious to witness to us that Christ's love is enough. He noted that it is "a beautiful and special gift" that Pope Francis is giving us by canonizing Blessed Junipero Serra, who gave up everything, sacrificed to the end of his life to follow the calling of the Lord.

The bishop then spoke to his central message, "an essential part of creating this culture of vocations—which may not seem essential. It is one of the paradoxes of our Christian faith. Jesus spoke about them all the time. For example, the last of this world are often the first in heaven; the poor become rich; celibacy is fruitful. All this brings us to the central paradox of our faith—the paradox of the Cross, which shows us that sacrifice leads to joy, and that death leads to life."

At this gathering Serrans heard about many things we can and must do to promote vocations, to create a culture of vocations in our parishes and families. Bishop Cozzens noted that one of the greatest things about Serrans is that they are doers of the Word.

He continued, "Serra has a third objective—and I want to propose to you that this third objective is just as important as the other two! You know it: 'to assist its members to recognize and respond in their own lives to God's call to holiness in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.' This is one of the paradoxes of Christianity. Holiness is about a way of being—being in relationship with God. This objective is not about what I do so much as about who I am. My own holiness..., your own holiness is essential for the Church' fruitfulness. Before you do anything for God he wants you to live deeply in relationship with him."

"Serra will serve the Church much better if her members are holy, not just busy and active, for then our activity will really be the activity of the Holy Spirit, directed by God, seeking God's will and not just our own ideas. We must remember the paradoxes. The more we become people of prayer, the more we grow in charity, the more we embrace the cross in our daily

life, the more we say 'yes' to God's will for us, and not to our own will (even in good things!), the more fruitful will be our efforts to promote vocations."

Bishop Cozzens then talked about "the temporal means by which we do the works of evangelization, the work of promoting and supporting vocations" to priesthood and religious life. He divided them into two categories, "rich means" (public means) and "humble means" (private means).

Rich means are those that are visible, countable, measured by achievable goals. If I do this and this, then I consider myself successful. "However, one of the characteristics of these means is that they influence one's self love because the facts or results are apparent. We judge whether they are successful by the statistical analysis. In fact, this is often the way we judge our own holiness and success. I did three things for Christ today. I went to Mass. I visited a sick person... I am a success if I did something I can count for God today."

"But," he said, "there are other means for spreading the gospel that are more difficult to measure, what one could call 'humble means' or 'private means'. These are usually not seen by many, if any at all. I make a special sacrifice to go to daily Mass and pray. I spend an extra hour in adoration I do my duty especially well. I am patient with someone who annoys me. I get up again after my failure and go to confession. I silently offer up my suffering for an increase in vocations to the Church. I do some private work of charity that nobody sees.

"The effect of these 'humble means' cannot be measured or would not seem to count for much. They seem insignificant in light of the larger world. Unlike rich means, they don't build up our pride. Exactly the opposite—by their nature they involve a silent offering. They are made possible only by a death to one's self for the sake of love."

Here is where our apostolate meets the paradox of

the cross. Jesus used 'rich means': he spoke to thousands, healed hundreds, fed thousands, performed miracles. "But what was Jesus' greatest work? Jesus' greatest work for our salvation was a humble means. As St. Paul said in the letter to the Philippians, '*Christ Jesus though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found in human appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.*'

"The moment of Jesus' victory was a hidden moment. To most of the world he looked a failure and yet in that hidden, humiliated moment of suffering he was doing his greatest work for us." It is a paradox of faith: the cross teaches us that the poorer, the less visible the means, the more efficacious they are for the transformation of souls. The grain of wheat dies and produces much fruit. Humble means, through dying to self, produce much fruit.

The Church needs rich, public means such as new clubs, new members, retreats. But what we need more are humble, hidden means. "Why? Because they are the key to our ultimate success! Success comes not through the perfection of our efforts but through the perfection of our self-offering. Why? Because the work of spreading the Gospel and especially the work of promoting vocations relies upon God speaking to a person's heart." An interior change of heart only happens by grace, the Holy Spirit working in the heart. "And the work of the Holy Spirit is mysteriously connected to the humble means of the Church which are all taken up in the Eucharist, in the one sacrifice of Christ."

