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the Serran



A Brave New World
Promoting Vocations
in the Time of Covid-19

“This is a time of sorrow, a time of struggle and of tribulation. But for all of us, and maybe particularly for those whom the Lord is calling, it is also a time and occasion of grace.

Most Rev. Thomas Cardinal Collins, Archbishop of Toronto
Serra International Episcopal Adviser

The Serran Calendar

July 25, 2020

Serra Global Rosary for Vocations

August 29, 2020

Serra Global Rosary for Vocations

September 26, 2020

Serra Global Rosary for Vocations

October 31, 2020

Serra Global Rosary for Vocations

November 28, 2020

Serra Global Rosary for Vocations

January 14-17, 2021

Serra Rally — Dallas, Texas, USA

June 25-28, 2021

Serra's 78th International Convention

Toronto, Ontario, CANADA



ON OUR COVER:

Sister Nilcar Esendido of St. Anthony's Church in Harlingen, Texas, USA, wears a very reassuring mask next to a car decorated by Serran Delma Gallegos. The Serra Club of Harlingen coordinated an appreciation car parade for staff at St. Anthony's on April 28, 2020.

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A Time to Enter Deeply into Faith

In the sorrow and stillness, may many hear God's joyful call

by Most Reverend Thomas Cardinal Collins
Archbishop of Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Serra International Episcopal Adviser

Dear Serrans,

Here we are, during this time in which we're all facing the difficulties caused by the pandemic. I would like to assure you of my prayers in your mission as disciples of the Lord but also specifically in your mission as Serrans.

We are committed to service of the Lord and particularly of His great command to us: "Pray that the Lord of the harvest may send laborers into the harvest." In these days, we face such difficulties. People are suffering. People have died because of this pandemic. So many people have lost their jobs and are suffering in other ways.

It's a time for us to enter very deeply into our faith. We are faced with the realities of life and death, things that very often all of us can forget about in the busyness of life as we go from one perhaps trivial thing to another. Now we're forced to think of life and death. Many of us are also forced to stay at home. All the distractions that come into our lives are taken away, and that could be an occasion for frustration and anger.

But it can be also a tremendous occasion for grace, as we have some time to reflect on the will of God in our lives, our mission as Christians, the great mission of Serra, and the great mission particularly of those who are called to serve the Lord in works or a particular ministry within the Church and in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. It is a time to go deep, a time to reflect on the Gospel, to take time to pray to the Lord that we may love God more and more fully, and that we may love our neighbor through our prayers and also through whatever works of service we can do.

It's also an occasion for those who may perhaps have been thinking of a vocation within the Church to the priesthood

or religious life, but who have been busily going, as do we all, from point to point to point – now that they're forced to stop and to think more deeply and consider life, death and what their vocation is in life, this may lead them to reflect upon a call to serve in the priesthood or religious life.

This is a time of sorrow, a time of struggle and of tribulation.

But for all of us, and maybe particularly for those whom the Lord is calling, it is also a time and occasion of grace. So perhaps that should be our prayer as Serrans: that this occasion, which can be in so many ways difficult, stressful and very sorrowful, be also a time for those whom the Lord is calling to make a decision; to think of the purpose of their life and then to step forward to listen to the words of the Lord: "Come, follow me."

I pray the Lord to bless you and keep you safe and give you courage and strength in the vocation which we all share as disciples of the Lord. We pray that these restrictions caused by concern for our health, the health of others, and the common good, be overcome, and especially that we might be able to return to the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist. Until that time, as we offer that up because of our love for our neighbor, we pray that each one of us may make use of this time to enter more deeply into our faith; and especially as Serrans, that we may pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into the harvest.

May the Lord bless you and keep you always. 🙏



Thomas Cardinal Collins
Episcopal Adviser
Serra International

Serrans in Lockdown

How Serrans are around the world are promoting vocations in a suspended environment

We are a family, and we are aware of each other,” says Malena Dosal of the Serra Club of Mexico City, when asked how her club is keeping in touch during self-isolation and social distancing due to coronavirus. She refers specifically to Mexico City Serrans, like so many others, connecting via Whatsapp, telephone, and holding meetings on the Internet, but her response speaks more broadly to the footing Serrans around the globe have taken since Spring, when much of the world began to shut down to slow the spread of Covid-19.

