

Vol. 63 No. 2 | November 2016

# the Serran



## Called to lift up the growing Church

Vocation formators worldwide say “Thank You”  
to the Serra International Foundation



I like to believe that our clubs could be for the seminarians, the religious men and women, and the priests, what Lazarus' home in Bethany was to Jesus: a place where He felt intimacy and familial friendship.

—Dante Vannini, Serra International President

## The Serran Calendar

**Nov. 26, 2016**

International Rosary for Vocations Call

**Dec. 31, 2016**

International Rosary for Vocations Call

**Feb. 5, 2017**

World Day for Consecrated Life

**Feb. 16-19, 2017**

The Serra Rally

Phoenix, Arizona, USA

**June 22 - June 25, 2017**

2017 Serra International Convention,

Rome, Italy

**CORRECTIONS:** In the September 2016 issue of *the Serran*, we neglected to list the Serra Club of Allentown, PA as a Banner Club on the Foundation Awards page. Also, the Serra International Board pages should have listed Bertha Rosa Acuña Hallatt as VP for Vocations and Kurt Metyko as VP for Communications.



### ON OUR COVER:

Nestor Kzyk, fourth year seminarian at Holy Spirit Seminary in L'viv, Ukraine, shares a book with fellow students in the library where he works. Nestor was the beneficiary of a grant from the Serra International Foundation which made his studies possible last year.

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Countries directly benefiting from Serra International Foundation grants in 2016.

# Quietly Serving the Universal Church

How the Serra International Foundation supports vocations worldwide

by Charles Bauermann  
President, Serra International Foundation

The Serra International Foundation was founded in 1951 to assist Serra in fulfilling its objectives of fostering and promoting vocations in the Catholic Church. Since that time, the Foundation has funded a wide range of programs for the formation and training of priests and consecrated religious.

The Serra International Foundation sets as its goal to live as an organization dedicated to those programs that bring to us the holy men and holy women who are the successors to those who followed Jesus in the pilgrim Church. Without interruption, in this way the Foundation has quietly maintained its focus on serving you, your families, and all Catholics. It serves the Universal Church by working to financially assist, with your dollars, those houses of formation for the priesthood and religious life.

Members of Serra throughout the world strive to exemplify our unique vocations mission in how we live each day, through individual acts as well as coordinated club efforts. Somewhere in all that is the call to support the mission of the Foundation in a financial way – through annual giving and planned giving for vocations.

Through its grant application review process, members of the Serra International Foundation Board are in a unique position to see and understand the

needs of our Church. The Foundation Board is seeing an increase in needs throughout the world as reflected by significant increases in the number of applicants – last year there were approximately 50 applicant organizations; this year we have received approximately 90. Last year, there was a substantially higher number of applicants from Africa and other suffering and poor areas around the world. The Church is truly growing and we are asked to assist!

We are also experiencing a change in the needs of applicants. It has been a policy to not fund “bricks and mortar” projects but instead direct our (your) funds to formation matters. This policy was sorely tested in recent years’ award processes when we received a request from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to repair a dormitory roof where the roof columns had collapsed and the students were in danger. Another request came from a novitiate in Russia that was in a small building and had an increase in novices that made the size of the facility totally inadequate. These are typical situations that tug at our heart strings as we visualized that “pilgrim church” to which I earlier referred. Other requests asked for money to drill a well for clean water, a car, and books, in addition to the more direct needs for their formation programs. Very many requests present stories of poverty and lack of infrastructure, basic human needs that many of us take

*Continued on next page*

for granted. We leave many applicants disappointed and hurting, so we and our clubs are being called upon to give the grant program a boost in any way that we are able.

But as the grant requests increase in dollars and numbers, our investment portfolio, now invested in accordance with the guidelines of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, suffers from the same low yields experienced by others who have the same fiduciary responsibility. The size of our average grant has decreased each of the last four years due to the fact that our investment assets have also decreased to the lowest in four years. The board is addressing this issue and needs your assistance to correct this unacceptable trend.

How exactly do we decide who will receive funding from the Serra International Foundation? The grant requests are divided up and assigned to teams of two board members who study their assigned requests, including a review of the specific needs and funding requirements. Each team has a targeted number of dollars to work with, based on the Foundation's projected formula-calculated availability of funds. The board then convenes and the teams present their case for each request. If the total allocations are below the budget, discussions are open for teams to seek more funds for a specific grant. There might also be a shift of funds from one grant request to another based on the serious nature of any requests and we ultimately bring the grant totals in line with the budget. Once the total grant budget has been presented to the Serra International Board for ratification, we are set to notify the successful applicants and advise the recipient's local bishop.

Grant applications are available at [www.serrainternational.org/content/serra-foundation](http://www.serrainternational.org/content/serra-foundation) for houses of formation to apply. The grant requests must include a letter of support from the local bishop. Financial data, preferably audited statements, and other financial information regarding the use of grant monies, project costs, and efforts to obtain other funding, are included.

Jesus has given us an endowment – no, not the Foundation's investment portfolio – but the endowment of that priesthood and that religious life handed down through the life of the Church. Your generous contributions to the Serra International Foundation help grow and honor that living bequest of holy people whose mission and purpose focus on the administration of sacraments and salvation of souls.

As we close this Year of Mercy, may we be blessed with that Mercy that reaches to those within and out of our physical reach. Mercy has no limits except what we place on it.

May St. Junípero Serra pray for us. May God's mercy and love be with those we serve and for ourselves and loved ones. ☺

*Charles L. Bauermann has been a member of the Serra Club of Baltimore for over 40 years. He is President of The Serra International Foundation.*

*At the 63rd Serra Convention in Bangkok, Thailand, His Eminence Zenon Cardinal Grocholewski, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education declared:*

"I deeply appreciate Serra for its beneficial contribution to the life of the Church. This meeting gives me the opportunity to say publicly and very warmly, first of all in the name of the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations, but also in the name of the Congregation for Catholic Education and in my own name, that I highly appreciate all the activities of Serra and I want to say a sincere thank you to all Serrans, scattered the world over, for all that they do for the sake of priestly vocations, with their prayer, help and various kinds of support, and for all they do to be close to their bishops and to the priests in their pastoral commitment."

In particular, Serrans are in a position to provide three potent elements crucial for a new era of growth for vocations:

**Prayer.** If one asks any successful Vocation Director to identify the most crucial element for success, prayer is almost always mentioned first.

**Lay Involvement.** The laity must join in the effort by giving of their time, by inviting people to discern their vocations, and by creating a climate and culture in which vocations can flourish.

**Financial Support.** Promising new ideas need a chance to be tried, proven methods need to be continued and replicated, and Serra's outreach must be extended.

These combined elements enable Serra to grow in effectiveness as a global lay apostolate at the service of the universal Church, as Saint John Paul II challenged us to be.



Nestor Kzyk balances an ancient manuscript with modern technology as part of his library work at Holy Spirit Seminary in L'viv, Ukraine.

## Helping people meet God in Ukraine

Seminary education made possible for two talented men in L'viv

In a country divided by language and history, and steeped in an increasingly violent political atmosphere, God's call to the priesthood perseveres.

Rev. Ihor Boyko describes the tone of the Greek-Catholic Church in Ukraine, where he is rector at Holy Spirit Seminary in L'viv:

"Although official statistics show that today Ukrainians are a deeply religious people... (they) mostly come to church occasionally when something extraordinary happens in their private or family life. They have a low level of knowledge about faith and the Church. There are many Ukrainian communities spread all over the world and each of them lacks sufficient pastoral care."

For these reasons and more, Rev. Boyko and his colleagues at L'viv's Holy Spirit Seminary recog-

nized the urgent need for well-educated priests for the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (UGCC), not only in their native country, but worldwide.

Serrans know well the shortfall in vocations plaguing the Roman Catholic Church over the past 50 years, but Byzantine Rite churches such as the UGCC face the same challenges – on top of severe historical setbacks.

Holy Spirit Seminary of L'viv operated as a respected theological, cultural, and scholastic center from the time of its founding by Austrian Emperor Joseph II in 1783 until the outbreak of World War II shuttered the seminary in 1939. In 1945 the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was declared illegal by Joseph Stalin, forcing Church life, including seminary educa-

*Continued on next page*



**LEFT:** Nazar Yuzvyak now studies at the prestigious Pontifical Lateran University in Rome.

**FAR LEFT:** Seminarians gather for a meeting at Holy Spirit Seminary.

tion, underground for over four decades.