All the saints, including Blessed Junipero Serra, who had huge followings and success in rich public means, were successful because they were holy. They surrendered "themselves through daily prayer to embrace the cross as it came to them." Serrans are called to do the same. "If we are going to see a flourishing of vo-

cations in our Church through the work of Serra, ...it won't necessarily be because we did more programs. It will be because you all decided to try and become holy... We can and must become people of daily prayer. We can do the little things that we do, things which no one notices, can participate in the Triumph of the Cross."

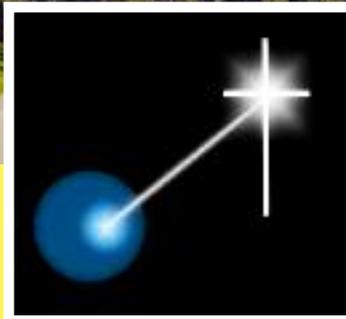
Bishop Cozzens then made reference to the many offerings produced by the Programs Committee "to contribute to the spiritual formation of your members. There is a whole manual of things you can download" ([Programs Manual—Part II](#)). "These are the kind of talks that help and strengthen your spiritual lives. This will help you embrace more the humble means that will make your rich means successful." He also called attention to the booklet, *Handbook for Serrans Called to Holiness, Serran's Guide for the Spiritual Life* (available through Serra's [e-store](#)). The Programs Committee urges you to take advantage of these opportunities to grow in the Faith and to pray.

Bishop Cozzens concluded by again holding up Blessed Junipero Serra as an example of holiness, a man who used both the rich and the humble means to evangelize. "He was extremely fruitful as a missionary. But, as you know, he suffered much in his life." He offered his pain "for the conversion of the peoples of the New World. He understood the importance of humble means to advance the Gospel. This was just as important as all the building that he did in those missions." Serrans should follow his example.

The bishop urged Serrans to remember the paradox of the cross. As we seek to promote vocations to priesthood and religious life, "we must not forget the most important of our work: the time we spend at Mass, the hours before the Blessed Sacrament, the silent offering of our sufferings. These ways of pursuing Serra's third objective, our sanctification, have profound effects on the rest of Serra's work because of the fruitfulness of humble means." 🕯



*Christ, the Light  
of the World*



*Be resurrected  
by the Light of Christ  
in the Great South Land*

# **Serra's 73rd International Convention MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA 30 July 2015 - 2 August 2015**

Join Serrans from around the world for faith and fellowship in Melbourne, ranked "the world's most livable city" since 2011. Our 73rd international convention promises to live up to the renewed enthusiasm in Serra and the new movement for vocations in the 21st century!

Located in the heart of East Melbourne, the Catholic Leadership Centre will host our convention in a world-class conference and learning facility. Accommodations are available at the Centre or at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel. Go to <http://si2015.melbourne/venueandacom> for details.

Melbourne skyline as seen from the Yarra River



Enhance your stay  
**Down Under** with our  
fabulous Melbourne  
pre-convention and Sydney  
post-convention packages!  
Find out more at  
<http://si2015.melbourne/pre-post-convention>



James Gould House  
PO Box 146  
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Australia

March 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Members of Serra,

I warmly invite you to join us in Melbourne for the Serra International Convention from 30 July to 1 August 2015.

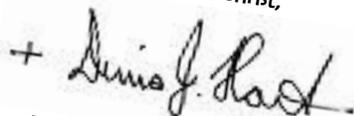
I am deeply grateful to Serrans in all our countries for the magnificent work which you do to support priests and to encourage vocations. Since the foundation of Serra in Melbourne in 1970, the Serrans have been a strong part of the life of our Archdiocese and I am deeply grateful for the inspiration and practical support which Serrans provide.