The duration of lockdown in countries, states, provinces, and cities has varied – some starting later than others, and some having opened fully while others operate in an attenuated state. Already, reopening in the United States, China and other countries has shown second spikes in the virus’ activity, and health experts do not expect the concerns, nor an appropriate response to these, to diminish for the foreseeable future.

As most of the membership of our Serra vocations apostolate are part of the senior population, these concerns and strategies to remain safe until a vaccine is available are very real. But as outgoing USA Council President Judy Cozzens reminds us: “Our mission cannot and will not stop” in the face of this deadly virus. What the Lord asks of Serrans must go on; we just have to get creative about how we do it.

Following is a selection of reports from Serrans around the world detailing how they are sallying forth in these new waters. Most are already proficient on Zoom or other videoconferencing platforms, holding regular club meetings and prayer gatherings through the computer screen. All are tuning into local Masses presented via YouTube or TV. A flurry of phone calls and emails complete the virtual scene. Read on to find out other ways your global Serra family are keeping the mission alive until things return to normal (or the new normal, as the case may be).

MEXICO

Our chaplain sent us two booklets from the Theology of Pope Francis: “The Holy Spirit” and “A Synodal Church.” We all are reading them and will discuss them when we get together again. We have also had our meetings via web every two weeks, and our monthly Mass with our chaplain continues, via web. This fortifies and nourishes us. Besides these, we translated into Spanish the beautiful “Novena for Vocations in preparation for the World Day of Prayer of Vocations” received from Serra International Foundation President Michael Bragg. We sent it to all Serrans in Mexico and Central America, asking them to pray it, especially in this difficult time. —*Malena Dosal, Serra Club of Mexico City*

UNITED STATES

I think PRAYER has been increased dramatically, and as a club there are so many opportunities to read the Bible, listen to religious broadcasts, and to make phone calls to see how the members are progressing. We have one of the chalices that our church distributes at Sunday Mass; we have had it since the churches closed. So we have been saying the various prayers for vocations and the Rosary every day. —*Bob Rudman, Serra Club of Williamson County, Franklin, Tennessee*

We sent out spiritual bouquets and copies of Serra Vocations Apostolate daily prayer pamphlet to our priests, vocation directors, bishops, religious, seminarians and permanent deacons.

We are using the *Handbook for Serrans Called to Holiness*. We recently had group discussion on “Five Biblical Steps on How to Grow in Being One with Jesus” (see p. 14 of this magazine). We are in the process of completing the Mission and Ministry Programs from the *Meeting Programs – A Call to Holiness* manual (pp. 6-19). We plan on consecrating our club to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mother Mary. To develop our membership and leaders, we continue attending district/region council meetings, Spring Leadership Training, and USA Council conference calls (Vocation, Membership, Programs and Communication). —*Morie Ratuiste, Serra Club of Tri-Cities Area, Washington*

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You Can Tell They're All Smiling!

The Serra Club of Harlingen, Texas, USA, didn't let lockdown stop them from showing heartfelt appreciation for their priests, religious, and seminarians. On April 28, 2020, they organized a car parade for Fr. Alex Flores, Sr. Nilcar Espenido (on our cover) and the staff of St. Anthony's Church, the club's regular meeting place. **Above and left**, Harlingen Serrans bearing signs of support pose for a photo with Fr. Flores and Sr. Espenido after the parade.

Below, members from the Serra Clubs of Brownsville, Harlingen, McAllen and Weslaco visited Diocese of Brownsville seminarians at the St. Eugene de Mazenod Renewal Center in San Juan on May 8, 2020, presenting them with gifts before their summer assignments. **Below left**, then-seminarian Pedro Hernandez, who was ordained on June 20, poses for a photo with Harlingen Club President Leticia Eads and District 126 Governor Jesse Gallegos. Fr. Hernandez attended high school where Gallegos worked as an assistant principal in Harlingen. 📷



Serrans in Lockdown

Continued from page 4

Many of us are unable to be at Mass and long to receive the Eucharist. Our circumstances awaken empathy for our brothers and sisters in mission territory who suffer this deprivation because there are so few priests. We watch Masses live-streamed or recorded. We miss the human contact of Serrans, our pastor and parishioners. Our pastor says he misses us, too. The local clubs and the diocese cannot hold the events we had planned, such as our walk-a-thon for and with the Sisters. We support the missions of the Sisters with the proceeds so we asked for the donations anyway! —*Katie Radford, Serra Club of Southeast Kansas City, Missouri*