In 1992, the dissolution of the Soviet Union allowed the Church to re-emerge, and Holy Spirit Seminary continued operations – though in a different location because their property had been seized and reallocated by the Soviets.

Now in 2016, Ukraine once again faces elevating tension and conflict with Russia – a political milieu that has persisted for over a decade. But as Rev. Boyko knows, nothing can stand in the way of God’s call to the priesthood, and two calls in particular prompted him to ask for the Serra International Foundation’s assistance to ensure that these vocations remained unimpeded.

Boyko’s goal was twofold: 1) To provide two promising and needy seminarians with financial assistance by awarding them with full scholarships to cover board, lodging and tuition; 2) To enable these two young men to get quality spiritual and academic formation through the theoretical and practical courses taught within the curricula of the seminary and the Ukrainian Catholic University

Last year, a \$12,000\* grant from the Foundation allowed the two men in question, Nazar Yuzvyak and Nestor Kyzyk, to pursue their formation as priests at Holy Spirit Seminary of L’viv. Rev. Boyko was so kind as to give us a peek into what their school year has been like, thanks to these funds.

Nazar Yuzvyak, 23, defended his Master’s Thesis, “Pastoral and Catechetical Activity of the Catechetical Commission of the UGCC’s Stryi Eparchy from 2000-2015” last January, receiving an excellent grade and a diploma with honors in June. He is currently continuing his studies at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, at the prestigious Pontifical Lateran University in Rome.

“Now I’m focusing on studies about marriage and family; thus, my aim is to get a Licensee degree of pastoral theology,” Kuzvyak says. “After completing my studies, I intend to return to my motherland and became a priest. St. Augustine said: ‘...*quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te*’ (‘You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you’). I want to help people to meet God and live with him in everyday life.”

Nestor Kyzyk is in his fourth year at Holy Spirit Seminary, and has enjoyed the challenge of advanced English and Italian language classes, Canon Law, History of Christianity and Culture in Ukraine, and Soteriology, among many others. He is head of the Liturgical Department of the Seminary Pastoral Center Ecclesia, which develops liturgies and edits different liturgical texts and books for seminarians and priests. Under his leadership, a new Holy Week Service book edition was published as well as a Typicon of divine services. He also works in the seminary library.

Rev. Boyko adds that Kyzyk is a talented singer and member of the seminary’s choir. “I thank God for this opportunity because I like to sing very much,” Kyzyk says, adding that fellow seminarians who are not so musical as he ask for help with singing, and he is always happy to oblige.

“Life in the Seminary is very interesting. Here I can see God act in our life everyday,” Kyzyk says. “It is important to hear His voice in our life and to see Christ in those people that are in need. Seminary is the place where we learn to be kind to our neighbors.” ☺

\*All grant amounts listed in this issue are in US dollars.



Sisters of Our Lady of Good Counsel receive education and spiritual renewal in Mbarara, Uganda.

## “Formation can never be finished”

Educational courses prepare sisters for modern religious life in Uganda

Last year, the Sisters of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Mbarara (OLGC), Uganda, received \$6,000.00 from the Serra International Foundation to assist with formation courses for sisters. Sister Grace Kyomugisha, Assistant Superior General for the OLGC, cannot stress enough the importance of ongoing formation for the sisters: “The work of forming sisters cannot be finished in the life of the Institute as long as it exists. Sisters need to renew themselves constantly spiritually, apostolically, and economically.”

The Foundation’s gift allowed the OLGC leadership team to arrange courses for new sisters focusing on understanding and dealing with various challenges facing those in religious life today. One challenge unique to religious in the modern age is social media and the Internet.

“Media exposes young sisters to Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc. In most cases, these forms of communication are not strengthening bonds of love in communities,” says Sr. Grace, who adds that the young sisters are predictably ahead of their superiors when it comes to using the new technology. “But on the Internet they access all sorts of unhealthy information like pornography. Through our formation courses, they are also urged to spend their energies doing things which are productive: compose poems, songs, write books, research, read, and debate so that their minds are engaged actively in productive activities for the Institute. Then they are encouraged to use social media to share these ideas instead.”

Loss of faith is another challenge for the sisters, some of whom join religious life to escape broken

families and other domestic troubles. The formation courses provide counseling for these women, even if it means helping them realize that religious life isn’t the right fit. Whether they go or stay, they are guided to appreciate the life they embrace, strengthened by faith.

“Faith is a gift from God and must be lived and experienced,” Sr. Grace says. “Young sisters have to be reminded all the time. Renewal of their faith through retreats and courses is mandatory. All these need funds to make them possible.”

Despite the loss of those who must depart to discern a different life path, the institute is enjoying growth. But that growth means that they struggle to meet the needs of their new members.

“They need education, which is expensive, and so we educate a few at a time,” Sr. Grace says. This is particularly crucial because of the sisters’ work: “The impact of our sisters on the church and society is enormous. They engage in works of education, health, socio-economic activities. In schools and health units, they meet people of God and a lot of work is being done.”

The sisters of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Mbarara strive for excellence, and in part because of formation programs made possible by gifts like one from the Serra International Foundation, the sisters are able to serve their community in the best possible way.

“Testimonies are given by people (served by the sisters) that especially after the sisters’ renewal courses, they get good results,” Sr. Grace says. “The Church commends us for good work well done.” ☺



The 2016 co-sponsored seminarians surround Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D., center, and their superiors at the Archdiocese for the Military USA's annual Labor Day gathering.

# Vocations program focuses on military chaplaincy

## Unique challenges make military ministry a special calling in itself

*Priestly ministry to those serving in the military is a unique and special vocation. The Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA is the largest geographical diocese in the country, and within its bounds those called to serve as chaplains must be prepared to undertake ministries as diverse as the regions they visit. As a sacramental minister, the priest-chaplain must bring Christ and the healing power of the Church to men and women serving in an endless range of stressful, dangerous and possible deadly circumstances. He must be prepared to transfer from parish ministry to ministry in a war zone at a moment's notice, and act as comforter to service members and their families in a way few others will ever experience.*

*Providing for the spiritual and sacramental needs of men and women in uniform is an essential task, and priest-chaplains are in higher demand now than ever before. Christ needs men to answer the call to the chaplaincy for the good of the Church, the country and the world.*

-- From [www.milarch.org](http://www.milarch.org)

**A**s the largest geographical diocese in the United States serving a community with uniquely intense needs, it should come as no surprise that the Archdiocese for the Military Services

(AMS) has its own vocations program. This program supports the discernment and formation of priests who will first serve as military chaplains. This year, the Serra International Foundation was proud to support the AMS in their vocation efforts. Following is a comprehensive report of the program by AMS Vocation Director Fr. Aiden Logan, OCSO, which gives us an unprecedented look into how the military finds and forms its chaplains.

### **One-on-one contact and recruitment of candidates for the priesthood and military chaplaincy**

Each week brings three or four spontaneous inquiries from men, some already in the seminary. Our active duty chaplains are the chief source of referrals for those already in the military. Responding to all of these men is the all-important first step in the discernment of a vocation to the priesthood and military chaplaincy. It is also the most time-consuming, involving coordination among the candidate, his home diocese, the military recruiters and the AMS.

### **Annual discernment retreats**

Initial contact retreats are held in March and Novem-

ber at seminaries on the East and West coasts. Arriving on Thursday evening and departing on Sunday, the retreatants get their first taste of seminary life, hear talks from military chaplains and local vocation directors, and meet with both the AMS' Archbishop Broglio and the AMS vocation director. The schedule includes daily Mass and Eucharistic Adoration, meals and recreation with the seminarians. The priest recruiters from the Army, Navy and Air Force are on hand to discuss the Chaplain Candidate programs, transition from active duty to seminary life, and the possibility of deferred service for those with service obligations.