The Convention is a magnificent opportunity for Serrans to share their love of the Church and the priesthood, to pray and meet and plan, in encouragement of vocations and in support of the priesthood which Jesus Christ established to give us the Mass, the Sacraments and aid us on the journey to eternal life.

Our generous and friendly Serrans in Melbourne join with me in assuring you of a warm and Christ-like welcome in our City.

May God bless you all.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ 

ARCHBISHOP OF MELBOURNE

Register online at <http://si2015.melbourne>  
or email [convener@si2015.melbourne](mailto:convener@si2015.melbourne)

# Featured club program: Easter Time

**W**e hope that your observance of Lent made you ready to sing every Alleluia song you know from Easter to Pentecost. And we hope that your celebration of the 50 days of Easter includes programs at your club meetings that help you do just that. Consider programs in Program Manual—Part II like “Easter Time.” It can be used by an outside speaker or a member of your club. All it needs is a facilitator—a person or persons to make it happen—to move things along. We have reprinted the “Easter Time” program in its entirety at right so you can get a sense of what is available in this wonderful manual.

Each program topic in the manual includes prayers, Scripture citations, Church document citations, reflections, discussion questions and a bibliography if you want to read more.

You can add to or subtract from any of it. It is a tool for you to use encourage Serrans’ spiritual growth. For example, in the program titled “Easter Time,” if you don’t like some or all of those discussion questions you could write your own. You might prefer to discuss questions such as: *Where do I see the Holy Spirit influencing the Church today? How is the Holy Spirit working in my life today to celebrate Christ’s victory over sin and death? How is consecrated life a reflection of the Paschal Mystery, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus?*

*Happy Easter Time! Alleluia!*

—Kathleen Radford, USA Council Programs Vice President

## EASTER TIME

*(Read the Opening Prayer and Scripture out loud.)*

### Opening Prayer

Jesus, you give your Church constant growth by calling new members to your family. Continue to call us to conversion and help us to live out with faith the baptismal promises we received. Amen.

### Scripture

“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we preach), for, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. For the scripture says, No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:8-13)

*(Take time for silent reflection, then read the Introduction out loud.)*

### Introduction

Easter time is the time when the unfolding mystery of God and the Church take place. This program emphasizes that through Jesus’ resurrection we begin to fully enter the paschal mystery and integrate it into our every day lives.

*(Introduce a speaker or the facilitator can read the following paragraphs with pauses in between.)*

### Documentary Tradition

“On the day of Pentecost when the seven weeks of Easter had come to and end, Christ’s Passover is fulfilled in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, manifested, given, and communicated as divine person: of his fullness, Christ, the Lord, pours out the Spirit in abundance.

On that day, the Holy Trinity is fully revealed. Since that day, the kingdom announced by Christ has been open to those who believe in him: in the humanity of the flesh and in faith, they already share in the communion of the Holy Trinity. By his coming, which never ceases, the Holy

Spirit causes the world to enter into the “last days” the time of the Church, the Kingdom already inherited though not yet consummated.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church #731-32)

Easter is the season of Alleluia; a hopeful sign of the time when all we will do is rejoice in God and be fully in His presence. This oldest season practice of the church draws heavily on the Gospel of John, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse for its scriptural readings during the great fifty days. The readings focus on the followers of Christ as they celebrate in the gift of the spirit, spread the good news of salvation, and work toward the life of heaven on earth. Throughout the season of Easter the scripture readings are of parallel and progressive selections. Material is presented on the life of the primitive Church, its witness and growth, its spirit of joyous faith, and its encounter with the risen Christ.

The scriptural message states that it is not a celebration of one man’s victory but a universal triumph of that One Man on behalf of all of us. Easter is the heart of our Christian faith. We are all born anew in Jesus’ death and healed by his suffering. Without a strong unswerving belief in the resurrection of Christ we could not be a people of the resurrection and bring the Good News of Easter to others. We share the great joy that accompanies the promised gift of everlasting life. Like the disciples we don’t do this alone. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to guide our lives and our church. During Easter we struggle with the huge mystery of the resurrection and the urgent necessity of carrying on Jesus’ work of peace and healing, forgiveness and nurture.