The Toledo club held a daily Zoom meeting to say the Novena for Vocations in preparation for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations that was drafted by the Vocations Director for the Diocese of Toledo. We have enjoyed reconnecting this way in prayer, sharing and laughter. We also promoted the Chaplet of Divine Mercy leading up to Divine Mercy Sunday. We are intentionally praying for our vocation director, our priests, bishops

and the pope – and of course praying our rosary and praying our Serra Prayer for Vocations. —*Michael Bragg, Serra Club of Toledo, Ohio*

Our parish held a surprise appreciation parade, where parishioners drove in a line by the parish office with signs of encouragement. The prayer time has been great to pray for vocations; cooperate as God give us this opportunity to grow in holiness; as well as to listen to the Lord for our “marching orders” about how Serrans can extend their love and support to the priests, religious and those in discernment. —*Chuck and Alice Wold, Serra Club of Phoenix, Arizona*

BRAZIL

We distributed 50,000 prayer for vocations leaflets to local Catholics, and we are now providing the DEVOCIONARIOS SERRA (small vocation prayer books) to all parishes to call forth new priests and religious, and to help us invite people to join SERRA. Although we do not have meetings, as recommended by the authorities, we are keeping in touch and helping with virtual Masses. —*Roberto Sebben, Serra Club of Vale do Iguaçu*

INDIA

Serrans in India are focusing on prayer especially for us to grow in holiness ourselves since we have a lot of quiet time on hand. This is done individually and in small groups online on conference calls. Many of us prayed the novena in preparation for Vocation Sunday on May 3. Our Serrans are working with the clergy in their own parishes to ensure that the poor are catered to, thus taking on some of the burden from the clergy. Some Serrans have gone all out to help their clergy, even cooking meals for them. —*Jeanette D’Souza, Serra Club of Bangalore, India*

CANADA

Our members have been praying more, and even more so for priests, and for an increase in vocations. I scheduled a WebEx club meeting for May 1, as that is the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, since St. Joseph is the patron saint of Canada, plus to coincide with the Archdiocesan Day of Prayer for Vocations, leading up to the World Day of Prayer for Vocations. It was also the day that the Bishops of both Canada and the USA consecrated their countries to Our Lady! At the meeting, we prayed the Serran Rosary for Vocations and were thrilled to

Continued on page 18

In the midst of this pandemic, I would say that the Serra Clubs in Pacific Northwest are like mallard ducks on the lake that appear to be still but underneath their feet are busy paddling.

What a great time to put skin on the motto of our patron St. Junipero Serra: “Always forward, never back!”

—*Morie Ratuiste, Pacific Northwest Regional Director*

A Catholic in the Coronavirus World

Following CDC Rules and GOD Rules

by Dr. Ruben Gallegos, President, Serra International
Serra Club of Brownsville, Texas, USA

The coronavirus world is a terrible and deadly world. At the time of this writing, the virus has affected 3,212,262 people; 288,255 have died in the worldwide, and that number is increasing daily. The virus has reached pandemic level. That means that the virus should be taken very seriously.

Can we take it seriously? Did God send the virus to us to punish us? Did God start the virus in a country that is not Christian? The answer is no. God is love and He loves us. Man allowed this virus to spread and therefore we as humans have to suffer for our mistakes.

We humans are creatures of habit, but now one thing is clear: the time to change is at hand. Change is not easy for many. But if we don't, health experts predict that a stronger virus will strike the world in the Fall. When will this end?

It will end when we help ourselves.

Ayudate y Dios te ayudara

Ayudate y Dios te ayudara — “Help yourself and God will help you’ is one of my favorite Spanish *dichos* (sayings). How can we help ourselves so God will help us? During the age of coronavirus, we need to follow these man-made rules.

Rule 1. We have to stay home more than ever. Enjoy your house and your backyard.

Rule 2. We have to abide by social distancing. We now need more space between each person. No more crowds.

Rule 3. The wearing of a mask is the best way to meet other people.

Rule 4. The washing of your hands should be a top task for the day.

These rules will allow us to live longer and enjoy health in this strange time in history.

What about the health of our spiritual life? For this, God has also given us very specific rules. The Ten Commandments should be followed daily. God gave us His Mother, Mary Mother of the Church. If everything fails, ask Mary to pray for us. Let us pray for her intercession with the help of the Rosary. Everyday when I wake up, I pray Psalm 118. If we follow these rules, we may live in the Eternal Life.

