Membership Is E-V-E-R-Y-B-O-D-Y’S Business!

INSIDE:
Tips, tools and resources to grow and improve your club
It has been well noted by the Church that where regular Holy Hours take place, there is an increase in those discerning religious vocations. There is no better way to bring people together than in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.”

Anne Shepherd-Knapp, Serra USA Council Vocations Committee

The Serran Calendar

November 4-10, 2018
National Vocations Awareness Week

November 24, 2018
Serra Global Rosary for Vocations

December 29, 2018
Serra Global Rosary for Vocations

January 17-20, 2019
Serra Rally, Ventura, California

January 20-24, 2019
California Mission Trail Pilgrimage

February 2, 2019
World Day for Consecrated Life

May 12, 2019
World Day of Prayer for Vocations

June 20-23, 2019
Serra’s 77th International Convention, Mexico City

In This Issue:

3 Every Serran is asked to bring in one new member in 2018 and 2019
Mario Biscardi, Serra International President

5 Over 100 Members in Only 13 Years!
How the Williamson County club does membership

6 On Mission with Serran in Ireland
Patty Schneier

8 Oh Canada!
Tips from Serra Canada’s key membership players

10 You can reinvigorate a failing Serra club
William Ohnsted, Serra USA North Central Regional Director

11 Membership Tools for Free Download from www.serraus.org

12 Ceremony for the Induction of New Members
Featured Club Program

14 Holy Hours with Serra’s Monstrances
Anne Shepherd-Knapp, Serra USA Vocations Committee

15 Low-Hanging Fruit: Recruiting Members Who Already Know about Serra
Col. John Halloran, Serra USA Membership Vice President

16 Friends and Family Fall Membership Drive
Mark Bonkiewicz, Serra USA Secretary

18 United States Clubs in Formation
Greg Schwietz, Past President, Serra USA Council

ON OUR COVER
Serra Philippines Council Past President Blessida Diwa and her husband Rolando proudly display Serra International President Mario Biscardi’s membership goals, literally writ large!

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The Serran Editor: Anne McCormack
Serra International Executive Director: John Liston
333 W Wacker Drive, Suite 500 Chicago, IL 60606
www.serrainternational.org
Every Serran is asked to bring in one new member in 2018, and again in 2019

Dear fellow Serrans, greetings!

In the last issue of The Serran magazine, you received a copy of my speech at the recent Nashville convention where I spoke about the need to make membership our #1 priority for the coming year, and I encouraged all Serrans to become engaged in this effort so that Serra will be significantly stronger by this time next year. Today, I would like to convey to you my vision and thoughts as to how I believe we should go about to focus our efforts.

Firstly, our strategic focus for the next year will be to “Strengthen Membership in Serra,” and our strategic plan to do this is outlined in the charts on p. 4. However, that is the easy part. The difficult part will be, how will all Serrans move forward with the efforts that will be necessary to achieve our goal? After all, the core theme is for every Serran to bring in one new Serran in 2018 and again in 2019, and therefore, the success of our strategic plan to increase membership in Serra remains with each and every individual Serran. That is the challenge to all of us. Will all Serrans embrace this challenge? To the extent that they will, Serra will be significantly stronger in all ways, notably in membership, programs and vocation activities. But there is one more very significant way that Serra will be stronger, and that is financially. If each Serran is successful in attracting one new Serran, why, there would be no good reason to prevent us from reducing our membership dues by as much as 50%! Wouldn’t that be a nice gift to all Serrans this time next year! And so I would strongly encourage all Serrans to firstly embrace the core theme of our membership drive for the coming year and secondly, before we move forward to recruit new members, I would recommend that we all reflect on why each one of us is a Serran and what it means to each one of us to be a Serran.

