Called to be Serrans
Creating a culture of vocations worldwide
There are many different reasons why we all became Serrans, but I really believe the Holy Spirit used those reasons to call us to work in this ministry. I believe you are not a Serran by accident and God has chosen you to do his vocation work.”

Judy Cozzens, President, Serra’s Council for the United States

The Serran Calendar

April 25, 2020
Serra Global Rosary for Vocations

May 3, 2020
World Day of Prayer for Vocations

May 30, 2020
Serra Global Rosary for Vocations

June 25-28, 2020
Serra’s 78th International Convention
New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

July 1, 2020
Saint Junipero Serra’s Feast Day

January 14-17, 2021
Serra Rally — Dallas, Texas, USA

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Nearly 200 Serrans from all over North America (and one from Italy, our Serra International Vocations VP Giuseppe Miccoli) gathered in Ventura, California for the sixth annual USA Council Serra Rally, from Jan. 15-18, 2020. This was the second year in a row that the Rally was held in that location.

The theme of the event was “Creating a Culture of Vocations,” and over a dozen speakers and panelists provided inspirational and informative material on the topic. Among the featured presenters this year was Fr. Luke Ballman, new executive director for the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, whose statistical and pastoral analysis of the state of vocations in the United States was down to earth, yet encouraging. Also new this year was Fr. Paul Hoesing, Vice-Rectors of Formation for Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, who was the perfect choice to speak on “Forming Priests for the New Millennium.”

A particularly eye-opening and fascinating presentation on “Engaging Latino Catholics for the Promotion of Vocations” was delivered by Ken Johnson-Mondragón, Coordinator of Research in the Consultation for the V Encuentro, and Armando Cervantes, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Orange. Most Rev. Robert Barron, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles and Catholic media luminary, brought star power to the Rally.

Finally, we were especially blessed to be joined by the episcopal advisers for both Serra’s USA Council and Serra International: Most Rev. Thomas A. Daly, Bishop of Spokane, Wash., and His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Collins, Archbishop of Toronto, Ontario, respectively.

Immediately following the Rally, about 50 pilgrims departed for the second installment of the Mission Trail pilgrimage begun last year. They visited California missions from Ventura to Los Angeles, enriching their connection to St. Junípero Serra and to each other as spiritual journeymen and women.

The Serra Rally 2021 will be held in Dallas, Texas, from Jan. 14-17.
What a Rally!

Equal measures of work, inspiration, education, worship, and fellowship define the annual USA Council-sponsored Serra Rally.

LEFT: Bishop Robert Barron of Los Angeles and Serra International Episcopal Ad- viser Thomas Cardinal Collins of Toronto concelebrated the closing Mass of the Rally with other priests and Serra club chaplains present.

BELOW LEFT: USA Council President-elect Richard Arians served as the event’s emcee.

BELOW CENTER: Serrans enjoyed evening Mass on Jan. 17 at St. John’s Seminary in Camarillo.

BELOW RIGHT: Fr. Paul Hoesing, Vice-Rector of Formation for Kendrick-Glennon Seminary, with Wichita Serrans Juanita Smith and Kathy Mikols. 

All photos this section by Wayne Michaels.

The USA Council Outstanding Newsletter Award was presented by Communications VP Nancy Gibson (third from left) at the Rally. The winners are:

Great Lakes Region: Chuck Lynch, Serra Club of Louisville, KY (award received by Gino DiMattia, far left)

South Central Region: Mary Lou Purello, Serra Club of Northeast of Houston, TX (received by Candice Tyrrell, second from left)

Southeast Region: Rosey Bacaling, Serra Club of Williamson County, TN (received by Greg Schwietz, fourth from left)

Pacific Northwest Region: Karen Domini, Serra Club of Spokane WA (received by Morie Ratuiste, second from right)

The highest scoring newsletter in the United States Council is from the North Central Region: Norma Swanson and Margi Millunzi, Serra Club of North-Minneapolis, MN (received by Judy Cozzens, far right).

Photo by Don Simoneaux.
What a Pilgrimage!

After the Rally, a cadre of Serrans completed a pilgrimage of California’s southern missions.

All photos this page by Don Simoneaux

Above: Serra pilgrims outside Mission San Diego de Alcalá
Left: Paintings of the California Missions at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels
Right: Serra Chapel at Mission San Juan Capistrano, completed in 1782, the oldest standing building in California and the only remaining church in which Serra is known to have officiated.
Below left: Jesus walks on water at Christ Cathedral Campus, Garden Grove, CA
Below right: Mission San Gabriel Arcángel, Chapel of the Annunciation
Used chalices and patens from the U.S. get new life in Uganda

by Dave Wayman
Serra Club of Erie, Penn.