Jesus’ glorification in the Christian assembly is the central theme of the Easter season. It celebrates a resurrection faith that delivers us from the slavery of time, sin, death, and loss, which serves as an instance of courageous witness. Those who have been baptized, anointed, and admitted to the table at Easter are led more deeply into the very mysteries that they have now celebrated. The fifty days taken as a unit celebrates God’s gathering of a scat-

tered people to Himself by joining them to Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Eastertime is not just a remembrance, but is also recognition of the actual person of Jesus Christ in our midst, when we are gathered together in him whose very person is itself the feast.

*(The facilitator can read the discussion questions out loud for general or small group discussion.)*

### **Discussion Questions**

1. How do you know that you have faith?
2. Why is Easter a faith experience?
3. How important are other Serra members in my journey of faith?

*(If time permits invite the small groups to share with the large group any insights that they gain from the group discussion, then read the Closing Reflection.)*

### **Closing Reflection**

These fifty days can only begin to unfold their mystery and meaning when we accept the new life brought to us by the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Its joy is ours now, if we take the time to embrace our new life, and celebrate it to the fullest as we reflect on it daily. The result is an incredible realization that we can alter this world’s illusion of perfection and help shed the light of Christ on our world, by being that light, to our highest ability at the moment. ☺

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# Navigating the Lenten Paradox



Daniel S. Grady  
President,  
Serra International

I write this as we pass the midpoint of Lent. Holy Week approaches, and the Paschal Triduum. I ask myself 'How well I am doing this Lent?' As usual, there has been some progress - not enough - but there is still time left.

There is a paradox in Lent. It is a time for interior reflection, repentance, and conversion. A challenge to consider and to make changes in my life. Yet, I accomplish this personal growth by denying my interests and focusing on others - praying more for others, giving alms, and being of service to others.

The changes and the work I begin in Lent do not end with Easter. They continue, and hopefully become more perfect, as I continue on my path to holiness.

I am past the midpoint of my term as President of Serra International. We have not achieved all of our goals for this year, but we have made progress. Our financial position is much more stable, and our membership roster, for both clubs and members, is more accurate and more complete. We have chartered new clubs in Brazil and in the U.S. Membership Vice President Ruben Gallegos and trustees Affonso Iannone

and Fernanda Cavada Guzman are traveling to Paraguay this month to restore coordination with our clubs there and expand our outreach efforts in South America. The number of inquiries about Serra in Africa are more than our one trustee for Africa, Patrick Ugbana, can manage by himself. It is a good problem to have!

The recent announcement of the pending canonization of our patron, Blessed (soon to be Saint) Junipero Serra, has sparked interest in our patron, and in our apostolate. As I visit Serrans around the world, I sense a renewed energy within our apostolate. I encourage you to share your enthusiasm for Serra with your fellow Catholics!

We still have a lot to do. But as we enter our 80th year of service to the Church, I am confident that God will continue to bless Serra with the grace required to meet our contemporary challenges. We have a great slate of officers led by Tim O'Neill and Dante Vaninni to guide Serra in the coming year, and I encourage all of you to join us for the International Convention in Melbourne. Our fellow Serrans in Australia are looking forward to our visit, and promise us a warm welcome and energizing convention! ☺



## Have you visited Serra's new e-store yet?

Browse our online shop for calendars, lapel pins, name badges, banners, business cards, and the very popular *Handbook for Serrans Called to Holiness: A Serran's Guide to the Spiritual Life*.

**Go to:**

<http://www.serrainternational.org/serra-e-store>

# How Do We “Come to the Light”?



Robert Labat  
President,  
Serra's Council for  
the United States

**M**y Pastor, Father Doug had a meaningful homily for the Fourth Sunday of Lent. “But whoever lives the truth *comes to the light*, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God” (John 3:21).