To help us reflect on what it is that has kept us in Serra, ask yourself the following questions, and write the answers down:

• Why am I Serran? What convinced me to join Serra?
• In your own words, what is Serra’s mission?
• Why do I personally believe in this mission?
• How many years have I been a Serran? What keeps me in Serra and working for vocations?
• Name three blessings that you have received as a part of your membership to Serra.
• Name three activities conducted by our club that fulfill Serra’s mission.
• How would you feel if all Serrans move forward with the efforts that will be necessary to achieve our goal? After all, the core theme is for every Serran to bring in one new Serran in 2018 and again in 2019, and therefore, the success of our strategic plan to increase membership in Serra remains with each and every individual Serran. That is the challenge to all of us. Will all Serrans embrace this challenge? To the extent that they will, Serra will be significantly stronger in all ways, notably in membership, programs and vocation activities. But there is one more very significant way that Serra will be stronger, and that is financially. If each Serran is successful in attracting one new Serran, why, there would be no good reason to prevent us from reducing our membership dues by as much as 50%! Wouldn’t that be a nice gift to all Serrans this time next year! And so I would strongly encourage all Serrans to firstly embrace the core theme of our membership drive for the coming year and secondly, before we move forward to recruit new members, I would recommend that we all reflect on why each one of us is a Serran and what it means to each one of us to be a Serran.

Finally, think about the person whom you want to invite to join Serra. What about this special person made you think that he or she would find membership in Serra fulfilling? What qualities does this person possess that could make him or her a valuable member of your Serra Club?

Being well armed with these thoughts, we will have a much better chance of attracting other well-known and strongly Catholic individuals who share our love of the priesthood and religious life, and who will strengthen Serra in the future so that our apostolate will continue to be of service to our future Church in fostering and promoting vocations.

The good news is that there are plenty of potential members in our own local area waiting to be asked. Secondly, we have a precious gift of being a member in Serra International, the only lay organization that is aggregated to a
Pontifical Work at the Vatican, which is a very highly-valued and profound relationship that Serrans have enjoyed since 1951. All we have to do is engage ourselves in the membership drive, reflect on the reasons why we are Serrans, and then decide how and when we will approach strongly Catholic individuals like ourselves to join us in this most noble apostolate to be of service to our Church. Inviting others whom we know and recruiting new members is a challenge to us all, but if you need inspiration, look no further than at our own patron, St. Junípero Serra, whose travails show us what prayer, faith, sacrifice and action can achieve.

Whatever goal you set for yourself and your club and then put an earnest effort into it throughout the coming year, that goal you will achieve. What goal will you set for yourselves and your club? Our stated goal for Serra International is for every Serran to bring in one new Serran in 2018 and again in 2019, and for every district to bring in one new Serra club. Those who embrace this goal and move forward with their best efforts into achieving it, will surely find how amazingly easy it was to have accomplished their goal. All it took was the first step forward. There are clubs and individual Serrans who have already achieved 10 percent of this goal, and they have only just begun. Where do you want to be a year from now?

We can do it! All it takes is for every Serran to recruit 1 new member in 2018 and again in 2019!
When the Serra Club of Williamson County, Tennessee, was chartered in 2005, it began with only 25 members. Today, only 13 years later, the membership stands at 113, including four honorary members over the age of 90. That kind of membership growth in Serra is highly remarkable on its own, but get this: Williamson County is located in central Tennessee, where only 4 percent of the population is Catholic.

How did this club, who also took time and effort to co-host the recent sold-out Serra International convention in Nashville, accomplish such an incredible feat?

“During my second term as club president I made it a priority to grow membership in 2017,” says past Williamson County club president Bob Guerra. “I believe we were sitting at 87 members, and with several of them aging, I felt we would lose more, which we did.

“I asked for input from the board for their ideas to grow membership. Our Membership VPs Trip and Carole Guthrie took the lead in executing the ideas. The primary one was to ‘bring a buddy’: Our entire membership were encouraged to big a friend or two to each of the monthly meetings. The response was awesome and we started to see a steady growth of new members. I credit that to great speakers, great food and a welcoming environment from our members.”

The club did lose 12 members, but gained 30 new members in two years, surpassing the 100 mark last spring.

“Personal invitations from current members to attend our monthly dinner meetings is the most successful way to bring in new members,” concurs club Membership VP Carole Guthrie, who shares Membership tasks with her husband Trip, who is also District 18 Governor. “We make it an inviting, friendly atmosphere and introduce our guests prior to the meal and speaker.”