Many parishes in many dioceses across the United States have vocation chalice or vocation cross programs whereby parishioners take a chalice or a cross into their homes for a week and pray each day for an increase of vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. These programs are a way to indirectly plant the seed and encourage thinking about vocations among our family members and youth. These are worthwhile programs that should be embraced by every parish. With God’s grace they will, in time, bear fruit.

This article is about a different vocation chalice program; a program where there is a surplus of vocations to the priesthood. A program that should offer us in the West hope.

I have gotten involved in mission work through Mary Mission, Inc., a 501(c) 3 non-profit that has raised money and established a Catholic school in the Masaka district of Uganda. Each year for the past four years, I’ve taken mission and medical supplies to Uganda, and worked at St. Philomena Primary and Nursery School in Lwabikere. It is the most fulfilling work I’ve ever done.

Three years ago, Father Casimir Bogniak, a “retired” priest of the Diocese of Erie, Pennsylvania, approached me after morning Mass and asked a favor. Father Caz is in his mid-80s and still actively drives from parish to parish filling in where he is needed to say Mass and offer the sacraments along with proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.

He had heard that I was going to Africa and he had two chalices that he was concerned about disposing of before the executor of his will would be confronted with the problem. He asked me and my wife, Kathy, to take the chalices and patens with us to Uganda and make sure they were given to new priests whose families could not afford to buy good chalices for them.

We gave the two chalices to the spiritual director of Mary Mission, Inc., Father Edward Kabanda of the diocese of Kampala. He was delighted to accept them on behalf of the diocese and assured us that they would be used and cherished by the young priests who would receive them.

Uganda is a very Christian country, approximately 42% Catholic, 42% Protestant (mostly Anglican because they were a former British protectorate), 15% Muslim, and 1% Animist.

The Catholic community in Uganda is strong and growing, and that is reflected in the numbers of young men ordained each year. The Diocese of Kampala has the largest Catholic population, approximately 1.5 million. They have 390 active priests and their ordination numbers are: 2016 – 12 priests; 2017 – 19 priests; 2018 – 16 priests and 2019 – 18 priests. Each priest ministers to approximately 3,845 Catholic parishioners.

By comparison, the Diocese of Pittsburgh has a Catholic population of about 1 million. They have 209 active priests. Their ordination numbers are: 2016 – 3 priests; 2017 – 5 priests; 2018 – 4 priests; and 2019 – 4 priests. Each
priest ministers to approximately 4,716 Catholic parishioners.

Uganda is a third-world country and very poor. Many of the priests come from families that are average or below average on the country’s economic scale, which is to say, poor. Many cannot afford a chalice for their Mass kit.

In the U.S., we have more priests retiring than being ordained. Chalices have no practical use once their owner passes away and really should not be used for anything other than Catholic liturgies. Anecdotally, I’ve been told that many parishes and dioceses have cupboards full of chalices left by priests that have passed away and whose families didn’t know what else to do with the chalice.

So, before my summer 2018 mission trip I approached the Diocese of Erie to see if they had any chalices they would be willing to give to the Diocese of Kampala. They did indeed.

Sister Kathleen Dietz, F.S.O., Vice Chancellor of the diocese of Erie, was able to find six beautiful chalices and patens that had been collecting dust on a shelf. She polished them, restoring their luster and beauty for delivery to Uganda.

In 2019, I approached the Diocese of Erie again and they were able to provide six more chalices. Father Larry Richards of St. Joseph/Bread of Life parish in Erie offered four chalices that had been left at the parish by previous pastors.

Father Eddy Kabanda was absolutely thrilled to receive 10 chalices in November of 2019. “You have no idea what this means,” he said, “to the young priests who are able to have a beautiful chalice for their Mass kits. The gifts are deeply appreciated and will be used reverently to present the Eucharist at Mass in service to God’s people.”

In reflecting on this different kind of vocation chalice program, I couldn’t help but feel like a torch is being passed from the developed West where the largest religious group in America is the “nones,” those who choose not to identify with any religious group and comprise 34 percent of our population, versus Protestants at 33 percent, Roman Catholics at 21 percent, and the smaller religions that comprise the balance of the population.

Here, some may be abandoning our Christian faith, while it is growing in Africa. In time they will be the missionaries and we will be the mission territories. We need to keep the light of faith burning and support our priests in third-world countries in whatever ways we can. I hope that dioceses throughout the United States would try to give their unused chalices to mission partners that can deliver them to needy dioceses in poor countries.