### **The Co-Sponsored Seminarian Program**

The Co-Sponsored Seminarian Program was created as a formal relationship between the AMS and cooperating U.S. dioceses and religious communities to encourage men to pursue priesthood in the U.S. military and throughout the Church by supporting vocations drawn largely from the armed forces. This program financially supports men who show evidence of a vocation to priestly ministry in the armed forces. Contractually, co-sponsorship means that the AMS and the seminarian's home diocese or religious community agree to share equally the cost of all seminary related expenses with the understanding that the man will serve as an active duty military chaplain upon graduation from seminary, ordination, and completion of at least three years of priestly ministry with his diocese or religious community. During the course of each academic year, the AMS vocation director visits each of our seminarians, meets with the seminary faculty and staff, and is briefed on the seminarian's progress in academics and priestly formation.

### **Summary of Our Ministry in 2016**

The Serra International Foundation's generous grant of \$5,000.00 was a significant contribution to our 2016 budget of \$850,000.00. This included three discernment retreats for men on active duty and from military families as well as our share of tuition, insurance and stipends for 27 co-sponsored seminarians from 22 dioceses in 19 seminaries in the United States and Rome. Seventy-two men attended these retreats in 2016. As a result, we have 14 men in the process

of application to their home dioceses and the Chaplain Candidate program of the Army, Navy and Air Force. Fourteen new men began their studies with the Fall semester of 2016. Two co-sponsored seminarians were ordained deacons and three co-sponsored deacons were ordained to the priesthood in the spring of 2016. Fifteen co-sponsored priests are currently completing their three years of parochial ministry prior to coming on active duty as chaplains.

### **Looking to the Future**

In conjunction with the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), we are expanding our outreach to college campuses with significant ROTC programs. The Co-Sponsored Seminarian Program is, by far, the most significant expense in our apostolate. Over the next five years we project an expenditure of \$2.9 million on this program alone. ☺

## **Facts and Figures: Archdiocese for Military Services Vocation Program**

**Dioceses of Seminarians:** 26

**Seminaries:** 19

**Service Branches of Seminarians:**

US Army: 15      US Navy: 10      US Air Force: 11

**Priestly Ordinations 2016: 3**

Rev. Philip O'Neill (Air Force) May 21, 2016

Rev. Daniel Swartz (Navy) May 28, 2016

Rev. Mark Bristol (Navy) June 4, 2016

**Diaconal Ordinations 2016: 2**

Rev. Mr. Rene Pellessier (Navy) May 28, 2016

Rev. Mr. Samuel Schneider (Navy) June 5, 16

**Discernment Retreats**

2016 Fall Discernment Retreat (St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, NY) – 22 registered to attend

2016 Step Closer Retreat (San Damiano Spiritual Life Center, White Post, VA) – 8 attended

2016 Spring Discernment Retreat (St. Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park, CA) - 34 attended

2015 Fall Discernment Retreat (St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie, NY) – 30 attended



Young retreatants enjoy meditative coloring during Come, Follow Days at Mater Redemptoris House of Formation in La Crosse, Wis., USA.

## Mater Redemptoris helps girls discern God’s plan for them House offers prayer, community life and talks in a relaxed setting

**P**icture it: a standard school Vocation Fair. Within a single class period, a girl may pass by dozens of tables and displays representing as many religious orders. Especially for a child already discerning a glimmer of a vocation, this experience could be overwhelming — or even confusing.

But what if the same girl could go, with her sisters or friends, to spend a weekend retreat with fun teachers and spiritual guides whose goals are to promote a general understanding of religious life in the Church, and to assist girls and women to find God’s call for their lives – including, possibly, matching her gifts to a particular religious community?

This incredible option is offered by the Mater Redemptoris House of Formation in La Crosse, Wisconsin, USA, staffed by the Sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George. Mater Redemptoris is a joint project of the Diocese of La Crosse and the Sisters to

promote vocations to the religious life in the Diocese of La Crosse and the surrounding region, but serves girls and young women from all over the country.

What is unique about Mater Redemptoris is their gentle and generous approach to helping Catholic girls and women to prayerfully discern their vocation – any vocation, religious or otherwise. Furthermore, no particular religious community is promoted at their programs and events; displayed at the House and on its website is information from any canonically established religious congregation wishing to maintain visibility via Mater Redemptoris.

According to the House website, “In directing women, we follow God’s lead, seeking to match the woman’s inner call with the charism of a particular community. In choosing communities for vocation visits, we look for representative communities consisting of long-established congregations from the main

religious families which have young members.”

It’s a brilliant, timely and essential vision carried forth beautifully by the Mater Redemptoris House of Formation staff, and the Serra International Foundation was proud to help them fund their wonderful spring and summer retreats for girls and young women this year.

Following are details on these retreats from House Director Sr. M. Consolata, FSGM.

The Spring and Summer retreats at Mater Redemptoris House of Formation consist of activities designed to help girls and young women come to know Christ in a personal way, to come to know themselves in relationship to him, and to begin the process of searching for his will in their lives.

In the Spring, we generally host high school young women for a weekend **Come and See Retreat**. This retreat continues to be a popular way for girls to experience a bit of convent structure, to ask questions about the vocation to the religious life, and to deepen their prayer life. The women participate in community prayers and meals, attend talks on the history and elements of religious life, and have some time to recreate together. They have the opportunity to participate in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and to attend Mass as well as pray four hours of the Liturgy of the Hours with the Sisters each day.

We designed the **Summer High School Immersion Retreat** to build off of the Come and See experience. The young women come to the House of Formation on Sunday afternoon and remain with us until Saturday morning. During this time, they participate more fully in a structured experience patterned after common life in a religious community, as follows:

They rise to the ringing of the common bell at 5:30 a.m. and pray Morning Prayer and Meditation, attend Mass and eat breakfast in common. They devote their morning to prayer and study, attending class and having time for silent adoration. After common Midday Prayer and lunch, they

“dress down” and go to work on a project for Catholic Charities for the Diocese of La Crosse. Returning to the convent at 4:00 p.m., they take a break until common Scripture Reading and Evening Prayer. Following a common supper, they play at some common recreation (skits are a great favorite!). The day ends with common Night Prayer at about 9:00 p.m.

During the course of the week, these women become very familiar with the prayer of the Church and come to understand mental prayer more fully and personally. They also have the opportunity to spend time with like-minded girls their own age. Friendships formed during these weeks last; the girls remain in contact with one another throughout the year and often sign up for the following year so as to continue to grow together in their spiritual lives and friendships.

The children’s overnight retreat, **Come, Follow Days**, finishes our summer programs. This

is a two-day experience for girls ages 9 to 13. Truly it began because the younger sisters of the Immersion

girls begged to be able to “come and stay at the convent too.” We work in a more general spiritual content for this age. Each year we tailor the theme to topics current in the larger Church (this summer was Divine Mercy). The girls participate in some of the common prayers of the Sisters; they pray Morning, Midday and Evening Prayer and attend Mass, but they do not come for scripture reading or meditation.

They create various crafts, play games, and come for short classes on spiritual topics. The retreat introduces them to the convent and gives them an opportunity to play together in a fun and spiritual atmosphere. ☺

*Keep up with Mater Redemptoris House of Formation at <http://materredemptoris.blogspot.com/>.*

**“We follow God’s lead, seeking to match the woman’s inner call with the charism of a particular community.”**



Second-year seminarians at their 2016 retreat in Greccio, Italy.  
Photo courtesy of Pontifical North American College.

## Six days of silence, prayer, spiritual direction

### Pontifical North American College retreats kick off each school year

Through the kind generosity of our donors, among them the Serra International Foundation, the Pontifical North American College is able to begin each year of seminary formation with a six-day silent retreat for each class of seminarians. Beginning our year with a retreat helps to focus the upcoming year of formation for the priesthood. There could be no better way to begin.

The New Men make their preached retreat at Greccio, Italy, the place where St. Francis of Assisi made the first Nativity Scene. The theme of this retreat is discipleship, in which the seminarians are invited to deepen their identity as a beloved son of our Heavenly Father.

The second year seminarians again make their retreat at Greccio, which allows them to see the amazing growth that has taken place over the past year. The theme of this preached retreat is priestly identity, in which the seminarians are invited to reflect on the priest as a beloved son of Mary, the priest as a chaste spouse,

the priest as a spiritual father, the priest as a physician and healer, and the priest as head and shepherd.

The third year retreat takes place in Ariccia, Italy, the place where Pope Francis makes his yearly retreat. This retreat is individually directed and each seminarian meets with a spiritual director each day and focuses on praying with the sacred scriptures.