Of course, there’s more to it than just personal invitation. Williamson County makes sure that its speakers are interesting, and relies on personal religious vocation stories. A thought-provoking club program and speaker are essential to connecting current members to the Serran mission as well as keeping them engaged.

Identifying new members’ talents for leadership is another thrust of Williamson County’s success. The club is not shy about encouraging new members to attend

Continued on page 17
Back in 2016, when Margo Geddie, President of the Serra Club of Houston, became a board member of Serra International, she was asked, “What do you want to do now that you are on the International Board?” She answered, “I want to bring Serra to Ireland!”

Indeed, with only one seminary left for the entire country and less than 25 men currently in formation, Ireland needs vocations. God heard the desires of Geddie’s heart, and brought that dream to fulfillment this past August with a mission trip to Ireland in the hopes of starting a Serra club there.

Everything was divinely inspired: The timing with the World Meeting of Families taking place in Dublin; the mission team Geddie created; the personal connections with Margaret Cartwright, director of Vocations Ireland, an association of the Vocation Directors of the Catholic Religious Orders in Ireland; and Fr. Michael Begley, who arranged for us to meet with two bishops.

From start to finish, we felt the presence of St. Junipero Serra, St. Patrick, St. Kevin, and all the saints. Our goal was to plant seeds of faith and cover Ireland in prayer—and pray we did. The entire team began a Novena to St. Junipero Serra nine days before departure. We prayed the Rosary out loud in the streets of Dublin as we walked for hours to the Papal Mass. We touched the holy relics of St. Therese of Lisieux and her parents that were on display from the Vatican. We prayed the Lorica of St. Patrick at the Rock of Cashel for a renewal of faith and an increase in vocations. We prayed together first thing in the morning out in the countryside with farm animals all around us. We prayed in cemeteries, we prayed in the car, we prayed on the plane, and we prayed in the pubs.

On Friday, August 24, we met with Most Reverend Kieran O’Reilly, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly. It was a beautiful encounter with much joy and laughter as we sat together around the table at a restaurant in Dublin. On Tuesday, August 28, we met with Most Rev. Alphonsus Cullinan, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. Once again, we were received with warmth and hospitality as we feasted on a lovely lunch in his home.

Every member of the Serra mission team played a role in explaining the mission and impact of Serra clubs on a personal and ecclesiastical level. Fr. Michael Begley, CSSp, who arranged the meetings, led the introductions and thanked the bishops for their willingness to meet with us. Margo Geddie gave the history of Serra International and an overview of how Serra fulfills its mis-

On August 28, the Serra Mission Team met the Most Reverend Alphonsus Cullinan, DD, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, at his home for a meal and to discuss establishing Serra clubs in Ireland. Pictured from left to right: Patty Schneier, Candice Tyrrell, Alex Duncan, Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan, Margo Geddie, Fr. Michael Begley, CSSp., Fr. Shane O’Neill, diocesan priest of Waterford, Tramore, Ireland; Brother Rupert O’Sullivan; Margaret Cartwright.

On Mission with Serra in Ireland

by Patty Schneier
Serra Club of St. Louis, Missouri
sion. Fr. Ray Cook explained his role as chaplain of a Serra club and how it has impacted his own ministry. Candice Tyrrell gave tips and suggestions about recruitment and programs. I talked about the support my family received from Serra as my son journeyed from seminary to the priesthood. Margaret Cartwright explained how Serra would benefit Ireland with fresh ideas and complement the work she already does with Vocations Ireland. She thanked us for providing a way for the people of Ireland to begin talking about faith openly and encouraging young people to think about God’s call in their lives. Finally, Past Serra International President and Glasgow Serra Club member Alex Duncan offered his availability to be the “boots on the ground” and to follow through with the implementation of Serra in Ireland.

The joy and passion for Serra was palpable at both meetings, and the receptivity of both bishops was simply wonderful. Archbishop O’Reilly and Bishop Cullinan both expressed their desire and approval to begin Serra clubs in Ireland. The seeds were planted! Mission accomplished! We were humbled by Bishop Cullinan’s closing remarks in which he said to all of us, “Your American ‘can-do’ attitude and your willingness to come all this way to help the Church in Ireland is inspiring.”