It is a different kind of vocation chalice program, but one that is essential in order to support and encourage vocations where they are being found today. ☑

Dave Wayman is a past president and current board member of the Serra Club of Erie www.serraerie.org and is a board member of Mary Mission, Inc. www.marymission.com.
Steeped in European traditions and Caribbean influences, New Orleans calls curious minds to sweet sounds and savory aromas fueled by 300 years of history.

From the moment you arrive, the Big Easy will beckon your ears, allure your eyes and enchant your heart. Follow the scent of gumbo, the sound of a Blues guitar, or the path that welcomes you to a historic mansion or a hidden courtyard...

Whatever you do, join us for friendship, faith and family at Serra’s 78th International Convention in New Orleans!

Laissez les bons temps rouler – Let the good times roll!

**Our Keynote Speakers**

**His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Collins, Archbishop of Toronto**

We are so glad that Serra International’s beloved Episcopal Adviser will once again join us for the convention. Find out why Cardinal Collins’ talks are so highly anticipated at Serra events.

**Thomas J. Neal, Ph.D.**

Dr. Neal serves as Professor of Spiritual Theology at Notre Dame Seminary. Recently, he has dedicated much of his energy to theological reflection on the call of the lay faithful to be “secular saints” whose mission is to consecrate the world itself to God by faithfully living out their personal vocations.
New Orleans is blessed with an unparalleled number of renowned Catholic shrines. In a city that inspires so many—from artists to authors, from musicians to magicians—let it inspire your faith in a profound way! Three of the seven shrines are just walking distance from our hotel.

The National WWII Museum tells the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world—why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today—so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn. www.nationalww2museum.org

It's Mardi Gras everyday at Mardi Gras World, where you can go behind the scenes to find out how the extravagant floats of New Orleans' biggest party are made. Learn history, try on costumes, meet some artists, and try the famous King Cake! www.mardigrasworld.com

The Antebellum South comes to life at the many plantations that line the Mississippi River, a throwback to the city's agrarian past. Tour these stately mansions and hear stories from all perspectives, from the famous local families that built and owned them, to the views of slaves who worked there.

Information on these and other attractions will be sent to you via email and will be included in your convention packet.
National Catholic Youth Conference 2019

Indianapolis and Lafayette Serra clubs assist at largest Catholic youth gathering in the United States

By Rick Santangelo, Serra Club of Indianapolis, Ind.

The Serra Club of Indianapolis paired with the Serra Club of Lafayette to work at the 2019 National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, Nov. 21-23, 2019. NCYC is the largest Catholic youth gathering in the United States, drawing 20,000+ youth and adults. The theme this year was “BLESS * BROKEN * GIVEN.”

The National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) is an exciting, biennial three-day experience of catechesis, prayer, worship, community, and empowerment for Catholic teenagers and their adult chaperones. Teens and their group leaders enjoy speakers, workshops, live music, electrifying large sessions, an amazing closing liturgy, opportunities to participate in the Sacrament of Penance, and exploring their faith in a supportive environment.

The teens are part of a huge community of peers who love Jesus, who embrace their Catholic heritage, and aren’t afraid to show it. They are on fire with the faith! Teens and youth leaders can together harness the experience and bring it back to their parishes. The thematic village is a unique venue incorporating traditional exhibits with interactive, educational and recreational activities. Hundreds of vendors, representatives from many orders, and pro-life groups completed the atmosphere.

NCYC began in 1983 following in the footsteps of its predecessor conference, the Catholic Youth Organization biennial national convention. In its early days, NCYC was held regionally, one session for each coast. Combined attendance at the regional conferences was a few thousand. In 1991, the two conferences merged into one national event. In the mid 1990s, interest in NCYC began to increase. Today, NCYC draws 20,000+ youth and adults for three days of catechesis, prayer and worship, service and recreation and celebration of the Sacraments. NCYC will be in Indianapolis through 2025, and Lafayette and Indianapolis Serrans hope to assist again in 2021 and beyond.

Local Serrans purchased booth space and at the recommendation of Indianapolis Serran Anne Wessel, used
TapSnap as a way for attendees to get their picture taken and share with friends and relatives who could not attend the event. The pictures were taken for free and everyone received a print to take with them. They then typed in their cell phone number for that print to be sent to their cell phone and shared with others.

Every picture had the Serra International logo on it, along with the names of the Indianapolis and Lafayette clubs. Participants had their choice of backgrounds, including the Vatican, parting of the Red Sea, Lucas Oil Stadium, Downtown Indianapolis, or the Serra background. The event theme was printed on each picture.