The fourth year retreat is also an individually directed retreat which takes place in Rocca di Papa, Italy. At this retreat, each seminarian meets with a spiritual director each day. This retreat takes place one week before the seminarians are ordained to the diaconate.

It would not be possible for us to have these wonderful, grace-filled retreats without the generosity of our donors, and it is so fitting that the Serra International Foundation helps prepare future priests in this way. 

*-- Mark Randall, CFRE, Executive Director, Institutional Advancement, Pontifical North American College, Rome*



Young women suit up for a day of outreach work during their “Serving with Sisters” retreat.

## Carmelite Sisters’ soft touch yields stunning results

### Mother-Daughter retreats, focus on service deliver vocations

Sometimes the way to vocation is a less direct path than focused discernment. In the modern age, a dramatic calling like Moses or Saul experienced would be welcome amidst the cacophony of electronic stimuli and insidious messages conveyed through advertising, but perhaps the more sophisticated sensibilities of today’s youth need cues that arrive with a softer touch.

Through their “Vocations Flourish in the Family” program, the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles, California, USA, have found an astoundingly successful way to deliver messages of calling to the religious life. Much of this is expressed through thoughtfully crafted retreats, which a grant from the Serra International Foundation helped to make possible in 2015 and 2016, by helping cover the costs of these programs and offer airfare assistance for some young women who would not otherwise have

been able to attend.

One such program, the Sisters’ **Mother-Daughter Retreat**, shows exceptional savvy in understanding how youth come at the idea of religious life. But mostly, it grew out of unpleasant necessity, as Vocation Directress Sr. Faustina, O.C.D., tells us:

“For years, we had teenage girls volunteer to staff our weekend discernment retreat, performing kitchen duties and other activities with the sisters. But in 2002, the sexual abuse scandal in our Church signaled that we should not have minors spend the night here unaccompanied.”

The Sisters found the perfect answer to this quandary: design a retreat for girls aged 13-17 and their mothers, and have them both work, play, and learn alongside the Sisters. These retreats, which take place during the third week of June at the Sacred Heart Re-

*Continued on next page*



2015 Mother-Daughter retreatants hosted by the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles

treat House in Alhambra, California, have been very successful. Last year, over 60 mothers and daughters attended, many from out of state.

Separate prayerful activities are scheduled for mothers and daughters, but they come together with the Sisters for talks, kitchen duties, Mass, meditation, and faith formation.

This combination of the girls with their mothers and the Sisters does something that could not be accomplished without such an expert arrangement: “The girls get to see how their moms interact with the Sisters. Then something subconscious happens,” Sr. Faustina says. “They get to understand at a very deep level, ‘If I wanted to become a sister, my mom would be OK with that.’”

Aside from providing an opportunity for mother-daughter relationships to be strengthened and forming lasting friendships with other Catholic families, the retreat has brought forth fruit for the Carmelite Sisters: one girl who attended all four years in high school is now discerning with them.

“Many sisters attribute their vocation to being around sisters,” Sr. Faustina says, simply.

That same motivation drives the Sisters’ **Come and See retreats** geared toward young women welcomed to the motherhouse for a weekend to discern if they have a religious vocation to their community. More than 130 women attended these retreats in May and December 2015, and April 2016.

But in terms of vocations, the Sisters’ most obviously successful event is their exciting two-week volunteer program, **Serving with Sisters**. During this time, young women live in community with the Sisters for two weeks, accompanying and assisting the order with

their outreach work at nursing homes, daycare centers, and other locations.

“It’s an incredible experience that is really formative for the participants,” Sr. Faustina says. “For two weeks, they learn to serve with the heart of Christ and let him love through them.”

Note, *Serving with Sisters* is not a vocations-focused program. But of the 18 young women who have participated over the last two years, five have entered religious life; two have started formation; one joined another community; and two have joined Carmelite cloisters.

Of these astonishing results, Sr. Faustina cites a 2014 Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) study that found that 37 percent of people who volunteered with Catholic Volunteer Network for a year considered religious life. The study, entitled “Nurturing Vocations to Religious Life and Priesthood: The Impact of a Volunteer Service Year,” reported:

“When asked if they have considered a vocation to ordained ministry or religious life, over one-third (37 percent) of these (over 5,000) volunteer alumni responded “yes.” Among Catholic respondents, the consideration of a vocation to ordained ministry or religious life was even greater. Over half of the Catholic men (54 percent) and one-third of the Catholic women have considered a vocation to ordained ministry or religious life. These volunteer alumni are three or more times as likely to have considered a religious vocation than were the never married Catholics described earlier in this report (of whom 87 to 90 percent surveyed said they had never considered a religious vocation).”

“Volunteerism is an ‘in’ to discernment,” Sr. Faustina says. “When people are serving, less defenses are up as opposed to when they are in an atmosphere of intense discernment.”

By working diligently to identify and meet the needs of modern young women and adjust their approach accordingly, Sr. Faustina and her team at Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart in Los Angeles have seen unequivocal success with their “Vocations Flourish in the Family” programs.

And the main secret to their success?

“The grace of God,” she says. ☪

*Find the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart online at <https://carmelitesistersocd.com/>*

# The Future of Vocations Is in Your Hands

In 2015, thanks to your generosity, a record-shattering 55 clubs received awards recognizing their outstanding donations to the the Serra International Foundation. Contributions from these clubs from five countries totaled over \$125,000. This year, the Foundation received over 90 grant applications seeking more than \$1,300,000 in support. The Foundation's current resources allow for only 10% of these grant applications to be funded. But with your help, we can do more to support vocations and bring honor to your local Serra club.

Below is a list of the 120 Serra clubs who have contributed to the Foundation so far this year. Sixteen of these clubs have already secured Banner Club status or better by contributing \$1,000 or more in this calendar year. If every Serran contributes \$82.00 to the Foundation before the end of 2016, we will be able to fund all of the grant applications we have received. We hope the stories in this issue of *The Serran* magazine have helped open your eyes to the amazing vocations work made possible by the Serra International Foundation. Please use the envelope included with this publication to send whatever gift you can to support vocations throughout the world! 📬

<b>Majorca Award Winners</b> <b>(\$10,000+)</b>	<b>Supporting Serra Club</b> <b>(\$1-999)</b>	Kansas City, MO - North	Saginaw
<b>Grand Rapids</b>	Akron	Kokomo	Salem-Keizer
<b>Houston</b>	Amarillo	Lafayette	San Diego - North Coast
	Arlington-Metro	Lake & Geauga Counties	San Diego East
	Baltimore	Lima Area, OH	San Francisco
<b>Carmel Award Winner</b> <b>(\$5,000-9,999)</b>	Bay Area	Lincoln	San Jose
<b>Kansas City</b>	Beaumont	Little Rock	Santa Clara
	Bethlehem	Lorain County	Seattle
	Bismarck-Mandan	Manitowoc County	Sioux Falls
<b>Padre Award Winner</b> <b>(\$3,000-4,999)</b>	Boulder County	Mankato	South Palm Beach Count
<b>Northwest Hennepin</b>	Bronx-Westchester County	Memphis	Southeast Denver
	Central Delaware County	Metropolitan Dallas	Southeast Kansas City
	Champaign-Urbana	Miami	Southern Maryland
<b>Mission Award Winners</b> <b>(\$2,000-2,999)</b>	Chattanooga	Minneapolis	Southwest Denver
<b>Johnson County, KS</b>	Cincinnati	Modesto	Spokane
<b>Lake Charles</b>	Clarksburg	Monterey Peninsula	Spring-1960 Area, TX
<b>Wichita</b>	Cleveland East	Norfolk Area	St. Clair County
	Corpus Christi	North Central Dallas	St. Louis
	Dallas	North Columbus	St. Paul
	Dayton	North San Diego County	St. Petersburg, FL
<b>Banner Award Winners</b> <b>(\$1,000-1,999)</b>	Denver	North-Minneapolis	Tiffin
<b>Allentown</b>	Des Moines	Northwest Houston	Tri-Cities Area
<b>Green Bay East</b>	Detroit-Oakland	Orange County	Tulsa
<b>Green Bay West</b>	Downtown New Orleans	Owensboro	Victoria
<b>Indian River Area</b>	Dubuque	Palm Springs Vicariate	Warren County
<b>Indianapolis</b>	DuPage County	Palo Alto - Menlo Park	Washington, D.C.
<b>Lima</b>	East Harris County	Pasadena	West Omaha
<b>Omaha</b>	East Valley	Pensacola	Westside Los Angeles
<b>Portland</b>	Edmonds WA	Phoenix	Wheeling
<b>Toledo</b>	El Paso	Pittsburgh	Wisconsin Rapids
	Evansville	Pittsburgh-Byzantine Rite	Worcester North
	Forks of the Delaware	Providence	Worcester South
	Fresno	Reading	Wright County MN
	Galveston	Reno	Youngstown (Mahoning County)
	Grand Rapids	Riverside	
		Rochester	

# Be a Missionary: Follow the Star

## Featured club program: Christmas Season

Christmas Season has arrived with God's message that we are to stay the pilgrim course, embracing the Magi's missionary spirit. Like the Magi, we have been given the gifts of wisdom and perseverance.