As we reflected on our journey together, we realized that just as St. Junípero Serra didn’t start out in California as a great saint, neither did St. Patrick nor St. Kevin as they brought Christianity to Ireland. They simply traveled and brought their love for the faith with them. They planted tiny seeds and did what they could. God did the rest. He made their seeds blossom into missions and monasteries to fill the land with faith. May our tiny seeds bring about a harvest of vocations as we pray for the Universal Church and the implementation of Serra in Ireland. May God be praised for this incredible opportunity to be a part of it all! 🙏

The Serra Ireland Team Needs Your Prayers

**Rev. Michael Begley, CSSp:** Director of Research and Development for the Irish Province of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit

**Brother Rupert O’Sullivan:** Presentation Brother and a Member of the Provincial Council. He is also a vocation director and chairperson of Vocations Ireland

**Margaret Cartwright:** Director of Vocations Ireland

**Rev. Ray Cook, OMI:** Chaplain of St. Mary’s Chapel of Rice University and the Medical Center in Houston, Texas, USA

**Alex Duncan:** Serra International Past President, Serra International Foundation Board member, Secretary for the Great Britain Serra International Council, VP of Communications and Secretary for the Serra Club of Glasgow, Scotland

**Margo Geddie:** Serra International Trustee and President of the Serra Club of Houston, Texas, USA

**Candice Tyrrell:** District 10 Governor, Serra Club of North Houston, Texas, USA member

**Patty Schneier:** Nationally acclaimed Catholic speaker, Serra Club of St. Louis, Missouri, USA member, and mother of a priest

**PERFECT WEATHER FOR PRAYER:** Patty Schneier, Margo Geddie, and Candice Tyrrell pray the Rosary outdoors at the World Meeting of Families in Dublin.
The success in the recent surge in new Canadian clubs is attributed to at least a couple of factors. First, I credit the commitment and passion of our Serra International President, Mario Biscardi, who flies to different provinces all over Canada to meet with archbishops, bishops and vocation directors; as well as myself, travelling to different parts of the Province of Ontario as their district governor. Second, vocation directors and the clergy as a whole have a new-found interest in Serra, which started when the Archdiocese of Toronto not too long ago hosted a seminar for vocation directors. It was surprising to find out that just a minority of them knew what Serra is all about.

Within my district, I always look for any opportunity to open a new club. Mario and I make a joint presentation to vocation directors and their bishops, and the results have so far been very exciting and inspiring, to say the least. When I visit different clubs, I always stress the importance that each and every member plays. My philosophy is, no matter how many and how good the club’s vocation and spiritual activities are, if they have no growth in membership, the club will just slowly die. We have to ensure that all are given the opportunity to be active, to serve as officers, and take on some responsibilities and roles that show how important the contribution of each member truly is.

What’s our biggest challenge? A lot of our members are getting old and they are not being replaced. The younger generation has not been invited to join and we don’t have specific plans to reach out to them. Serra in Canada is not as big and not as settled as it is in the United States. I have been focusing on membership growth as envisioned by President Biscardi: a new member for every Serran and a new club for every district. As part of that, we are now focusing on our younger generation; specifically, we are reaching out to college and university students. This is in addition to our regular membership recruitment practices: holding membership drives in parishes, speaking to everyone who loves to go to Church, and inviting members of different Church ministries. Lastly, we focus on bringing in members of our families and circles of friends. My own Serra Club of Markham and Scarborough has thoroughly embraced this year’s membership challenge and I am proud to report that we have already increased our membership by 20 percent!

In addition to striving to meet President Biscardi’s membership goals using the recruitment activities mentioned above, I meet all the club presidents every four months with the main focus on membership growth. I have required each one of them, starting next month, to provide me with a status report of their membership. This process will make them aware that we mean business in doing everything we can to grow in membership!

Being a district governor is not an easy job. We are the extensions of our President Biscardi in our respective districts. We should always be passionate and committed in performing our sacred trust entrusted to us by our Constitution. We should be aware of any opportunity to promote Serra in whatever way we can.