No hay mal que por bien no venga

No hay mal que por bien no venga — “There is no bad from which good cannot come” is another of my favorite Spanish *dichos*. Whenever something bad like the virus comes around, there will be something good that will come afterwards. The good that I see already is that Catholics are praying more, especially the Rosary. In addition, more Catholics are reading the Bible for answers. There will be a vaccine for this virus soon when God wills it. Life will never be the same but change for the better will come.

A prayer in times of good and bad

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore You! You have brought me into existence.

You support me throughout my life forever. How good You are to me.

Protect me from moral and physical harm.

Give me Your Spirit to inspire, guide and transform me.

Use me for Your glory and the good of others and never let me be separated from You, my God and my all!

Amen.

Peace be with you. ☺



Dr. Ruben Gallegos
President
Serra International

No Time to Stop

Get creative and keep Serra's mission rolling along

by Judy Cozzens, Serra's USA Council President



Judy Cozzens
President
Serra's US Council

Dear Serrans,

I challenge you to meet the needs of our Church at this time. We cannot let the virus stop us from fulfilling our duties and mission as Serrans. The evil forces in our world are counting on the fact that it will. Prayer will provide answers. Here are some ideas to contemplate during this time of uncertainty:

Prayer

Enhance your individual prayer life and with your spouse. Rekindle a new relationship with God. If you are a part of the Seven Serrans Prayer Program, be more focused on your day of prayer for your vocation director. Add something to it; perhaps consider a day of fast.

Club Board Meetings

Most of us are home, available, and undistracted; even bored. What the Lord is asking of you in prayer can be done, even in physical isolation. Now is the time to be curious and courageous with regard to the wonderful communications services offered to us by technology. It might be a little intimidating, but don't let that stop you. I tried to set up a Zoom meeting and signed up for a trial run. However, I was the only one who could not get into the trial! So I contacted our North Central Region Director, Jerry Biese, and asked him if he would learn how to run a Zoom meeting. Jerry accepted the challenge and we had our first district-wide Serra meeting with about 60 attendees. Set a short agenda. Start with prayer letting the Holy Spirit take over. You will find much to talk about and plenty to do. The hustle of everyday life will not be a hindrance.

Club Program Meetings

Innovate. With today's technology there is very little reason

we need to stop. Be aware that a program speaker is in the same situation, isolated from normal groups. Consider gathering on a video-based platform like Zoom. As always, invite guests!

Call to Holiness Meetings

Club spiritual development programs need no special video platform, just a conference call number that an individual can set up at www.freeconferencecall.com. Select your program from the *Call to Holiness* manual, gather your people, give them the number and access code, and go. If you're not comfortable with running a program, try a scriptural rosary.

Our Priests

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, asked us to be a good friend to our priests. It is a stressful time for them spiritually and financially. See where you can help. Maybe preparing a meal, doing

some shopping, or even praying with them. Show them you care about them.

Serra Poised to Expand in Philly

Father Stephen DeLacy, vocation director for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, wants to organize six new Serra clubs in his archdiocese for vocation work. To that end, U.S. Council Northeast Region Director Mark Bonkiewicz, five Philadelphia Serrans and I took part in a virtual rally introducing Serra to over 100 potential new members in that archdiocese. If we can do it, so can you!

If you would like speakers for your electronic meetings, please let us know. The Serra Board is willing and ready to help. If you would like to try to start a new club with electronic gatherings, let us help.

Please feel free to call or email me at jcozzens@msn.com if you have questions. Remember our patron saint's motto, "Always Forward, Never Back." 📧

**What the Lord is asking of you
as a Serran can be done, even
in physical isolation.**

Ways to Keep Your Serra Club Thriving During Self-Isolation and Social Distancing

Ideas from Serra's USA Council Board

Keep in Touch with Priests and Religious

- On a regular basis, send physical greeting cards, letters, gift cards and care packages and cards to priests, seminarians, sisters, retired priests, and others in formation.
- Stay in touch with priests by phone.
- Reach out to priests serving in rural or remote communities.
- Consider sending a fun, uplifting video with message of support and gratitude to your priests and religious.
- Send a personal letter of support to your bishop (e-mail not recommended).
- Send special letters of support to newly ordained deacons and priests.

Keep in Touch with Fellow Serrans

- Set up a club platform in Zoom or GoToMeeting so members can see each other. Note: The person who has the platform must be able to assist others in joining the meetings.
- Continue monthly contacts with members by phone calls, newsletter.
- Divide officers to call Serrans to see how they are doing.