He also related the story of Michelangelo who looked at a large piece of marble others had not considered using; he looked beyond the flaw in the marble

and his work on the piece resulted in *DAVID*. Fr. Doug then reminded us that God looks beyond our flaws and came to us as in human form as Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. This caused me to consider perhaps we also should look beyond our own flaws and that of Serra to become what we should be as noted in the Gospel, “come to the light.”

How do we “come to the light?” There are several ways but prayer is number one. Have you tried “Lectio Divina” (Divine Reading)? Here are the guide-

lines from Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn.:

First, read a short section from the Bible (no more than a paragraph or two) and notice the word or phrase that seems to ‘stick out’ to you.

Second, reflect on the significance of that word or phrase and what it might mean for your life today.

Third, recite a prayer back to God about that ‘word’. Talk with God about the implications of that verse or idea in your life.

Finally, rest in God's faithfulness. Don't try to take back responsibility or concern for what God is speaking about with you. Just sit still. Be quiet. God is in charge. For “he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion.” (Philippians 1:16)

It is as simple as read, reflect, recite and rest. Try this method and perhaps it will help you “come to the light.” Have a blessed Easter and give thanks to Our Lord for all of our many blessings! ☺

Are you proud of your club's newsletter? Enter it into the USA Council's...

## Outstanding Club Newsletter Competition!

To enter, send **3 copies EACH** of **2 CONSECUTIVE** newsletters published since May 1, 2014 to:

USA Council of Serra International  
Attn: Communications Coordinator  
333 W Wacker Dr. Suite 500  
Chicago IL 60606

Include your club's name, your newsletter editor's name, your region number, and a club contact (name, phone number, e-mail, home address). All newsletters collected at the USA Council office by **DEADLINE: May 15, 2015** will be forwarded to three judges around the nation, who will critique the newsletters based on **CONTENT** (60 points) and **APPEARANCE** (40 points). **A winner is chosen from each region entered, and a grand prize winner is selected who will receive an Amazon Kindle e-reader.** The awards will be presented at the USA Council Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids, Mich., June 19-20, 2015.

# Serra is a “YES” Organization



John Liston  
Executive Director,  
Serra International

“Yes” is an incredibly important concept for Serrans and all Catholics. In many respects, everything that we do as Serrans flows from the word “yes.” We seek to help men and women say “yes” to their vocations to the ministerial priesthood or consecrated religious life, we say “yes” to our own personal call to holiness through prayer and good works. We say “yes” to our bishops, priests, and religious when asked for assistance.

All of these “yeses” are the faint echoes of the most important “yes” in the history of the world. They all stem from Jesus Christ saying “yes” to death on the cross for our salvation (Roman 4:25). The Son of God said “yes” to an agonizing death because that was the only way He could also say “yes” to redeem humanity and conquer sin.

Jesus’ “yes,” and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, empowered the Apostles and disciples to preach the Gospel to all nations, despite the persecution they faced. Jesus’ “yes” laid the foundation for our Church and lead St. John Paul II to proclaim: “Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” That is exactly what Serrans must do: go out into the deep, outside of our comfort zone, to increase vocations and help spread the Gospel throughout the world.

Serrans must focus their efforts on assisting seminarians, postulants, novices, and those discerning a vocation to say “yes” to the Lord’s call. This can be done through words of encouragement, but it should also be done through prayer and other acts of support. Additionally, Serrans are tasked with supporting and

affirming priests, sisters, and brothers who have already said “yes” to their vocations.