Very important as well is maintaining a personal relationship with our clergy to ensure them that we are always around to support them, especially now that our Church is facing a crisis pertaining to sexual abuses. They need all of us now more than ever. We have to be able to set examples for our members if we want them to follow our footsteps. ✝️
Maria-Luz’s favorite membership practices

**Be a role model to your current members.** To be a credible member, one must demonstrate commitment to the club. Have complete attendance, actively participate in club activities, be friendly and encourage members to have a role in club events.

**Communicate and listen well.** Talk to people in the parish community explaining what Serra is all about. Regularly follow up with members on how they are doing, and what challenges they face. Our club has assigned telephone callers to call members to attend the meeting, in addition to sending emails to them.

**Make use of existing resources for membership management.** Provide handouts and materials related to the club. Make sure members sign up for Serra International newsletters and the membership portal. Update the new and existing members of the club initiatives. Assign a buddy for a new member.

**Maria-Luz’s TOP TIP:** Don’t make your club exclusive; make it inclusive. Be open-minded. We are all children of God, with different talents to share.

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Tony’s favorite membership practices

**Fellowship and feeling of belonging are very important to retention.** Engagement and promotion and frequent personal contact via “phone committee” works for us.

**Adopt a business model for meetings and activities, but without “hardening of heart.”** To give our ministry the secular importance it needs, we emphasize structure and organization by following Serra International guidelines and club by-laws for meetings, including board meetings.

**Existing members and prospective members must be committed to sharing God given skills, talents and treasures.** Serra isn’t for everyone. A devout Catholic with a professional background is always being scouted. The ability to financially commit to Serra for local meetings, conferences and travel goes a long way to succession planning.

**Tony’s TOP TIP:** Promote Serra by presenting yourself as prayerful, polished and professional.

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Antonietta’s favorite membership practices

**Introduce potential members to the Travelling Vocations Chalice program and invite them to reserve a week with the chalice.**

**Invite people who you think might be interested in an upcoming speaker to that Serra meeting.**

**Talk about why Serra matters on a personal and Church level.** Bring to light the fact that without priests, we don’t have the Eucharist. Give testimony to the joy and graces you personally have received since joining Serra.

**Make announcements at church.** Place a notice in the parish bulletin, including the link to the Serra website.

**Antonietta’s TOP TIPS:**

**Be passionate when talking about the great works that we do.** Share your story on how and why you become a member.

**Do not be afraid to invite someone to a meeting, but never pressure a person.**

**Prayer:** Pray for a prospective member and ask them to pray to discern if God is asking them to join Serra.
About 15 to 20 years ago, our Serra Club of Duluth, Minnesota, USA, was at the point where we either had to relinquish our charter or rebuild. We were getting 10 to 15 members at our meetings every two weeks with a total membership of about 35 members. Our club president was in his fourth year of service and most of our VPs had held their positions for about the same amount of time. They were tired and had lost interest in keeping the club going. No one was willing to step forward to refresh the slate of officers.

At one meeting, only our chaplain and four other members were present. That was it; we decided we had to do something different or else the club would cease to exist. We called for mandatory attendance at our next regular meeting to discuss the future of our club. Thirty members attended and the remaining five gave their support to whatever was decided.

At one meeting, only our chaplain and four other members were present. That was it; we decided we had to do something different or else the club would cease to exist.

We called for mandatory attendance at our next regular meeting to discuss the future of our club. Thirty members attended and the remaining five gave their support to whatever was decided.

At that meeting we had a long discussion as to what the real mission of Serra is and how we were failing our priests and religious due to our lack of involvement. Some of our original charter members wanted to keep the club going; others wanted to fold it up and turn in the charter if we couldn’t get more motivation going.

We were very lucky we did have a group of men and women who wanted the club to succeed. We were also blessed with Father John Petrich, our chaplain, and his support of our mission and to continue with the club. Everybody stayed on and we all worked on membership together.

At the mandatory meeting we elected all new officers from the president on down through the trustees.