Holiness and Prayer Activities

- Consecrate your club to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
- Continue adoration if your diocese has a location that is currently open.
- Encourage members to attend Holy Hour online.
- Encourage members to join the Serra International monthly Rosary for Vocations, the last Saturday of every month.
- Do a stay-at-home catechesis for the club once a month. Lesson plans are available.
- Pray the Rosary for vocation directors.
- Invite Serrans to pray the Novena for Vocations during the pandemic.
- Call your club chaplain and ask for spiritual direction and inspiration. Ask him to send out regular prayers and meditations.
- Send a spiritual bouquet to the bishop, priests, seminarians, and religious.

Keep Recruiting!

- Contact local pastors, especially those who have a heart for vocations, and ask for prospective members.
- Have a virtual wine and cheese to recruit prospective members.

For Club and District Leadership

- Continue having board meetings via Zoom, GoToMeeting or by Free Conference Call.
- Continue planning for activities for the year. Review the SerraSpark.org website for new ideas. Implement at least one new program.
- Installation of officers is important; do not drop it. Make it virtual if necessary.
- Remind officers of report deadlines. Keep a regular, though adapted, club schedule going.
- Make sure to attend USA Council training webinars.
- District Governors, have a monthly district meeting with a speaker, invite all club members.
- Club officers, brainstorm with other officers of area Serra clubs. Share your special club activities in response to the coronavirus with other clubs.
- Keep thinking of vocations and how your club can uniquely support and affirm them.
- The *Always Forward Never Back* e-newsletter from Serra's USA Council is a good resource for new ideas. Make sure all members are signed up to receive this resource.

Specific Club Program Ideas

- Present condensed talks/topics from www.serraus.org into 20- to 25-minute presentations for virtual meetings.
- Continue the Seven Serrans prayer teams for vocation directors.
- Use materials found in the *Handbook for Serrans* and in the *Call to Holiness Manual* in virtual meetings.
- Focus activities on supporting the promotion of vocations in the family and the domestic church.
- Start a virtual 31 Club with your parish. 📞

Pages 10-13 have been omitted from this digital issue due to copyright.

Please read the two articles that appeared here in the print edition at the following links:

We're All Monks Now by Greg Tillis at America Magazine

I'm a Nun and I've Been Social-Distancing for 29 Years by Sr. Catharine Mary Perry as told to Cassidy Grom at www.nj.com

Five Biblical Steps on How to Grow in Being One with Jesus

from the *Handbook for Serrans Called to Holiness*

by Morie Ratuiste, USA Council Programs Committee

There's no doubt that many of us are weary of this forced social distancing due to the pandemic that confines us in our homes, unable to be nourished sacramentally by the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thankfully, many bishops and priests continue to celebrate Mass via livestream and nourish us with spiritual communion. How true it is indeed when the Lord Jesus says – “And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” – Mt 28:20.

As Catholics, we received the call to holiness when we were baptized. “By Baptism we share in the priesthood of Christ, in His prophetic and royal mission. We are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, that we may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Baptism gives us a share in the common priesthood of all believers” – CCC 1268.

Thus, through Baptism we all became ambassadors of Christ – called to be holy as He is holy. To sustain our fidelity to that call, the *Handbook for Serrans Called to Holiness* suggests **Five Biblical Steps on How to Grow in being One with Jesus** as recorded in the Gospel of St. John. They are outlined here along with passages from the Novena to St. Junipero Serra and suggested discussion ideas from the Serra manual *Meeting Programs – A Call to Holiness*:

1. “Remain in My Word”

Jesus said, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” –John 8:31-32

Saint Junipero Serra, you may have lived with spiritual eyes raised to Heaven, but you knew that your primary goal of glorifying God through the conversion of souls could not be obtained without temporal feet planted firmly on earth. You risked your life to travel to Mexico and then witnessed great success in the flowering of California. Help me to effect change

where possible, accept limits when necessary, and never to forget that God is the source of, and reason for, everything I do.

From the Serra manual *Meeting Programs – A Call to Holiness*, consider discussing: Baptism (p. 72-73), and Prayer: A Path to Vocational Call (p. 82-85).