Over 1,000 people received a picture and a vocations prayer card. Adults received information about the Serra Club and its objectives. It was our prayer that the seed of priestly or religious vocations may have been planted through our efforts. It was a truly remarkable experience.

Many of the participants also spent some time helping to assemble over 44,000 meals for Pack Away Hunger, an Indianapolis-based organization that provides nutritious dehydrated meals to local food pantries throughout Indiana. The organization also works with international populations. The meals consist of rice and soy, dehydrated vegetables and a powerful vitamin nutrient pack that goes into it. The meals are sealed and have a long shelf life.

The following Lafayette Serrans assisted at NCYC: Dana Fitzsimmons, Mary Farrell, Dan and Judy Schumaker, Tom and Jean Martin. Sean Belby, Larry and Debbie Timko, Steve Wessel, Doug Keller, Deacon Mike Slinger, and Rick Santangelo represented the Indianapolis club. We give special thanks to Anne Wessel for suggesting the idea, and for devoting her time and energy all three days.

“Serra Club Indianapolis has seen new growth in the past five years, with phenomenal growth in the past two,” says club President Louise Collet. “There is a hunger in the new members to spread the philosophy of Saint Junípero Serra to the young men and women in our area to increase the harvest of which Christ speaks to all of us.” 🌱
Back in August 2019, Dr. Ruben Gallegos, President of Serra International, asked me to chair a special committee to develop a pamphlet of daily prayers for vocations that would:

- provide structure in daily prayer
- encourage fellow Serrans to pray more consistently
- help enhance our spirituality and
- support the work of Missionaries of St. Junípero Serra in increasing our membership.

Working with the USA Council Programs Committee (Aileen Fields, John Osterhart, Katie Radford and Barbara Meehan), and collaborating with Anne Roat (Vocations VP), and Candice Tyrrell (Membership VP), we developed this *Vocations Apostolate Daily Prayers* pamphlet, which is compact enough to carry in a purse or shirt pocket, or use as a bookmark. Valuable feedback was also furnished by Serra Club of Tri-Cities, Wash., chaplain Fr. Rex Familiar, Spokane Diocese Vocation Director Fr. Kyle Ratuiste, members of Serra Club of Tri-Cities, and potential members.

The introduction of the *Vocations Apostolate Daily Prayers* pamphlet at the Serra Rally in Ventura (Jan 16-19, 2020) was well received and so successful that we ran out of copies. By now, your club should have received 25 complimentary copies. This pamphlet is available in the Serra E-Store.

The prayer pamphlet is composed of seven different prayers for vocations with one theme for each day of the week using the acronym **B.A.P.T.I.S.M.** In baptism we all become children of God. Using the acronym **B.A.P.T.I.S.M.** reminds us of our own call to holiness or vocation, and our baptismal obligation to seek, know, love, and share Christ.

Each day starts with a short Bible verse reflection, followed by vocation prayer, seven petitions, and then concludes with the praying of the Holy Rosary with suggested focus on the fruit of each mystery.

**Sunday - Blessed.** At the beginning of the week, we give blessing to our Heavenly Father who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing and chose us in Him to be holy and without blemish.

**Monday - Answer the call to Holiness,** a discernment prayer to find our true vocation in life.

**Tuesday - Perseverance** – a prayer that we may patiently persevere to live out our vocation with faithfulness, generosity, and humility.

**Wednesday - Thanksgiving** – at the middle of the week, we pause to express our gratitude for holy priests, vowed religious, single life, and holy marriages.

**Thursday - Identity of vocation** – a prayer to help us radiate Christ to others.

**Friday - Shepherd** – a prayer to have more laborers for the harvest.

**Saturday - Mission** – a prayer to affirm our ultimate mission to bring Christ to others and others to Christ; in short, the salvation of souls.

The living breath of prayer is the Holy Spirit. Hence, the life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with Him. This communion is made possible through Baptism. As you pray using the Vocations Apostolate Daily Prayer, always remember the priests who baptize and confirm us, who absolve our sins, who nourish us with the Eucharist, who witness our marriages, who anoint the sick and dying, and who prepare our souls to meet our Maker; the holy vocation of marriage that builds domestic churches - the leaven of holy vocations; and young men and women as they discern their calls to holy life.

The demand of our Vocations Apostolate has a special need of prayer. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI - “I often think that prayer – the ‘unum necessarium’ – is the one aspect of vocations work which we tend to forget or to undervalue.”