By doing this we were able to get more people involved, changed the attitude of the club, and made it a vibrant one. After that our attendance went from four to five people at our meetings to about 70 to 75 percent attendance.

We re-established the existing programs we were doing before but with more enthusiasm from the new officers and more member commitment. We brought back the trip to our seminaries, Christmas dinner for all of our priests, and the visit with the Benedictine sisters. We also became more involved with the Spring leadership training. When you change officers, you change a lot of ideas and programs.

We did increase our membership to about 40-plus people in the first year of our rebuild.

If your trustees are not an active part of your club and your club is struggling, then get them involved or find new ones. Club trustees are tasked with monitoring and making corrections to the direction in which your club is going. They are the ones to be the nominating committee and to work on the officers and their replacements each year. Discourage your officers from holding the same position for over two years so you can bring fresh ideas and energy into the different areas of your club activities. 

You can reinvigorate a failing club
How a “come to Jesus” meeting saved Serra in Duluth

by William Ohnsted
North Central Regional Director,
Serra’s Council for the United States
Download these FREE Serra membership tools now

Catholic Faith and Heritage Flyer/Serra Application
Attract potential members with a thought-provoking visual and emotional call. Serra membership application on the back.

Does the Church Need Serra? Trifold Brochure
General information about the Serra mission.

Find all these materials, manuals, promotional articles, graphics and more on the Membership page of www.serraus.org.

Membership Tool Kit
Help for common Serra club and district problems

Mountain Top Joy Trifold
Information on your local club. Customizable.

Who Will Fill My Shoes?
Prayer Card
Serra Prayer for Vocations on the back. Customizable.
Featured Club Program: Ceremony for the Induction of New Members

Whether held at the end of Mass or during a club meeting, this ceremony is designed to highlight who we are and what we do as Serrans and welcome new members into the Serran ministry. It intends to be complete yet concise. As in the past, there are blank lines to fill in your club and new member names and footnotes to guide those in charge.

The ceremony opens with the Master of Ceremonies (preferably the district governor) calling the new members and their sponsors forward. The chaplain begins with a prayer and two readers read quotations from exhortations given to Serrans by Pope Francis and Pope Saint John Paul II.

The Master of Ceremonies (MC) then addresses the new members. Lighted candles are distributed to them symbolizing the link of this ministry with their baptismal call to holiness. The chaplain calls attention to the symbolism of the candles and then, with a short series of questions, asks the new members to agree to put forth the time, effort and prayers necessary to live the Christian life and be good Serrans. The candles are then extinguished, and the sponsors give the new members their Serra pins.

The script then suggests that all Serrans stand and read the pledge based on Pope Saint John Paul II’s letter to Serrans. A heartfelt reading of these words should help inspire and promote solidarity among all Serrans present, no matter how many years they have been involved in this ministry.

The text of the ceremony follows.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Will the new members of the Serra Club of __________ please come forward as you are called?

_______ with _______
_______ with _______
_______ with _______

(After assembling)

CHAPLAIN: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

CHAPLAIN: The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

ALL: And with your spirit.

CHAPLAIN: Heavenly Father, look with favor upon the Serrans assembled here. Bless their apostolate. Guide our new members through your Spirit dwelling in them to fulfill their new apostolate to the end that many generous people through their vocations may preach the Good News your Son proclaimed and make his sacrifice visible in the lives of those whom they serve.

READER 1: His Holiness, Pope Francis, speaking to Serrans in 2017, said, “To be friends to priests, sustaining their vocation and accompanying them in their ministry: with this great gift you enrich the Church! This is, above all else, what a Serran is – a ‘special friend’ whom the Lord has brought into the lives of seminarians and priests... The Serra Club helps foster this beautiful vocation of being laity who are friends to priests. Friends who know how to accompany and sustain them in faith, in fidelity to prayer and apostolic commitment. Friends who share the wonder of a vocation, the courage of a definitive decision, the joy and fatigue of ministry. Friends who can offer priests support and regard their generous efforts and human failings with understanding and tender love.”