2. Sharing in the Sufferings of Christ

“He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” John 12:25

“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you...” –John 15:20

Saint Junipero Serra, you tackled many obstacles and made untold sacrifices. In addition to those naturally placed in your path, you willingly assumed additional burdens. If you, so holy a man, gladly bore such severe penances for your sins and the salvation of souls, how much more should I, in my constant struggle with temptation, undertake as I struggle to be more selfless and do more for others!

From *Meeting Programs – A Call to Holiness*, consider discussing: - Triumph of the Cross (pp. 61-62), Feast of Christ the King (pp. 63-64). Pray and reflect on the Stations of the Cross.

3. Love for One Another

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” –John 13:34-35

Saint Junipero Serra, for your all-consuming love of Our Lord, to the point of risking your life on several occasions, you were afforded miraculous occasions and divine favor. Help me to develop a more intimate and devoted love of Jesus, the Word of God Incarnate. His Mother Mary, and all the saints, so that

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SPARK Tool #7: Involving the Homebound in the Vocations Effort

by Dr. Anne Roat, USA Council Vocations Vice President

During the recent Covid-19 outbreak, I was on a video conference with a group of individuals from my parish. One of the participants, who is a fellow Serran, lamented the fact that given her age and health she was unable to do anything to help others during the pandemic. I spoke up and recommended that she use her time at home to pray for vocations. Another Serran on the call recommended that she go to the Serra website and look at the information on how the homebound can pray for vocations. I directed her and everyone else on the video conference to check out Serra SPARK.

Serra SPARK is a resource developed by the US Council of Serra International specifically for Diocesan Vocation Directors. However, the **Serra Promotion And Resource Kit** is also a valuable source of ideas and concepts that will succeed for anyone involved in vocation work. Local Serra clubs, parishes, and everyone committed to building a culture of vocations can both learn about and expand their vocation activities with the information and tools available under the SPARK tab on the US Council of Serra International website, www.serraus.org. Or, you can go directly to SPARK at serraspark.org.

The specific tool that I wanted the participants on the video conference to consider was **Tool #7**, which is **Involving the Homebound in the Vocations Effort**. The concept for this tool comes from the known fact that prayer is essential for increasing vocations within the Church. There is a very special prayer apostolate that is available to the homebound and to those who suffer. It helps fill the need for prayer for vocations while providing an opportunity for the homebound to be involved in creating a culture of vocations.

The concept of an apostolate of suffering has a long history in the Church. St. Josemaria Escriva worked for many years to establish Opus Dei. During those years, he would ask

those who were sick and homebound to pray for the success of his ministry during the 1920s. Later when the Opus Dei was recognized as a personal prelature in the Church, St. Josemaria credited those prayers and sacrifices of the sick with the spread of the work.

In his Apostolic Letter, *Salvific Doloris*, Pope St. John Paul II stated, “And we ask all you *who suffer* to support us. We ask precisely you who are weak *to become a source of strength* for the Church and humanity.” In 2003, on the World Day of the Sick, he addressed those who suffer saying, “I express my heartfelt hope that you will learn to recognize and welcome the Lord who calls you to be witnesses to the Gospel of suffering, by looking with trust and love upon the face of Christ crucified and by uniting your suffering to His.”

The SPARK Tool #7 contains a wonderful resource for involving the homebound in vocation ministry. There is a PDF brochure that can be downloaded and personalized with the name of your local Serra club, diocese or parish. The brochures can be given to those Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion who visit the homebound. Homebound who participate in this apostolate are encouraged to offer their prayers and sufferings for the needs of the Church and for an increase of vocations to the priesthood and the vowed religious life. 🙏

If your local Serra club, diocese, or parish has an active Homebound Ministry praying for vocations and you would like to share your experience using this Serra SPARK tool, please contact US Council of Serra International Vocations Vice President Dr. Anne D. Roat at vpvocusserra@gmail.com.



Dr. Anne Roat
Vice President
Serra's US Council
Vocations Committee

MISSIONARIES OF ST. JUNIPERO SERRA

A new kind of membership drive

**WIN FOR YOUR CLUB
WIN FOR OUR CHURCH**



A Resounding Success!

Houston and Cleveland West take top prizes
in Serra's first-ever membership contest

by Greg Schwietz

Communications Vice President, Serra International

We are pleased to announce that the Missionaries of St. Junipero Serra membership initiative and contest, established by Serra International President Ruben Gallegos, Ph.D., and the Serra International Board in cooperation with the United States Council, was a resounding success! With over 80% of the USA Serra clubs (162) participating, this contest was the most successful effort to increase Serra membership in recent memory.