We hope that this *Vocations Apostolate Daily Prayer* pamphlet will help fill that need. As our patron said: “Siempre Adelante, nunca retroceder!” 🙏
SPARK Tool #18: School Traveling Crucifix Program
Promoting Vocation Prayer and Awareness for Young People
by Dr. Anne Roat, USA Council Vocations Vice President

Serra SPARK is a resource developed by the USA 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 work for anyone involved in vocation work. Serra Clubs, parishes, and anyone committed to building culture of vocations can use the tools available at www.serraspark.org to learn about and expand their vocation activities.

When visiting the Serra SPARK website, be sure to check out Tool #18, the School Traveling Crucifix Program. This tool is designed to create an awareness of vocations by promoting an atmosphere that inspires vocations to emerge in the community, the parish, the classroom, and the household.

The School Traveling Crucifix Program is appropriate for every parish. It can be used in a parish school or a parish religious education program. There are suggested lesson plans and ideas for both the Catholic school and the parish faith formation program. Homeschool families will also find it easy to adapt the program to their educational setting. It is a wonderful, easy-to-organize way to involve students in praying for vocations and to unite the class in perpetual prayer for priests and consecrated religious.

In this program, the Crucifix travels from classroom to classroom or homeroom to homeroom each week or month. As the focal point of this program, the Crucifix must sit atop the teacher’s or catechist’s desk before vocation prayers begin each day. It serves as a visible reminder of the class’s commitment to pray together for vocations. Students receive holy cards with suggested prayers and are encouraged to use the prayers often each day. Each student is reminded of God’s personal call to grow in holiness. A journal can also be used to help teachers and catechists record what happens in their classroom when the Crucifix is present.

There are many different suppliers and options for obtaining the School Traveling Crucifix. At the Serra E-Store (www.serrastore.org), Vianney Vocations offers a distinctive crucifix with a stand-up base. It comes with a travel case, brochures that explain the program for schools and religious education programs, and 200 prayer cards.

If your parish school or religious education program uses the Traveling Crucifix Program and you would like to share your experience, please contact Dr. Anne D. Roat, Vice President for Vocations of the USA Council of Serra International, at vpvoccuserra@gmail.com.
My name is Ruben Gallegos, Ph.D., and I live in the city of Brownsville, Texas, USA. Brownsville is located across the Rio Grande River from Mexico and close to the Gulf of Mexico. I became a member of the Serra Club of Brownsville in 1993.

In June 2019, in Mexico City, I became president of Serra International. My goal was “to increase the number of Catholics praying for vocations.” There are 1.2 billion Catholics and only 12,000 Serrans praying for vocations. We need more Catholics praying for vocations.

The Missionaries of St. Junípero Serra membership contest launched last September is a big step toward accomplishing this goal. I donated $20,000 for the contest that would identify clubs with the greatest increase of membership. The funds will be also used to recognize individuals and clubs that went the extra mile.

Our patron saint, St. Junípero Serra, was a missionary of Jesus and he calls on us to be Missionaries of St. Junípero Serra. We are to visit parishes to promote the Serra Movement. As “head missionary” of Serra International, I have visited 10 clubs in countries outside of the U.S. — namely, Mexico, Italy and Paraguay.

Paraguay is a small country in South America whose inhabitants speak Spanish as well as their native Guarani language. The people from Paraguay are indeed proud of their Guarani heritage and their native tongue. Guarani is also the name of their currency. Traditional Paraguayan music, featuring the harp, entertains in both languages. Two songs known worldwide are “Recuerdos de Ypacarai” and “Mis Noches Sin Ti.”

Paraguay has five Serra Clubs. I first visited Paraguay in 2015. Since then, the Serra Club of Harlingen, Texas, has been a “sister Serra club” to them and has paid the dues for Paraguay. The Serra members in Paraguay are very proud Catholics. They cheerfully recite their Mass and Serra Prayers by memory and in unison.

On February 1 and 2, 2020, I attended the XXI Encuentro Nacional Serra Paraguay. This retreat meeting was held at the beautiful buildings of Casa de Retiro Carlota Palmerola operated by the Dominican Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in the city of Areguá. The theme was “Año de la Palabra de Dios.” The Encuentro was well attended by the officers of the five clubs. District Governor Sra. Beatriz Aldana de Benitez, a dynamic leader, opened the Encuentro. I spoke with her for over an hour regarding the Missionaries of St. Junípero Serra contest and the Sister Serra Club.
concept. Past Serra International President Affonso Iannone of São Paulo, Brazil, also spoke and responded to their questions.