Serrans must also say “yes” to their own personal call to holiness. However, merely saying “yes” is insufficient. Serrans must live out their call to holiness and act in a way that allows everything they do to affirm their call to holiness. All of the lay faithful are called to holiness. This call was clarified in 1988 by the Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*:

*The Second Vatican Council has significantly spoken on the universal call to holiness. It is possible to say that this call to holiness is precisely the basic charge entrusted to all the*

*sons and daughters of the Church by a Council which intended to bring a renewal of Christian life based on the gospel (41).*

*This charge is not a simple moral exhortation, but an undeniable requirement arising from*

*the mystery of the Church: she is the choice vine, whose branches live and grow with the same holy and life-giving energies that come from Christ; she is the Mystical Body, whose members share in the same life of holiness of the Head who is Christ; she is the Beloved Spouse of the Lord Jesus, who delivered himself up for her sanctification (cf. Eph 5:25 ff.). The Spirit that sanctified the human nature of Jesus in Mary’s virginal womb (cf. Lk 1:35) is the same Spirit that is abiding and working in the Church to communicate to her the holiness of the Son of God made man.*

*It is ever more urgent that today all Christians take up again the way of gospel renewal, welcoming in a spirit of generosity the invitation expressed by the apostle Peter “to be holy in all conduct” (1 Pt 1:15). The 1985 Extraordinary Synod, twenty years after the Council, opportunely insisted on this urgency: “Since the Church in Christ is a mystery, she ought to be considered the sign and instrument of holiness... Men*

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## Gruenewald

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do the ridiculous, God will not do the miraculous.” We must be willing to trust the Holy Spirit, row out into deep waters, and cast the net.

### Action Plan

Here are four ways to kick-start or revive a vocation ministry at your home parish or a parish that your club oversees:

**Pray**, covering all endeavors in prayer, first, last and always. Pray specifically that the Holy Spirit will open the hearts of those at the parish who can help in this work.

**Acquire** the book *Hundredfold* and become familiar with [www.vocationministry.com](http://www.vocationministry.com) so that you can encourage those in the parish to use these tools for change.

**Invite** individuals who have a heart for Jesus, Mary, and the Church to discuss ways to start or grow a ministry. Use the book as a catalyst for new and renewed conversations (have a book club, tea with the ladies, small-group discussion). Read and grow together; gain fresh ideas, inspiration, and collaboration.

**Recruit** new people to join and light a fire for vocations in your parish. Call out and mentor the next generation of workers; it may be your pastor, your committee chairperson, or your committee itself needing inspiration.

If you do these four things, parishes around the nation will have new ministries, and we will see a hundredfold yield for vocations. Let me share with you a story that should inspire all of us in our work- a True Hundredfold Story...

In Lu, Italy, a group of Catholic mothers saw the lack of priests and religious from their small Italian village. The deepest desire of many of these mothers was for one of their sons to become a priest or for a daughter to place her life completely in God’s service. They gathered for weekly adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and after Masses to pray, asking the Lord for vocations.

In about 60 years, over one-third of its population became priests or sisters. There were 323 religious who came from its less than 1,000 inhabitants between 1881 and the 1940s. Through the powerful prayer of these mothers, an atmosphere of delight and Christian devotion developed in the families that helped the children to recognize their vocations more readily.

**If you will indulge me, Let me predict the future for 20, 30, 50 years from now.**

Pictures like this will be seen all across America and the world by digging deep and preparing the soil for the Holy Spirit to do His work and plant seeds for a hundredfold yield. This picture is a peek into our future of a hundredfold vocations, but it starts right here, right now with each of you... 📣

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*Hundredfold: A Guide to Parish Vocation Ministry*, with a forward written by Fr. Brett Brannen, will be available in mid-April. The book is being published and sold exclusively by Vianney Vocations. Pre-order your copy at [www.vianneyvocations.com](http://www.vianneyvocations.com).



An abundance of vocations in Lu, Italy.



## Responding to the Controversy Surrounding Blessed Junipero Serra's Upcoming Canonization

An iconic statue of Father Junipero Serra, designed by John Palo-Kangas and erected in 1936, stands before Ventura City Hall in Ventura, California.

Since the Holy Father announced his intention to canonize our patron when he travels to the United States this September, some voices have arisen objecting to the elevation of Fray Junipero Serra to sainthood. Because we as an organization are visible to the public and take our name from Junipero Serra, it is possible that in the coming months, individual Serrans or clubs may be confronted with such an opposing view. How should one respond? We hope sticking to the following key messages will help you to handle such a situation firmly and tactfully:

### Articulate Serra International's specific mission:

"Serrans come from all walks of life, but they have one thing in common: they actively support the Catholic Church by encouraging men into the priesthood and women and men into religious life."