In *Daily Reflections for Advent & Christmas* by Robert F. Morneau (2016 Liturgical Press), Pope Francis describes the missionary as one who brings the Gospel to life and life to the Gospel. True to the Franciscan spirit of Pope Francis' and our patron Saint Junípero Serra, the missionary follows the Baptismal call of an Easterman: Die and rise with Christ, stay on the journey, pray without ceasing and proclaim the Good News. And as we continue the journey, God gives us the grace to "Know that I am with you always" (Matt. 28: 18-20).

In our *Program Manual – Part II*, the program "Christmas Season" offers Serrans the methodology that brings a group through the journey like that of the missionary, solidifying Pope Francis' message.

For example, the Opening Prayer and Scripture provide instruction how to seek out Jesus, keeping the light of the Christ Child forever present in our lives.

Praying forward, we are reminded that the Christmas season is a time of celebrating the great gifts God has given us; the greatest gift of all being the salvation offered to us through the child Jesus. In the Tradition section, there is reflection on how Jesus is born within us every moment. Like the Magi, we are to be good stewards of our gifts, advancing with the star, serving one another to obtain salvation and eternal life.

I think the best part of the Christmas season reflection is the challenge of answering Question #3 which involves Evangelization. *In what ways does your Serra Club proclaim the Word of God to others?* and *How is your Serra Club a gift to others?*

This Christmas season, let us reflect on what it means to be a missionary in the spirit of Serra, giving praise and thanksgiving for all our gifts received. And like the Magi, follow the star and evangelize the Christ Child's promise of love, peace and salvation for the world. 🙏

*Aileen G. Fields, USA Council Program Chair*

### Opening Prayer

Eternal God, we now know the joy of receiving the Christ Child in our hearts. Help us to hold Him with a reverent spirit so that we experience His continual presence in our lives. We pray that your holy birth inspires us to live in loving peace where we recognize the signs of good tidings and salvation to the world. Amen.

### Scripture

"On that day, the root of Jesse set up as a signal for the nations, The Gentiles shall seek him out, for his dwelling shall be glorious. On that day, The Lord shall again take it in hand to reclaim the remnant of his people that is left from Assyria and Egypt, Pathros, Ethiopia, and Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the isles of the sea." (Isaiah 11:10-11)

### Introduction

More than any other time of the year, the Christmas season is a time of celebrating the great gift of salvation through Jesus. During this period we marvel at God's unconditional love for humanity. The purpose of this program is to experience the gift of the Christ child and the true gifts God has given us.

### Documentary Tradition

During the Christmas season we celebrate the coming of the Messiah into our lives and into the world of justice at the end of time. The unending love of God seen in the Bethlehem event of 2,000 years ago is present among us

today. Consequently, the nativity story is more than a historical drama that is reenacted each year. It is also a time to reflect on how Jesus is born into our lives every single day.

While popular culture may be finished with Christmas on December 26, the Church has not yet begun to celebrate the fullness of the season. We embody the incarnational Christmas theme by continuing to tell the story. Because Jesus was born, God now resides in our flesh and blood, is in the pulsing of our needs and aspirations, and even in the shadows of our forgiven sins.

The scriptures for this season capture the events of history that the prophets uttered to their people. Their message is simple. Believe in the creative, redeeming, purifying, loving, and blessing word of God. By remembering the community's return from exile, the prophets lay the foundation for the good news to be proclaimed as it reflects not only what God said to His people, but also who God is in history and how God acts.

These Christmas days are filled with specific festive events highlighting aspects of Jesus' humanity. These include the birth of Jesus (Christmas), born of Mary (Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God), who became a part of a human family (Feast of the Holy Family), was manifested to the nations (Epiphany), and revealed as God's own beloved child (Baptism of the Lord). The Christmas season celebrates the appearance of God among us. It highlights the familiar bonds that foster relationships and provides learning about life, receiving seeds of faith, experiencing communion, and being of service that Jesus understood as He grew in wisdom, age, and grace.

"Jesus was born in a humble stable, into a poor family. Simple shepherds were the first witnesses to this event. In this poverty heaven's glory was made manifest. The Church never tires of singing the glory of this night: *The Virgin today brings into the world the Eternal, and the earth offers a cave to the inaccessible. / The angels and shepherds praise him, and the magi advance with the star, / For you are born for us, Little Child, God eternal!*

To become a child in relation to God is the condition for entering the kingdom. For this, we must humble ourselves and become little. Even more: to become "children of God" we must be "born from above"

or "born of God." Only when Christ is formed in us will the mystery of Christmas be fulfilled in us. Christmas is the mystery of this "marvelous exchange":

"O marvelous exchange! Man's Creator has become man, born of the Virgin. We have been made sharers in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share our humanity" (Catechism of the Catholic Church 525-526).

### Discussion Questions

1. What does Jesus' birth teach you about God?
2. How has believing in the Word of God affected your life?
3. In what ways does your Serra club proclaim the Word of God to others? Is a gift to others?

### Closing Reflection

Christmas does not merely celebrate the birth of a child, but rather, this great feast celebrates the birth of our Lord in our very flesh. These days reveal the divine manifestation and human discovery. They celebrate the dawn of salvation in a world shrouded with shadows of sin and darkness. We come to live in the true light and warmth of the Christ Child, the greatest gift to us all.

The movement from the birth of Christ to the reality that he is now a part of our human world is a challenge to many of us. We are called to begin, continue, or assess how we have brought Christ into the world through our actions and service to one another. The giving of gifts to family and friends must open to giving to the rest of humanity in whatever capacity we are able.

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# The Role of the Laity in Vocation Ministry

*The following address was given by Serra International President Dante Vannini at the meeting for the Congregation for the Clergy in Rome on Oct. 20, 2016.*

Our organization is inspired by, and is named after, Junípero Serra, the Spanish Franciscan missionary known as the “Apostle of California,” who came to evangelize in the 1700s. Junípero Serra founded missions from San Diego to Los Angeles. These missions are now found in major cities along the West Coast of the United States, where he is acknowledged as one of the nation’s fathers. In September 2015, together with many Serrans from five continents, I attended the canonization of Saint Junípero in Washington, an event highly anticipated by His Holiness Pope Francis during his apostolic visit to the United States.

## Vocation and Mission of the Laity

Informed by the spirituality of Saint Junípero, missionary on the frontier of evangelization, I want the presentation entrusted to me to be about the role of the laity in Pastoral Ministry. In my professional life, I was a business executive who traveled the world, and now I continue to do so for Serra. Pardon if my ideas do not have much doctrine; however, I assure you that they come from my heart and arise from my experiences.

Saint Junípero was a consecrated man and a missionary. “Vocation” and “mission” are like two sides of the same coin. That is, the Church has neither “vocation without mission” nor “mission without vocation.” Both are related to and justify each other. “God calls me and sends me,” said Saint John Paul II, and Benedict XVI repeats, “As a laborer in His vineyard He called me and sent me to work for the coming of His Kingdom in history.”

It is very interesting from the point of view of the laity’s formation to renew their knowledge and to consider their vocation a personal mission, not only in terms of the close relationship between vocation and mission but also the personalization of this dual and unique “identity” in the Christian life.