Monseñor Edmundo Ponziano Valenzuela Mellid, SDB, Archbishop of Asunción, Paraguay, presented on the conclusions of Pope Francis’ Amazon Synod. Padre Miguel Angel Martinez spoke on “Año de la Palabra de Dios,” and Monseñor Ricardo Jorge Valenzuela Ríos, Bishop of Caacupé, Paraguay, delivered his talk, “Cómo Perseverar en el Serra.” All the speakers were very stimulating and spiritual.

The future for Paraguay looks very bright. They have excellent leaders, such as District Governor Sra. Beatriz Aldana de Benitez; President of the Serra Club of Asunción Sra. Eva Chaparro; and President of the Serra Club of Villarrica, Cristhian Arce Sandoval. All five Serra clubs are interested in the Missionaries of St. Junípero Serra initiative.

Most of all, they want to provide the leadership to organize Serra clubs in other South American countries like Chile, Columbia, Uruguay, and Bolivia. Sra Beatriz has already developed a plan of action and offered their support in chartering a club in South America. My goal as Past President will be to charter a Serra Club in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I know it will be done.

Paraguay is beautiful and I love it. VIVA PARAGUAY!

President Gallegos Attends VIP Event in Nashville

On Dec. 19, 2019, President Gallegos traveled to Nashville, Tenn., for the local Serra Club’s VIP (Vocations in Progress) dinner. This annual event honors seminarians and Dominican Sisters postulants of the Diocese of Nashville.

Pictured at left: District 18 Governor Trip Guthrie; Carole Guthrie; President Gallegos; Most Rev. J. Mark Spalding, Bishop of Nashville; Serra Club of Nashville President Jim Walton; painter Anne Goetze; and Serra International Trustee Bob Rudman.
Serrans often wonder where their Serra International and U.S. Council dues go. I want to take this opportunity to let you know your dues are a great investment in the future of our beautiful Church. I would like to stress to you that this may be the best investment you make in the course of your year. Where else can you spend about $100 and have it used to promote religious vocations in our Church that will serve our children and grandchildren in the future? Here are four programs that your investment is promoting.

**Serra SP ARK Online Resource**
The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors (NCDVD) asked Serra to prepare a digital resource to assist vocation directors and vocation promoters in their work. Serraspark.org is our answer and it is now used as a great resource for vocation promotion and affirmation activities across our nation. These vocation activities are easy to use and not copyrighted, so vocation promoters can download a good plan for an activity, add a few personal touches and brand with their organization, and use.

**SPARK Training for Parish Vocation Ministry**
In fact, Serra SPARK was so well-received that the NCDVD asked Serra to provide in-person training for parish vocation ministries using SPARK as the game plan. Serra met the challenge and prepared a comprehensive training for Parish Vocation Ministries. We were able to announce this at the NCDVD conference last fall and it was very well received. If a diocese can pull together 5-10 parishes, our training team will come and conduct a free 6-hour workshop on developing and maintaining a culture of religious vocations through Parish Vocation Ministry. The diocese invites the participants, hosts the workshop and provides the refreshments. Two comprehensive trainings have already been presented, three more are planned and several dioceses are investigating the program. This is just the tip of the iceberg; stay tuned and watch this effort grow!

**Seven Serrans Prayer Program**
Our third new program is the Seven Serrans program, where teams of Serran pray-ers are personally dedicated to lifting up U.S. diocesan vocation directors in prayer. Thirty percent of these directors are new each year and they know the job is a great challenge. Therefore, we want to support the vocation directors because they are our soldiers on the front line working to secure vocations for the future of our Church. One vocation director told us that our prayers will protect them from the devil who tries to plant seeds of discouragement. Our prayer teams are like the helpers who held up Moses arms so his army could be victorious.

**Serra-Sponsored FOCUS Reunion**
One other new item is very worthy of mention. FOCUS alumni are an army of dedicated Catholics numbering about 30,000 across our country. Ten percent (500) of the 5,000 seminarians in our country are former FOCUS missionaries, and the convents and monasteries also have received many new vocations from them. The rest of the alumni live in communities around the country and are very active Catholics who love religious vocations. Serra, with the help of the FOCUS alumni office, is planning an outreach to these faithful Catholics. We will sponsor a reunion for alumni before the Serra International convention in New Orleans. This evening will give alumni from around the area an opportunity to reconnect with each other while learning about Serra. This could be the blueprint for hosting FOCUS alumni at regional conferences around our county and obtaining new, younger Serra members.

This is one of my favorite quotes from John Henry Cardinal Newman: “God has created me to do him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission.” As I told Serrans at the Rally, there are many different reasons why we all became Serrans, but I really believe the Holy Spirit used those reasons to call us to work in this ministry. I believe you are not a Serran by accident and God has chosen you to do his vocation work. 