Final counts confirm that the mem-

bership drive pulled in a net total increase of 350 new members — a 5% increase. Serra membership in the United States now stands at 7,692. Of the 162 participating clubs, 87 (53%) reported a net increase in membership during the contest period. Of the non-participating clubs, only six of 34 clubs reported positive increases, and collectively reported a net loss in membership of 82 members, including the loss of two clubs which closed their doors during the contest period (Allegheny County Pennsylvania and Palm Springs, California, total collective loss of 49 members). There were no new

clubs chartered in the United States during the 11-month contest period.

Region performance: Seven out of 9 USA Council regions showed positive net increases. All regions qualified clubs for the Missionary Society: South Central, 10 qualifying clubs; Central region, 8 qualifying clubs, Great Lakes and Southeast regions, qualifying 6 clubs each. South Central recorded the largest net increase with 149 (over 10% increase), Central region was second with 113 net increase (6.6% increase), Southeast with a net change of 50 (12% increase) and Great

Lakes with 47 (5% increase).

District performance: Twenty-nine of 43 districts showed positive results during the contest. Top producing districts included District 10, Houston, (up 81 members) District 12-2 South, Kansas and Oklahoma (increase of 59 new members) District 126, South Texas (37 member increase) and District 30 Florida (30 new members, an increase of 49%).

Clubs: **Forty-three clubs** qualified for membership in the **Missionaries of Saint Junipero Serra SOCIETY**; membership in which entitles qualifying clubs 1) a 10% dues rebate and 2) a free registration to the Serra International Convention in Toronto, June 2021. That means that over 25% of our Serra Clubs in the United States are **WINNERS!** Congratulations!

Money Winners: A total of \$10,500 in seven money prizes were awarded. The top money winner, \$3,000, in the Large Club category (25 or more members) is **Houston, Texas** with 49 new members! Second and third place were secured by the Serra clubs of **North Houston** (\$2,000 award) and **Tulsa, Oklahoma** (\$1,000 award), respectively. Houston also won the award for **Top Percentage Increase in the Large Club category** (\$1,000), with an increase of 68%.

In the **Small Club category (under 25 members)**, **Cleveland West** takes the top prize (\$2,000) increasing from 12 members to 38 — a net gain of 26 new members! The Serra clubs of **Miami** (\$1,000 award, increasing from 8 to 27 members) and **Harlingen, Texas** (\$500 award, increasing from 19 to 30 members) placed second and third, respectively.

With the success of this contest, plans are already being made to repeat this contest and to expand it to other Serra Councils around the world during 2020-2021. **In the next issue of *The Serran*, we will feature the winning clubs and find out what strategies they used to successfully grow their membership.**

Great thanks to all participating clubs for your enthusiastic participation. It made the Missionaries of Saint Junipero Serra Membership initiative and contest a **GREAT SUCCESS!** 🍷

2019-2020 Contest Winners

Large Club Category (25+ members)

CLUB NAME	NET GAIN
Houston, TX	49
North Houston, TX	39
Tulsa, OK	26
St. Louis, MO	19
McAllen, TX	17
Wichita-Metro, KS	16
Des Moines, IA	15
Metropolitan Dallas, TX	15
Wheeling, WV	15
Lafayette, IN	13
Bay Area, TX	11
Little Rock, AR	10
Reno, NV	10
Memphis, TN	9
Tri-Cities, WA	9
Downtown Columbus, OH	8
Lake Charles, LA	7
Indianapolis, IN	7
Victoria	7
Boulder County, CO	7
North Idaho, ID	7
Stockton, CA	7
Reno County, KS	7
Council Bluffs, IA	7
South Palm Beach County, FL	7
Williamson County	6
Fresno, CA	6
Green Bay East, WI	6
Southwest Metro Twin Cities, MN	5
Nashville, TN	5
Arlington Metro, TX	5
Kansas City-North, MO	5
Toledo, OH	5
Brownsville, TX	5

Small Club Category (24- members)

Cleveland West, OH	26
Miami, FL	19
Harlingen, TX	11
San Bernardino, CA	10
Milwaukee, WI	9
Northern Colorado, CO	7
St. Mary's & Sidney Deaneries, OH	6
Bethlehem, PA	5
St. Petersburg, FL	5
Baltimore, MD	4
Northwest Indiana, IN	3