## The Role of the Laity in Vocation Ministry

All of us agree that it is the duty of the entire Christian

community to foster vocations. This is a clear interpretation of the commitment of the role of the laity in the ecclesial service so crucial and essential for the Church itself. All must accept the responsibility to encourage the birth and growth of missionary vocations, whether they are priestly, religious or lay. To what extent can the lay faithful perform this service of vocational mentorship?

The practicing laity must, first and foremost, be willing to commit to the discovery of their personal vocation and mission; to be available to hear the Word of God and the Church; to pray, to receive the Sacraments, to meditate on the Word of God; and to serve the faith using our gifts and talents in all situations. This process of formation for the faithful laity is a real vocational journey.

Every layman must have a comprehensive testimony of their vocation and mission. “Simply in being Christians, even before actually doing the works of a Christian, all are branches of the one fruitful vine which is Christ...The significance of ‘being’ a Christian does not come...about simply from the life of grace and holiness... Its meaning also arises from the state of life that characterizes ... the lay faithful” (Saint John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*).

Therefore, the layman gives a solid testimony of his own faith in the world in which he lives. The layman should be the person who does the calling, and in that sense, is aware of the major role entrusted to him in promoting vocations.

In recent years, the laity has increasingly come to realize that through Baptism they become part of a larger family, in whose life they must participate with responsibility, determination, and commitment. Since the Second Vatican Council, the presence of laity in the life of the ecclesial community has been progressively increasing in catechesis, pastoral councils and liturgy.

Nevertheless, this phenomenon is not without problems. If the laity’s pastoral commitment is not authentic, for example, and is used as an escape from their own often complex and difficult responsibilities, or is perceived merely as “chipping in” without deep reflection or creativity, then the presence of the laity will not be effective. Here, the laity’s pastoral commitment does not emanate from respect for vocations as a unique

yearning, but simply responds to a perceived need. Certainly, it cannot be said that the laity must participate in the life of the Church for the lack of priesthood and religious vocations!

Therefore, the lay person working for vocations may be defined, if such a definition is even possible, as: “a witness and a life partner,” rather than a detached guide. The lay person must always respect and value the human condition, and “humanize” the vocation narrative, knowing that the Divine does the rest. The lay person must have a keen sense of the relationship that unites all vocations with other forms or states of life -- perceiving more than others that the human experience is never an unwavering path toward destiny, but rather a journey that often requires new beginnings. The perfection of love is a goal. There is no pathway to vocations without the Sacraments, without the Eucharist, without the Church as a whole, and without the gift of the ordained ministries.

The “participation” of the laity in the Pastoral Ministry is not, therefore, a quantitative concept, but is, as Msgr. Marcello Semeraro, Bishop of Albano, writes, “an indication of how each person responds to the mission of the Church.” It can be said that there is nothing different that a layman can or should do with respect to the promotion of vocations than what a priest or a religious would do. However, it is their distinctly secular style that essentially marks their ministry and originates from their condition of life in the Church. The faithful layperson, precisely because he or she is a lay person, has an awareness and behavior unique to and shared by other seekers of the Kingdom, and can understand the transitional realities and order them in accordance to the plan of God.

### **The Charism of Serra**

Within this context, I will briefly try to explain these proposed concepts which, with simplicity and modesty, are part of the charism of Serra.

Serra is a club of service, indeed, an association of service, founded in Seattle on the West Coast of the

United States in the 1930s having statutory objectives to: 1) Promote and support vocations to the ministerial priesthood of the Catholic Church as a particular vocation of service and support for priests in their sacred ministry, 2) Encourage and promote vocations to the consecrated life in the Catholic Church, and 3) Assist members to recognize and respond, each in his own life, to God’s call to holiness in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

The movement quickly disseminated throughout the world and arrived to Genoa around 1959 where it was accepted with great enthusiasm by Cardinal Siri, the first Genovese Serran and a well-known and deeply respected person. Cardinal Siri was pleased that such a movement more inclined to action than dialogue was formed. He referred especially to people (entrepreneurs,

professionals, teachers, administrators) who could communicate well and keep alive Christian values in a modern materialistic world often indifferent to the challenges of the

Catholic faith.

Currently, Serra strives to stay true to its principles while adapting to the language and the attitude of the changing times. Serra, therefore, hopes to realize a dual mission that basically requires that each Serran forms a mindset, a culture, and an environment which do not hinder the incentives and choices of individuals who intend to dedicate their lives to the Lord. Further, Serra is required to promote the vision of vocations by creating a support network for vocations through a series of real actions that express solidarity, friendship and moral support. These supportive efforts may take shape in all kinds of possible forms depending on the needs that arise from time to time, all as simple day-to-day acts.

In all humility, we as united and self-organized laypeople are ready to serve with courage and generosity to do what is required of us. In complete alignment with the bishops and rectors of seminaries, we offer our aid at every point along the difficult and complex path of those training for and discerning a vocation, vowing to help them live a life of fulfillment in the service of the

*Continued on page 23*

**I like to believe that our clubs could be for the seminarians, the religious men and women, and the priests, what Lazarus’ home in Bethany was to Jesus: a place where He felt intimacy and familial friendship.**



**Greg Schwietz**  
President,  
Serra's National  
Council for the  
United States

# The Serran Litany

**W**hat (or who) is a Serran? If you can nod your head yes to any of the statements in my proposed “Serran Litany,” then you have the makings of a Serran. Through your involvement with Serra, you now more clearly see yourself to be a leader in your church, your community and your family. Your membership in a good, healthy Serra club should be an inspiration to you; an inspiration for you to grow in your faith and in your action.

Serrans are committed to a great mission. From the early days of Serra, our founders set the course of our organization to be two-fold: 1) to affirm, encourage and foster vocations to the priesthood and consecrated religious life; and, equally important, 2) to assist its members to grow in their Catholic faith and to bring that faith into the world for its benefit. The first of these two mighty pillars of Serra includes what many of us readily identify as our mission, namely, fostering vocations.

But it is the second pillar which makes us “Serrans for a lifetime.” What brings us together is our sense of spiritual growth and brotherhood with fellow Serrans. Twice monthly internal programs within Serra clubs around the world must be fundamentally oriented toward the spiritual growth of its members. Too many times, club meetings become more social, or what I call “informational,” rather than “inspirational.” It is my belief that the glue of Serra is the spiritual camaraderie that is found and nurtured at the club level. That is why extra effort must be made to attend Serra meetings regularly. Both pillars of Serra need our full commitment.

The Serra mission is very focused and unique within the Catholic church. Only Serra has a formal charge within the Church hierarchy to be THE lay vo-

cations support organization. It was established early in our existence, on May 6, 1951 by Pope Pius XII, that Serra became formally aggregated to the Church through its formal structure, the Pontifical Work of Priestly Vocations. This underscores our belief that being a Serran is a special calling, involving special work, requiring our recruitment to this important mission of the best possible leaders found within our communities.

Serrans are do-ers. Sitting on the sidelines, not getting involved, or continually patting yourself on the back for past involvement is not enough. The challenges of the Church remain today and your involvement today is needed.

Do not recruit prospective members to just sit and watch. The greatest mistake I have made in recruitment was to invite good, able people to the table

of Serra and have no meat to give them in the way of meaningful, relevant activities, thinking that they would catch the spirit of Serra by osmosis. Club leaders must be prepared to properly welcome new Serrans into their club and to lay before them the

noble work of the club, engaging their immediate commitment to those activities. The second greatest mistake is to invite people who cannot or will not make a time commitment to the club’s activities. For the well-meaning Catholic who likes what he or she hears about the Serran mission, but cannot find time to participate, another time will have to do. And in God’s grace, he or she will find that time.

So, our recipe for a healthy club includes the Serran Litany. We need Serrans who are leaders, people who are do-ers, those who say “Yes!” when asked. We need those who are committed to the dual Serra mission, which is focused on fostering religious vocations and their own spiritual growth.

It’s a calling. It’s a gift. It’s our legacy. 