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*What Do Serrans Do? Your dues at work with four exciting new programs by Judy Cozzens, Serra’s USA Council President*

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*Serrans often wonder where their Serra International and U.S. Council dues go. I want to take this opportunity to let you know your dues are a great investment in the future of our beautiful Church. I would like to stress to you that this may be the best investment you make in the course of your year. Where else can you spend about $100 and have it used to promote religious vocations in our Church that will serve our children and grandchildren in the future? Here are four programs that your investment is promoting.*

**Serra SP ARK Online Resource**
The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors (NCDVD) asked Serra to prepare a digital resource to assist vocation directors and vocation promoters in their work. Serraspark.org is our answer and it is now used as a great resource for vocation promotion and affirmation activities across our nation. These vocation activities are easy to use and not copyrighted, so vocation promoters can download a good plan for an activity, add a few personal touches and brand with their organization, and use.

**SPARK Training for Parish Vocation Ministry**
In fact, Serra SPARK was so well-received that the NCDVD asked Serra to provide in-person training for parish vocation ministries using SPARK as the game plan. Serra met the challenge and prepared a comprehensive training for Parish Vocation Ministries. We were able to announce this at the NCDVD conference last fall and it was very well received. If a diocese can pull together 5-10 parishes, our training team will come and conduct a free 6-hour workshop on developing and maintaining a culture of religious vocations through Parish Vocation Ministry. The diocese invites the participants, hosts the workshop and provides the refreshments. Two comprehensive trainings have already been presented, three more are planned and several dioceses are investigating the program. This is just the tip of the iceberg; stay tuned and watch this effort grow!

**Seven Serrans Prayer Program**
Our third new program is the Seven Serrans program, where teams of Serran pray-ers are personally dedicated to lifting up U.S. diocesan vocation directors in prayer. Thirty percent of these directors are new each year and they know the job is a great challenge. Therefore, we want to support the vocation directors because they are our soldiers on the front line working to secure vocations for the future of our Church. One vocation director told us that our prayers will protect them from the devil who tries to plant seeds of discouragement. Our prayer teams are like the helpers who held up Moses arms so his army could be victorious.

**Serra-Sponsored FOCUS Reunion**
One other new item is very worthy of mention. FOCUS alumni are an army of dedicated Catholics numbering about 30,000 across our country. Ten percent (500) of the 5,000 seminarians in our country are former FOCUS missionaries, and the convents and monasteries also have received many new vocations from them. The rest of the alumni live in communities around the country and are very active Catholics who love religious vocations. Serra, with the help of the FOCUS alumni office, is planning an outreach to these faithful Catholics. We will sponsor a reunion for alumni before the Serra International convention in New Orleans. This evening will give alumni from around the area an opportunity to reconnect with each other while learning about Serra. This could be the blueprint for hosting FOCUS alumni at regional conferences around our county and obtaining new, younger Serra members.

This is one of my favorite quotes from John Henry Cardinal Newman: “God has created me to do him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission.” As I told Serrans at the Rally, there are many different reasons why we all became Serrans, but I really believe the Holy Spirit used those reasons to call us to work in this ministry. I believe you are not a Serran by accident and God has chosen you to do his vocation work.
A few years ago, during Lent, my wife and I were attending Mass at our parish. By all accounts, it was a typical February morning in Chicago. There was a light dusting of snow on the ground, a chill in the air, and a flu virus making the rounds. Before Mass, we visited with the ushers and deacon about the fish fry that coming Friday, and then took our seats.

Mass proceeded as it normally does with the opening procession and introductory rites. During the Liturgy of the Word, things took an odd turn. Halfway through proclaiming the Gospel, Fr. Joe, our beloved pastor, stopped and said he needed to sit down for a moment. The parishioners looked around quizzically when this happened, as Fr. Joe is not known to “do bits” during Mass. After a brief pause, Fr. Joe stood up, walked to the ambo and finished the Gospel reading. He began his homily and our concern for him began to grow as he seemed short of breath and struggled to organize his thoughts. After preaching for two minutes, Fr. Joe fell to the ground, unconscious.

A stunned congregation looked on in shock at what had just happened. For 15 seconds, which felt like an hour, no one said or did anything. Finally, a member of the parish council ran up to the altar to check Fr. Joe’s vitals. “Someone get help! He’s still breathing!” she shouted. Two ushers went up to assist her in assessing the situation and an altar server went to the sacristy to get a glass of water for Fr. Joe.

