Foreword

In 1935 the first Serra Club was founded. In 1938 Serra International was formed.

In 1941 Pope Pius XII instituted in Rome the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations.

In 1951 Serra International was aggregated to the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations.

To make known the aggregation of Serra International and its clubs to the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations and to explain its full meaning, this brochure has been prepared.
The Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations

Pope Pius XII
Founder
THE PONTIFICAL WORK
FOR PRIESTLY VOCATIONS

To promote vocations to the sacred priesthood of the Catholic Church, many individuals and many organizations have always labored. To encourage and to coordinate all these efforts, and to encourage everywhere new work for priestly vocations, Pope Pius XII in 1941 founded an organization called, in ecclesiastical documents, Pontificium Opus Vocationum Sacerdotalium.

The purposes of this new Pontifical organization were listed by His Holiness in founding it: 1) to intensify the desire for promoting, safeguarding, and assisting ecclesiastical vocations; 2) to disseminate an accurate notion of the dignity and necessity of the Catholic priesthood; 3) to call the faithful of the whole world into a close union of prayers and pious exercises.

This organization is a primary work, i.e., it is empowered to aggregate to itself, or to affiliate, other organizations of similar purpose and thereby to confer on the members of its affiliates the spiritual benefits belonging to its own members.

On the following pages are given, in English translation, two important pontifical documents dealing with the Pontificium Opus Vocationum Sacerdotalium, and a list of the spiritual benefits of membership. The first document is Cum Nobis, the motu proprio of Pope Pius XII, issued in 1941, which established the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations. The second document, the statutes of the organization, issued in 1945, describes its activities and the ways in which other groups or persons can be aggregated to it.

MOTU PROPRIO

Instituting the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations in the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities.

POPE PIUS XII

Since the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities has informed Us that it would be most opportune to establish a primary work for priestly vocations, the purpose of which among the faithful would be—by every means, but particularly through similar projects established in each diocese—to intensify the desire for promoting, safeguarding, and assisting ecclesiastical vocations, to disseminate an accurate notion of the dignity and necessity of the Catholic priesthood, and likewise to call the faithful of the whole world into a close union of prayers and of pious exercises. We, motu proprio and with the fullness of the Apostolic authority, will and decree erected in the same Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities a Work for Priestly Vocations to which We give the name Pontifical, with the faculty of aggregating works and individuals that will so request, and at the same time of extending to all its members the indulgences and spiritual favors already granted or to be granted.

Let this determination of Ours have full force and effect, all things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, from Saint Peter's, on the fourth day of November, the Feast of Saint Charles Borromeo, in the year 1941, the third of Our Pontificate.

POPE PIUS XII
THE STATUTES OF THE PONTIFICAL WORK FOR PRIESTLY VOCATIONS

I

The Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations is the principal work for protecting, promoting, and helping priestly vocations. It was established by Our Holy Father Pope Pius XII in the Apostolic Letter, Cum Nobis, given motu proprio on November 4, 1941.

II

The Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations has its headquarters in the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities.

III

To attain the end for which it was instituted, the Pontifical Work

1) is concerned primarily with setting forth a true and clear notion of the nature, the necessity, and the excellence of the priesthood;

2) promotes the offering up of Masses, Communions, prayers, and works of penance and of charity to the end that God may grant many and excellent priestly vocations;

3) encourages the growth of the project which is established in each diocese for priestly vocations, and tries to have such projects set up where they do not already exist.

IV

Societies may be aggregated in the following ways.

Diocesan works for priestly vocations may be aggregated as “filiales.”

General or provincial headquarters of religious communities, institutes, boards of directors of Catholic societies, and similar groups which go beyond the boundaries of individual dioceses may be aggregated as “adhaerentes.”

Persons constituted in special dignity or who are charged with more important duties in the Church, or who have done some special work for the Church can be ascribed directly to the Pontifical Work.

V

The Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations is consecrated to Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Supreme and Eternal Priest; it is entrusted to the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen of Apostles and to the guardianship of Saint Joseph, the Patron of the Church Universal. It pays particular honor to the saintly Princes of the Apostles, Saints Peter and Paul.

At Rome, on the eighth day of the month of November, on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the year 1943.