READER 2: His Holiness, Pope Saint John Paul II, recognizing Serra’s unique character in promoting vocations, sent this message to its members: “Serrans have wished to keep two outstanding characteristics of Father Junipero Serra: love for priestly and religious vocations, and the constant testimony of Christian faith in the environment in which your activity takes place. ... Your commitment of praying, promoting and helping priestly and religious vocations continually stimulates you to reflect on the requirements of the Word of God. For this reason, you intend also to live up to your own Christian vocations. Prove to everyone, with clarity and without compromise, your sincere adherence to Christ.”
MASTER OF CEREMONIES: You are about to be inducted as members into the Serra Club of __________________. Serra International’s mission is a sacred ministry. You will strengthen Serra’s role in the Church by promoting, fostering and preserving vocations to the priesthood and religious life both by prayer and by active vocation programs. Furthermore, you are to promote, through Christian education and Serran fellowship, your own personal holiness, and that of your fellow Serrans, in order to better carry out your own Christian vocation to service.

(Distribute and light individual candles or one large candle. 3)

CHAPLAIN: This candle is a reminder of the one you received on the day of your baptism. Its light symbolizes Jesus, the light of the world, and its fire, the transforming energy of the Holy Spirit. Let it be a symbol of rededication to your solemn pledge to live out your baptismal call to holiness. In this spirit I ask these questions of you. Please answer, “I will.” Will you give your time, efforts and prayers for the encouragement and preservation of vocations to the ordained and professed ministries?

NEW MEMBERS: I will.

CHAPLAIN: Will you, by faithful attendance at Serra meetings and by the example of your Christian life, promote and deepen Christian justice and charity, and continually strive to fulfill your own Christian vocation?

NEW MEMBERS: I will.

CHAPLAIN: Will you do your best to share our Serra community with others who have much to give and much to gain from the Christian friendships which are refined through Serra membership?

NEW MEMBERS: I will.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Please extinguish your candles.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Will the sponsor(s) please pin the membership pins on the new member(s)? (Allow enough time to accomplish this.)

CHAPLAIN: (A short sentence or two of congratulations, e.g., “Congratulations! Welcome to Serra International.”)

(If it has not been done at Installation of Officers the same day/evening, the following rededication by all Serrans present may be added before new members return to their seats.)

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Will all Serrans please stand? Please refer to your program. We ask all Serrans to rededicate themselves with these words, based on Saint John Paul II’s 1985 letter to Serrans:

(ALL READ the following which is also printed in their program:)

By virtue of my baptism and confirmation, I take my place among the People of God. I pledge to fulfill the responsibilities which correspond to my state in life and to practice the virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

I pledge to use the grace of my personal gifts, guided by the light of the Gospel, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the mind of the Church to carry out my mission in the world.

I accept the Serran responsibility to foster and affirm vocations to the Priesthood, the Diaconate, and the Consecrated Life in the Catholic Church, to grow in my own Catholic Faith and assist others to recognize and respond to God’s Universal Call to Holiness.

Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us. Saint Junipero Serra, pray for us.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: (Ask new members to be seated and continue with the Mass or meeting.)

1 When at all possible, the District Governor should be invited to be Master of Ceremonies. Use of one or more Readers to assist the Master of Ceremonies helps to focus attention on these important words of our Holy Fathers.

2 Use your judgment according to the facilities available. In general, try to line up the new members near the podium in dining facilities, or in front of the altar, if in church.

3 Lighting candles can be cumbersome. Use individual candles for four or fewer new members. Use a single larger candle for five or more new members; give to one of the new members to hold. ⊙
Holy Hours with Serra’s Monstrances

by Anne Shepherd-Knapp,
USA Council Vocations Committee

Three sacred vessels or monstrances have made their way to Serra International in recent years for the purpose of encouraging Holy Hours for vocations among Serrans and others. With our dedicated Serra ministry to pray for new priestly and religious vocations, to love and support existing vocations, and our call to grow in personal holiness, it seems natural that our organization with its charism be entrusted with these sacred vessels to promote Holy Hours. St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI each blessed one of these monstrances. Pope Francis will bless the third one this year.