After a few more panicked moments, a young member of the parish stood up and asked if anyone had call 911 (emergency services, for our Serrans outside the U.S.A.). Everyone looked around and no one answered. The young parishioner, seeing no definitive answer, said that he was calling for an ambulance and suggested that the rest of parish, aside from those with Fr. Joe at the moment, pray for the pastor’s recovery. The ambulance arrived shortly thereafter. Fr. Joe was able to say, “I’m going to be OK, but I’m not sure about you folks; you need to wait here for Fr. Don to come in and finish Mass, so I will be praying for you as you pray for me.” He was carried from the church on a stretcher.

The next week, Fr. Joe added further levity to the situation by noting in the parish bulletin: “Anyone who thinks all Masses are the same should have seen what happened at the 10:15 Mass last week.”

While everyone was happy to learn that Fr. Joe was merely dehydrated, overworked, and battling the flu, the situation might have turned out differently if various leaders and members from the parish did not act when they did. Everyone knew that Fr. Joe needed help, but no one immediately rushed to his aid because they all thought that someone else would handle that. When the member of the parish council asked the congregation for help, most people remained stationary in the pews because the request for help was not targeted to them directly. The three people who did respond did not take the obvious step of calling for an ambulance. It was not until the young parishioner stood up to ask if an ambulance was called before everyone realized that no one made that important phone call.

As we continue our work as Serrans, we must remember to directly ask or instruct the members of our team regarding what they are expected to do. Often, requests go unheard because they are made to generally to “someone” rather than a specific person. Other tasks go uncompleted because despite the fact that a specific person was asked to do the job, that person failed in his duties and no one followed up.

At the end of the day, we are all responsible for what transpires within our Church and within our Serran ministry. This is best summed up in the story of “Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody”: There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody’s job. Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn’t do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Who is “someone,” exactly?

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A newly formed Satellite Serra Club sponsored and created by the Serra Club of McAllen in McAllen, Texas, was officially launched on Oct. 8, 2019. Serra International President and Brownsville Serra Club member Ruben Gallegos, Ph.D., attended the ceremony. A total of eight new members were sworn in as members of the Serra Club of McAllen. This nucleus of members will continue to assist in recruiting new members to the Satellite Club until such time they can reach charter status. At that time, the satellite Serra club will spin off and become a new Serra Club of Weslaco, Texas.

The satellite club idea came from McAllen Serrans Adam and Betty Lara, who serve as Vice President of Membership and President-Elect of the McAllen Club, respectively. The Laras are also Serra International trustees who will be instrumental in assisting Serra International President Gallegos to promote the establishment of new Satellite Clubs to help our organization grow and prosper in achieving its goals and purpose. McAllen club President John Asbell endorsed the satellite club idea and helped move the procedure forward.

"Working together and supporting one another can achieve good results," observed District 126 Governor Jesse Gallegos, of the successfully implemented satellite idea. Norma Montalvo, the newly elected chair of the satellite club, is elated and excited by the response of their Catholic community showing strong support for this new venture.

—Al Beltran, Serra Club of McAllen, Texas

Seed Planted for Serra Club in Weslaco, Texas
The Harvest Is Abundant
Our new 52-page booklet contains a treasury of prayers to help intercede for holy priests, sisters, and brothers. Also includes the Rosary for Vocations. A great resource for daily prayer for vocations. $2.50 with bulk pricing available

Greeting Card for Seminarians
Express your support to seminarians with a message of prayer and encouragement. $8 per 10 cards, includes envelopes

Serra Membership Brochure
Attract new members to your club! Beautiful trifold brochure clearly explains Serra’s mission and reasons for becoming a Serran. NEW—back of brochure includes large blank space for you to add your club name and info. Only $18 per 50 brochures. Custom brochures also available.

Serra Prayer Card
The newly designed Serra Prayer Card is priced to buy in bulk and hand out to members, family, and fellow parishioners.

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Pray for Vocations Magnets
4”x7” indoor magnets are a great giveaway to remind parishioners to pray for vocations. $1 ea.
NEW SPANISH PRAYER CARDS

Now in stock—the Spanish version of the newly-designed Serra prayer card. Features the Serra Prayer for Vocations on the front and the prayer for the perseverance of vocations on back. Sold in packs of 50. Same low bulk pricing as English prayer cards:

- 5-9 packs - $2.60 per pack
- 10-19 packs - $2.00 per pack
- 20-49 packs - $1.60 per pack
- 50+ packs - $1.20 per pack

REMINDER
World Day of Prayer for Vocations is Sunday, May 3

Prayer card is the same size as a business card