PRESIDENT
Joseph Cardinal Pizzardo

SECRETARY
E. Ruffini
SPIRITUAL BENEFITS

AVAILABLE TO THE MEMBERS OF ALL SERRA CLUBS BECAUSE OF THE AFFILIATION OF SERRA INTERNATIONAL WITH THE PONTIFICAL WORK FOR PRIESTLY VOCATIONS

A plenary indulgence is granted on the day a person joins the society if he receives the Sacraments of Penance and of Holy Eucharist and prays for the intentions of the Holy Father.

A plenary indulgence is granted under the usual conditions (confession, communion, visit to a church or public oratory, and prayer for the Holy Father’s intention):

a) on the following feasts of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Christmas, December 25
The Circumcision, January 1
The Epiphany, January 6
The Holy Family, Sunday within the Octave of the Epiphany
Easter
Ascension
Finding of the Holy Cross, May 3
Corpus Christi, Thursday in the second week following Pentecost
The Sacred Heart of Jesus, Friday following the Octave Day of
b) on the following feasts of the Blessed Virgin:

Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8
The Purification, February 2
Feast of the Apparition of Lourdes, February 11
The Annunciation, March 25
The Seven Sorrows, Friday after Passion Sunday

The Visitation, July 2
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, July 16
Our Lady of the Snows, August 5
The Assumption, August 15
Nativity of Our Lady, September 8
Holy Name of Mary, September 12
The Seven Sorrows, September 15

Our Lady of Mercy, September 24
Our Lady of the Rosary, October 7
Maternity of Our Lady, October 11
The Presentation, November 21

c) on the following feasts of St. Joseph:

Feast of St. Joseph, March 19
The Solemnity, Wednesday follow-
ing the second Sunday after
Easter
d) on the following feasts of the Apostles:

Sts. Peter and Paul, June 29
St. Barnabas, June 11
St. Andrew, November 30
St. James the Greater, July 25
St. Thomas, December 21
St. Bartholomew, August 24
St. John, December 27
St. Matthew, September 21
St. Matthias, February 24 (or 25)
Sts. Simon and Jude, October 28
Sts. Philip and James, May 1

f) on the Feast of the Holy Day of the Saints:

St. Peter’s Chair at Rome, Jan. 18
All Saints, November 1
St. Aloysius Gonzaga, June 21
St. Charles Borromeo, November 4

g) on one day out of each three Ember Days.

A plenary indulgence is granted at the moment of death, when the person has confessed and received Holy Communion, or is at least contrite, and when he has devoutly invoked Our Lord’s Holy Name, orally if he is able to do so, and in his heart if he is unable to speak, and shall have been resigned to death as the penalty of sin and as something that comes to him from the hand of the Lord.

A partial indulgence of one hundred days may be gained for each act of charity or of piety performed by the members to further the ends of the society.

All the Masses offered by any priest for the soul of a member who has died in the state of grace are to profit that soul just as if the Masses were offered at a privileged altar.
SERRA CLUBS
SERRA INTERNATIONAL

In the fall of 1934, in Seattle, Washington, four men were meeting informally. They felt the need for an association of Catholic laymen which would further the cause of their Faith and would foster genuine and lasting friendships among Catholic men. Inviting several of their friends to join with them, these four—Dan Rooney, Richard Ward, Harold Haverle and the late Leo Sharkey—formally organized on February 27, 1935. Begun under the auspices and with the approval of Most Reverend Gerald Shaughnessy, S.M., then Bishop of Seattle, the group called itself the "Serra Club," after Father Junipero Serra, the Franciscan missionary and apostle of California.

One of the early members of the Seattle Club, John J. Janette, suggested, as a specific work for the group, fostering vocations and assisting in the education of candidates for the priesthood. On June 12, 1935, the original purpose of the Serra Club was enlarged to include this work.

During the first four years under the leadership and direction of the members of the Seattle Club, new Serra Clubs were organized in Spokane, Portland, Tacoma, and San Francisco. When the need for common direction and coordination of their program became apparent, these Clubs were invited to send delegates to Seattle. There, on July 2, 1938, the representatives of the five Serra Clubs voted to form Serra International and elected Dr. T. V. Sheehan of Seattle as the first president. Most Reverend Gerald Shaughnessy became the first Chaplain of Serra International and served until 1946. The principal aim of the first Serra Club—the promotion of priestly vocations—thus became the common goal of all Serra Clubs.