**The Serran Litany:**  
**We’re Catholic leaders.**  
**We’re committed to our Mission.**  
**We’re focused on Vocations.**  
**We’re do-ers. We rise to the challenge.**  
**We’re called: It’s our vocation.**



**John Liston**  
Executive Director,  
Serra International

# Vocations Are Everybody's Job

**M**any years ago, when I was still a Boy Scout, an argument arose within the Troop over who was responsible for certain tasks during one of our camping trips. The discourse was civil as you would expect it to be among a group of 14-year-old boys out in the woods with witty banter like:

“You do it.” “No, you do it.” “Nuh-uh, you should do it.” Then our Scoutmaster appeared as if by magic. In his calm, wise way, he asked what the problem was and we explained that no one had been assigned or wanted to take certain jobs. The Scoutmaster instructed us to go back to the campsite and sit around the fire pit. Once there, he reached into his pocket, took out his wallet, and then produced a small, tattered piece of paper. He said, “In the 40 plus years that I’ve been involved in Scouting, I’ve seen this kind of behavior more times than I can count. I want all of you to listen to this story and then spend the next hour thinking about it.” He unfolded the piece of paper and read the following to us:

*This is a little story about four people named 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.*

Ever since that day, I am always on the lookout for the jobs Everybody should be doing, Somebody was supposed to do, but Nobody was doing.

While this story is applicable to so many elements of life, it’s particularly relevant to what we do as Serrans. We have heard time and again that the laity

have a role in forming vocations within the Church. In 1992, St. John Paul II wrote: “Lay people themselves had asked that priests commit themselves to their formation so that they, the laity, could be suitably helped to fulfill their role in the ecclesial mission which is shared by all.” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, No 2.)

All of us – that is, Everybody – has work to do to create a culture of vocations but many of us think that someone else, Somebody, will do something about the shortage of vocations to priesthood and religious life in the Church. Yet so many times, it’s easy to think that no one outside of fellow Serrans and vocation directors are taking action regarding this problem. This is frustrating because at times it feels like we are alone in our work. However, we should take solace in the fact that Christ is always with us and remember God always knows what we are doing and our good efforts will always be rewarded either in this life or, preferably, the next (Mt 6:4).

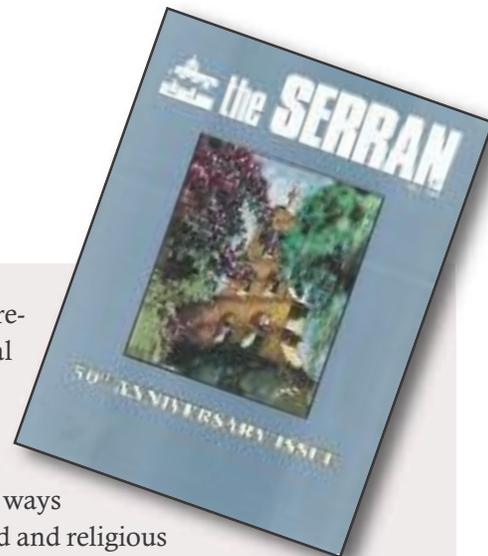
Many Serrans ask me: “What more can I do to promote vocations?” They often regret asking the question because my answer is often a torrent of Serra programs, prayers, an encouragement to attend Eucharistic Adoration, and, of course, a suggestion that he or she financially support the Serra International Foundation. That last one is usually met with the most resistance.

Some question the benefits of supporting our Foundation which provides support for vocations globally, when the local needs are so pressing and immediately visible. Yet most, if not all of us, know someone who discerned their vocation in another country, or someone whose spiritual formation was shaped by an institution in Rome or elsewhere. Ours is a global Church and a true, holy discernment anywhere benefits all of us, whether we realize it or not. This year, the Foundation provided 55 grants which will have an immediate impact on vocations in at least eight countries (Canada, India, the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and the United States of America) and increase the global strength of our Church for years to come.

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## The Serran Time Capsule 1985: The Mission Extended

Since its founding in 1951, the same year Serra International was formally aggregated to the Pontifical Work of Priestly Vocations, the Serra International Foundation has been in a unique position to keep a finger on the pulse of the vocations needs of the Church. Were we to see a list of all the Foundation's grant recipients of the last several decades, we'd glimpse a history of our Church, our evolving mission in response to timely challenges, and ways Catholics all over the world have tried to increase vocations to the priesthood and religious life, using what technology and research they had at their disposal. We may also be reminded of ideas and approaches worthy of dusting off for a 21st century reboot. **Read on to see how the faithful labored for vocations in the early 1980s, courtesy of the May 1985 issue of *the Serran*.**



**H**ow could Serra respond to serious needs in vocation ministry which require financial support beyond the organization's dues income? Dues, after all, were to be kept to a minimum and used for operational expenses. Meeting this problem necessitated the institution of the Serra International Foundation. Originally chartered as a not-for-profit corporation to help Serra itself in 1951, then dormant for several years and reactivated in 1967, the Foundation has financed numerous Church vocation projects which otherwise may not have been possible. Over this 33-year period the contributions of thousands of Serrans extended Serra's impact much beyond the scope of individual club programs and activities.

Since 1967 the Foundation has given \$552,000 to Serra International to enable the financing of scores of vocation initiatives. Each year through the "Giving in Thanksgiving" program, an invitation is extended to Serrans to contribute to this effort. Through these gifts financial assistance has been given:

- To publish and distribute to all priests in the U.S.A. a vocation handbook, *FIRST STEPS*, with sample parish vocation activities
- To produce a 30-minute film, "These Men Called Priests" (matching funds with the Serra Club of Seattle, Washington, 1984)
- To the Center for Human Development for a Serra-CHD joint production of video cassette programs on the great Catholic spiritual masters

- To provide scholarship assistance to seminarians attending the 1979, 1980, 1982 and 1984 Black Catholic Clergy Caucus annual meetings. These meetings are sponsored and attended by Black bishops and priests in the U.S.
- To the DIRECTIONS program, Archdiocese of San Francisco, for an experimental program helping Catholics discern their calls to Church ministry
- To the Northeast Regional Committee for Hispanics, Inc. to help make possible a conference for all Church personnel involved in vocation promotion and information
- Annual to U.S.A. National Catholic Vocation Council (N.C.V.C.)
- To the Serra Bicentennial Commission to provide television programs in Spanish on the life of Father Serra
- To publish the workbook for the first Australian national vocation week, *DAYBREAK '80*
- To Serra International to make possible Serra Days of Renewal led by Archbishop William E. Cousins former Episcopal Adviser, Serra International
- To the Commission for Priestly Formation, established by the Episcopal Conference of England and Wales, for its work in preparing a study on the "theological formation of future priests"
- To provide vocations material and the Pope Paul

VI and Serra Unit Certificate given by the U.S.A. National Catholic Committee on Scouting for completing a Church vocation project

- To Pope John Paul II to further international vocations work
- To produce television and radio spots to encourage interest in the priesthood, sisterhood and brotherhood
- To the USA National Catholic Office for the Deaf which sponsored, in the Spring of 1981, a vocations retreat for deaf people who have an interest in Church ministry
- To Colegio Bellarmino, Santiago, Chile, for a Study on Vocations Trends in four major Latin American countries
- For the preparation and distribution of the three-part Understand Scriptures Program Series (on tape) to all clubs
- To the National Office for Black Catholics to fund the Church vocations workshop which was an important part of the August 1980 Conference of Black Catholics in the United States
- For partial expense of the documentary film on the “Pontificate of Pope Paul VI”
- To assist in the preparation for the first Latin American Vocations Conference (Lima, Peru)

The total value of the Serra International Foundation now stands at nearly \$1 million, thanks to the generosity of Serrans who have contributed and remembered the Foundation in their wills.

“The future is bright – contributions are increasing, as are opportunities to develop and assist worthwhile vocation activities,” says Serra Foundation President Nicholas Spinella. “Every gift helps extend our mission to further vocations.” ☺

## **Vannini,** *Continued from p. 19*

Lord.

Thus, we aim to be, as I described earlier, practicing Catholics who call, guide, and give special attention, companionship and understanding to those preparing to be consecrated.

I like to believe that our clubs could be for the seminarians, the religious men and women, and the priests, what Lazarus’ home in Bethany was to Jesus: a place where He felt intimacy and familial friendship.

In this perspective, we try to approach the consecrated person, whether elderly or with particular challenges, who often feels lonely or even abandoned. We want to give freely and without ulterior motives from the diversity of talents and resources available in the Club.