Serrans in Lockdown

Continued from page 6

have Cardinal Collins as our speaker. It was my first time hosting an online meeting and it went very well. —*Teresa Buonafede, Serra Club of North Peel, Ontario*

We were on track to celebrate the Annual Priesthood and Consecrated Life Dinner and Altar Servers Awards before COVID-19 put a stop to everything. Since then, we had our meetings via Webex. I shall also follow up with sending the lone priest jubilarian an Anniversary card for his 50 years of service. The two past presidents we have in our club called members regarding stepping up and taking on a

position. So in June when we have our meeting, we will announce a new set of trustees. —*Margaret Carreiro, Serra Club of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada*

Highly anticipated events such as our Lenten retreat, the debut of the Travelling Vocation Chalice program at three local churches, and ordination celebrations were cancelled or postponed. Using Facebook, email, text, WhatsApp, and Messenger, our club sent birthday greetings, words of encouragement and anniversary wishes to most of the priests in the Archdiocese of Toronto. We mailed anniversary cards to 28 priests. We continue

to pray for our ordinandi/ordinati. At Easter time, our members from Blessed Trinity Parish created a beautiful kaleidoscope montage video entitled “To Our PRIESTS with THANKS” to extend our love and gratitude for all that they do. Various members of our club also join local Sisters for Rosary prayer via Zoom. We miss the Liturgy of the Mass and receiving the Sacraments, and of course the fellowship with each other. We continue to pray for an end to this pandemic so we can resume our work in the vineyard of the Lord, and our work to promote Vocations. —*Felisa Pulumbarit, Serra Club of Markham-Scarborough, Ontario, Canada* 📍

Five Biblical Steps

Continued from page 14

I, too, may gain the gift of divine grace.

From *Meeting Programs – A Call to Holiness*, consider discussing: God the Father Programs (pp. 35-40). The Beatitudes (pp. 77-79).

4. Service

When he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” —John 13:12-17

Saint Junipero Serra, when your health was in jeopardy, when the future looked bleak, you never wavered. You bore “crosses” and continued “harvesting souls” from among your “tender mission plants.” As you said, “What becomes of the ox that does not plough, and without plowing, and there be a har-

vest?” Help me to learn from your example and remember that “God keeps His promise. He will not let you be tested beyond your strength” (Corinthians 10:13).

From *Meeting Programs – A Call to Holiness*, consider discussing: Christian Hope Programs (pp. 44-49), The Magnificat: The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth (pp. 56-57), Mary Magdalene (pp. 58-60).

5. Mission

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” —John 20:21-23

Saint Junipero Serra, at the height of earthly honors you abandoned all to become a missionary for the greater honor and glory of God. You struggled with the decision at first, especially, pained by knowing you would never see your family again. Your deep faith and zeal for saving souls gave you the courage to go forward and renounce all security and comfort. Help me to strengthen my faith, listen for God’s call, and “go ahead and never to turn back” as I do what He asks.

From *Meeting Programs – A Call to Holiness*, consider discussing: Mission and Ministry Programs (pp. 6-20). 📍



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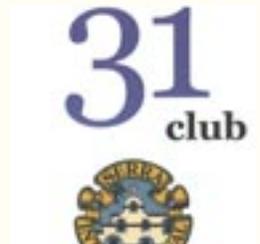
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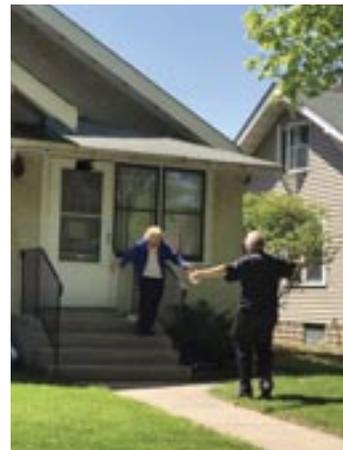


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Fr. Jarvis dons a special mask made by parishioner Marie Loribecki.



St. Bridget's Care-avan

Fr. Paul Jarvis, senior associate pastor at St. Bridget's Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, has taken his holy water on the road with his parish volunteers and staff for their special "care-avan," bringing blessings and greetings to parishioners staying at home during the coronavirus pandemic. "We line our cars in front of their home, honk and sing, pop up a cardboard image of Pope Francis, and then bless the home and family from more than six feet away. Little kids get an extra dose of holy water," says Fr. Jarvis. A virtual "distance hug" and well-wishes bring tears and smiles.