Serra continued to grow. By 1946 there were twenty-three clubs. In that year the Board of Trustees of Serra International meeting with His Eminence, Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago, who had just accepted the invitation to serve as Episcopal Adviser to Serra, decided to open a central office in Chicago. The decision was ratified in April 1947 by the International Convention meeting in Chicago.

In recent years Serra International has grown steadily. It now has eighty-five chartered clubs with over 4,500 members. These clubs exist in sixty-five dioceses and archdioceses. They are in thirty states of the United States, in Puerto Rico, in Canada, and in Heidelberg, Germany. Through all its rapid growth, promoting vocations has remained the chief objective of Serra.

At its ninth annual convention, held in Kansas City in 1951, Serra International approved a request, made through its episcopal moderator, Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago, for affiliation with the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations. The Congregation of Seminaries and Universities, having been informed beforehand of the request and wishing to show by a quick reply the favor with which the petition was received and thus to encourage the important work of Serra International, granted the request immediately, on the very day of the Convention, and so informed the delegates by radiogram directed to the Most Reverend Apostolic Delegate. An English translation of the diploma of aggregation, the original of which has been deposited by Serra International in the archives of the Chancery of the Archdiocese of Chicago for safekeeping, is given on the following pages.
DIPLOMA OF AGGREGATION

Sacred Congregation
of Seminaries and Universities

His Eminence, Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago, through His Excellency, Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Titular Archbishop of Laodicea in Phrygia and Apostolic Delegate in the United States of America, on the twenty-fifth day of April in the Year of Our Lord 1951, zealously petitioned that

SERRA INTERNATIONAL

of which the same Most Eminent Petitioner is the Episcopal Adviser, and which has for its principal purpose steadfastly to foster vocations to the Catholic Priesthood and therefore for this end to help with the education of boys and youths, and which holds together in close union its Serra Clubs, constantly increasing in number, be aggregated to the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations, erected in the Sacred Congregation for Seminaries and Universities. This petition, then, has been acclaimed unanimously on the occasion of the ninth annual convention of the same Serra International held in Kansas City on the third and fourth days of May in the Year of Our Lord 1951, His Excellency, the Apostolic Delegate, being present. The same Sacred Congregation, graciously accepting the petition of the Most Eminent Cardinal, very willingly aggregates the aforesaid Serra International to the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations as "adhaerens," defining that it and its every Serra Club work in harmony with diocesan works for Priestly Vocations and render faithful service to the local ordinaries for the more perfect attainment of the objectives enunciated in the Apostolic Letter Cum Nobis, issued moto proprio by the Supreme Pontiff Pope Pius

XII, happily reigning, on the fourth day of November, in the year of Our Lord 1941.

Given at Rome from the Palace of Saint Gallius on the third day of May, on the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the year of Our Lord 1951.

Prefect

Joseph Cardinal Pizzardo
Suburban Bishop of Albano

Secretary

Charles Confranieri
Bishop of Nocopolis, a.N.

The aggregation of Serra International to the Pontifical Work was announced by the Apostolic Delegate at the 1951 convention of Serra. Mr. James R. Martin, Serra's president, responded:

Your Excellency, for this marvelous gift you have brought us, we are honored and grateful. With profound humility we receive this historic document, we pledge Serra International ever to stand by its Apostolic charter which calls upon us, first, to foster vocations, and second, to further Catholicism by making Serra a veritable training ground of lay apostles.

Under the inspiration of the sovereign words of our Holy Father, we pledge ourselves to stand ever at the side of our Bishops in fulfilling our noble objectives and in building enduring friendships among Catholic men.
CUM NOBIS

This motu proprio, establishing the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations, was issued on Nov. 4, 1941. It appeared in the Acta Apostolicae Sedis 33 (1941): 479.

STATUTA

The statutes of the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations were issued by the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities on September 8, 1943, and appeared in the Acta Apostolicae Sedis 35 (1943): 569-570.

INDULGENTIAE

The indulgences listed here for members of organizations affiliated to the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations are taken from a rescript of the Sacra Apostolica Poenitentiaria of January 30, 1942.

OPUS PONTIFICIUM


SERRA INTERNATIONAL

Information and literature about Serra International can be obtained from the Executive Secretary, Mr. Harry J. O'Hare, at the office of Serra International, 38 South Dearborn Street, Chicago 3, Illinois.