Serra carries out its mission for vocations determined to be original and unique. That is, in addition to prayer for vocations, Serra takes steps to create and support growth through initiatives and events. We uphold the fundamental principles of our Catholic faith in absolute thoroughness while involving the secular world in areas of shared values such as in civil development and solidarity. Through this means we will show the entire world the beauty and goodness of men and women of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and cultures, from every geographic region giving everything of themselves for the Lord.

Once more, thank you for your attention. May the Lord bless our earnest work. Mary, Mother of Vocations, pray for us. ☺

## **Liston,** *Continued from p. 21*

It’s easy to think that someone else, Somebody, or anyone else, Anybody, will take an interest in these projects and provide the needed financial support. But the truth, as you have discovered throughout the pages of this issue of *the Serran*, is that in many cases, if not for our Foundation, Nobody would be supporting these worthy causes.

All of us benefit from each and every religious and priestly vocation in the world. Just as we as Serrans pray for vocations that we do not personally know, there are many around the world whom we do not know who are praying for us. Therefore, Everybody should be supporting vocations worldwide. With that in mind, I ask you to do what Everybody should be doing: support the Serra International Foundation.

Mary, Mother of Vocations, pray for us! St. Junípero Serra, pray for us! ☺

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Fr. Sean McCaffery, pastor at St. John Francis Regis Parish in Kansas City, Missouri, USA, poses in front of a large poster created by parish elementary school students in honor of Priesthood Sunday.

# The Serran Mission in Action

## Club activities around the world

### **Priesthood Sunday: Kansas City, Mo., USA**

St. John Francis Regis Parish and Parish Elementary School have used the USA Council's Priesthood Sunday resources for many years to show appreciation for their pastor. The Serra Club of Southeast Kansas City, Missouri, USA, provides Priesthood Sunday resources to 19 parishes in their service area 60 days prior to the event to encourage parish staff, school and School of Religion to plan a parish celebration.

This year, the students at St. Regis, guided by their teacher, created a large poster of Jesus casting a fishing net for a large catch of fish with additional fish in the water. Each of the fish in the net bears the name of a St. Regis School student. Some featured additional notes of appreciation for their pastor, Fr. Sean McCaffery.

The display was hung in the Gathering Space for a week so everyone could view and check the messages on the fish.

At the close of each Mass on Priesthood Sunday, October 30, the assisting deacon asked the congregation to join him in a blessing for their pastor.

### **Priesthood Sunday: Leawood, Kan., USA**

"St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Leawood, Kansas celebrated Priesthood Sunday beginning with the evening Mass on Saturday, October 29. The narthex was decorated with a banner saying "Thank you" to priests. Tables were set up with cards for parishioners to fill out a thank-you note for the pastor, Fr. Brian Schieber, and the two associate pastors, Fr. Matthew Nagle and Fr. Nathan Miller. A decorated box for each priest was made to hold the cards. Holy cards with the Immaculate Heart of Mary image on the front and a prayer for priests on the back were also offered. Because of the long lines, many people who wanted to fill our thank-you cards took them home to

*Continued on next page*



### Lekki Serrans Provide Computers for Seminarians in Ibadan

The Serra Club of Lekki, Nigeria, commissioned computer equipment for the Major Seminary of Saints Peter and Paul in Ibadan. A ceremony marking the occasion was held on June 29, 2016. Says club president Ehimare Ehizele, "This was our flagship project and from a position of ground zero, in terms of our finances, we have been able to pull this off...all thanks first of all to God Almighty and our patron, Saint Junípero Serra, and special thanks to my fellow Serrans, 'Indefatigable Titans,' who kept faith with the project and dream." The club rented an 18-seater bus to transport members (pictured at left) to the event. A plaque (above) commemorates their historic contribution to the seminary.

complete and bring back later.

On Priesthood Sunday itself, Masses were followed by a reception with juice, coffee and doughnuts. Hundreds of parishioners joined the celebration. A well-attended Holy Hour of Adoration was held in the afternoon. This was a very special time to pray for our priests, seminarians, and vocations to the priesthood.

This Priesthood Sunday celebration was sponsored by the St. Michael the Archangel Vocation Ministry and the refreshments were provided by the St. Michael's Knights of Columbus. Many members of St. Michael's volunteered to assist with this celebration.

### Priesthood Sunday: Omaha, Neb., USA

For the second year in a row, the Serra Club of Omaha, Nebraska, put a sweet twist on Priesthood Sunday with their "Priesthood Sundaes" event at Saint John Vianney Residence in Omaha. There, 20 retired priests were invited to build their own dessert at a Serran-staffed ice

cream bar, complete with all the toppings.

For decades, the Serra Club of Omaha honored retired priests at a luncheon meeting in October. But as it became more difficult for health and other reasons for some of the priests to attend, the club decided to bring the party to them, said Betty Dineen Shrier, a Serra club member who lives at St. John Vianney and helps organize the event.

### Kings-Tulare Club envision St. Catherine of Siena for 10th anniversary celebration

Dominican Sister Nancy Murray (big sister of famous comedian Bill Murray) brought her one-woman play, "Catherine of Siena: A Woman for Our Times" to Good Shepherd Catholic Parish Center, Visalia Calif., USA, for the Serra Club of Kings-Tulare's 10th anniversary celebration.

The Kings-Tulare club was particularly thrilled with Sister Nancy's re-creation of the life of one of Catholicism's most influential women, Dominican Saint Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the

Church. With simple props and a reliance on the audience's imagination, Sister Nancy portrayed St. Catherine as the colorful, strong, passionate and enthusiastic personality that she was.

The majority of club members are women, and many see St. Catherine as an inspiration.

St. Catherine "was very feisty in her day," says program chairwoman Jan Rose. "Women didn't do those things. They didn't have the voice they have today, and she had a voice. When you think that was over 700 years ago that she lived, it was an amazing accomplishment for someone so young."

### Williamson County and Nashville Clubs' Seminarian Benefit Breaks Records

The Seminarian Education Benefit Dinner and Auction held in Brentwood, Tenn., USA, sponsored by the Serra Clubs of Williamson County and Nashville along with the Tennessee Knights of Columbus, raised an unprecedented \$190,000 last May. A check in this amount was proudly presented to the Most

Rev. David R. Choby, Bishop of the Diocese of Nashville.

Says event chairman and Williamson County Serran Robert Rudman, "This was the seventh year of this event which has increased from 109 people attending and raising \$6,000 the first year to this year of 610 people attending and raising \$190,000."

Under Bishop Choby, Nashville has become one of the fastest growing dioceses for attracting seminarians, boasting 27 now in formation. Additionally, the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia's is also Nashville-based and is the fastest growing order of sisters with an average age of 33. Young sisters from all over the world are in formation.

"This is exciting when you realize that middle-Tennessee is 4% Catholic," says Rudman.

The Serra Club of Williamson County is only 10 years old and approaching 100 members. The club has recently adopted sister clubs in the Philippines and Thailand, helping them with their dues so they can flourish. ☺



Members of the Serra Club of the Blue Mountains, in Walla Walla, Wash., USA, are inducted by District 1E Governor Aileen Garrehy Fields at St. Patrick Church at their charter ceremony on Sept. 15, 2016.

## Serra is Growing!

Please welcome these new clubs by sending a note of congratulations, blessing and encouragement to their charter members.

### Club Name

São João Maria Vianney  
 Tecate Norte  
 The Blue Mountains, WA  
 North Idaho, ID  
 St. Stephen the Martyr, WA

### Country

Brazil  
 Mexico  
 USA  
 USA  
 USA

### Charter Date

April 16, 2016  
 April 2, 2016  
 Sept. 15, 2016  
 Sept. 17, 2016  
 Nov. 20, 2016



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The room rate will be  
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**We've got great speakers and activities planned  
for this wonderful event, including:**



We will enjoy Mass with his Excellency **Eduardo Nevares, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix.** Bishop Nevares will also talk to us on "The Joyful Promotion of Vocations in Latino Communities."



We are honored to welcome our featured speaker, **Rev. Ralph O'Donnell, Executive Director of the USCCB Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations,** to whom Serra International was named a consulting organization in 2014.

Visit [www.serraus.org](http://www.serraus.org) to register or call Serra's USA Council at 888.777.6681