### Talk about the work we do to help achieve our goals:

"By organizing meetings, appreciation events and prayer services, our local Serra Clubs bring members together to exchange ideas on ways to further our mission to support our priests and the Church."

### If a person who believes Serra treated American In-

dians cruelly asks why our organization chose him as our patron, speak about his achievements in context of the time in which he lived:

"The only thing I can speak to is what our founders knew about Father Serra when they named our organization after him. He was devoted to the Catholic Church, and he worked tirelessly to introduce our faith to as many people as possible."

Or: "Father Junipero Serra felt called to serve the Catholic Church. He left a very comfortable life in Spain to come to the New World and share his love of the Gospel. He was so dedicated that he walked thousands of miles across what is now California and Mexico to spread the faith. That is why we selected Father Serra as our patron, named our organization after him and support the Pope's decision to canonize him."

### If pressed to make a statement about the controversy surrounding Father Serra's canonization, direct the questioner to Serra International Executive Director John Liston:

"Our executive director, John Liston, is the best person to answer all of your questions. Would you like me to pass on your contact information to him?" 

## Liston

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*and women saints have always been the source and origin of renewal in the most difficult circumstances in the Church's history. Today we have the greatest need of saints whom we must assiduously beg God to raise up" (42).*

The need for saints to rise up is even greater now than it was in 1988. That's the bad news. The good news that anyone can become a saint by saying "yes" to a life of holiness. Recently, Pope Francis reminded us that we are all called to be saints. The Holy Father said: "Be holy by becoming a visible sign of God's love and His presence beside us. This is it: every state of life leads to holiness, always! At home, on the streets, at work, at church, in the moment and with the state of life that you have, a door is opened on the road to sainthood." Serrans have the opportunity to become visible signs of God's love by saying "yes" to Serra's objectives and purposes in their work to foster, promote, and affirm vocations and by responding to their own call to holiness.

Through Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, the Rosary, and prayers, Serrans say "yes" to their call to holiness. By encouraging, inviting, promoting, and affirming vocations, Serrans bear witness to Christ's love in this world. In living lives of holiness, Serrans walk to the path to sainthood. ☺

## Happy Anniversary

### 50 Years

- #284 - Union County East, NJ – 08-Mar-65
- #285 - Dumaguete, Philippines – 25-Apr-65
- #286 - Tacloban, Philippines – 03-May-65
- #287 - Cabanatuan, Philippines – 25-Mar-65
- #288 - Detroit-Oakland, MI – 12-Mar-65
- #289 - Tanjay-Bais, Philippines – 02-Apr-65
- #290 - Albany, NY – 15-May-65
- #291 - Hamilton, ONT, Canada – 15-May-65

### 25 Years

- #517 - Sioux Falls, SD – 11-Jan-80
- #518 - San Bernardino, CA – 19-Feb-80
- #519 - Cacapava do Sul, Brazil – 16-Feb-80
- #520 - Sao Goncalo do Sapucaí, Brazil – 16-Feb-80
- #521 - Belem-Batista Campos, Brazil – 30-May-80
- #522 - Lucca, Italy – 27-Mar-80
- #523 - Porto Alegre Sul Praias, Brazil – 23-Jun-80
- #524 - Guarapuava, Brazil – 27-Jun-80
- #525 - Anapolis, Brazil – 27-Jun-80

### New Charters:

### Welcome to the Serra Family!

- #1173 - São Sebastião, Brazil – 20-Jan-15



## World Day of Prayer for Vocations: April 26, 2015

Download your free parish planning kit  
at [www.serraus.org](http://www.serraus.org)



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*Help us build a spiritual bouquet  
for the Holy Father*

*OUR GOAL:  
80,000 hours of Eucharistic Adoration  
in celebration of Serra's 80th anniversary*