All three monstrances are available to our Serra clubs for special Holy Hours to celebrate such occasions as World Day of Prayer for Vocations, the club’s monthly adoration commitment or as part of a membership drive to aid potential club members with time for discerning their call to our ministry while sharing in our prayer petition for more vocations. There is no better way to bring people together than in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

Each monstrance prominently displays the Eucharist which engulfs each of us with the warm love of Christ, His graces and gifts. In turn, we the faithful offer adoration and lay down our petitions before Him asking “the Master of the Harvest to send out more laborers” (Matthew 9:38) both for our Church vocations and in our Serra membership. It has been well noted by the Church that where regular Holy Hours take place, there is an increase in those discerning religious vocations.

Once considered a traditional devotion, adoration and benediction were changed to a formal liturgical celebration. To aid our clubs in planning Holy Hours, they may turn to Serraspark.org. Tool #20 - Holy Hours, where several worship aids or liturgical examples are available for use. The SPARK Sampler and Serra’s Call To Holiness Program Manual also offer guidance to the clubs in putting on a Holy Hour.

These monstrances have been largely unknown to some of our Serra clubs but well used by others. “No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it away in a cellar nor under a basket, but on the lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light” (Matthew 5:15). With that in mind, each district and every Serra club is asked and encouraged to promote regular Holy Hours and to schedule a time when one of these special monstrances can be shipped to your area for extended use among the clubs in the vicinity. Clubs may communicate directly with one another to share in a scheduled visit or work through their district governor in creating a coordinated schedule of visitation within the district. The latter is the ideal. The Serra International office will provide round-trip shipping and details required to complete the arrangement.

Pope Francis reminds us: We should remember that holiness consists in a habitual openness to the transcendent, expressed in prayer and adoration. The path of holiness is a source of peace and joy, given to us by the Spirit. At the same time, it demands that we keep “our lamps lit” (Lk 12:35) and be attentive (Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete et Exsultate). ☪
by John Halloran  
Serra’s USA Council Membership Vice President

Most of us have heard the term “low-hanging fruit.” One definition is “A course of action that can be undertaken quickly and easily as part of a wider range of changes or solutions to a problem.” The problem we have in Serra is declining membership. Serra International and its national councils are addressing this issue and how best to combat it.

As we think of ways to solve this problem, our imaginations can sometimes run wild. It is good to think outside the box; but let’s not exclude thinking inside the box, too. Sometimes we look for complex answers to resolve simple issues. Like any other problem, answers to “How can we reverse this trend of declining Serra membership?” may be complex or simple. In this article, I will discuss the latter: a simple solution that our clubs should be using to increase membership is to pick the low-hanging fruit.

As mentioned in my article, “Is Serra a Secret Organization?” (The Serran, August 2018), only 16 percent of the overall membership is made up of spouses. We have 30 clubs that don’t have any spouses as part of their membership. In 12 clubs, spouses make up at least 33 percent of their membership, which means that over 200 clubs are missing out on a great recruiting opportunity. In addition to our spouses, potential members are our kids, grandkids and other relatives who may live in the area. These folks, to include spouses, probably know almost as much about Serra as our membership does.

The majority of our diocesan priests have families that live within the diocesan boundaries. How hard would it be to ask these priests to provide your club with their family members’ contact information? If your club does not cover the whole diocese, then send the request to those who fall within your club boundaries. (For a detailed strategy of this approach, see Mark Bonkiewicz’s article on p. 16.)

Similarly, in each of our dioceses are seminarians. The majority of them have parents, grandparents and relatives living within the diocesan boundaries. If you don’t have their contact information, then you can request it from the diocese or ask the seminarian to provide it.

What about permanent deacons? Many of them are married. Also, many of them have families in the area.

The diocesan website or the diocesan directory is a great source for contact information on priests, permanent deacons and seminarians. Once you get the contact information you need, send them a request to attend a meeting, function or a recruiting event. Include in that request information on your club, the “Why Be a Serran” brochure (available at serraus.org; see p. 11) and a membership application. If your club has conducted an event that has included seminarians, clergy and religious, then these folks have some idea what Serra is all about.

Finally, many of us have Catholic friends. It is a lot harder to say “no” to someone you know. Don’t forget them in your recruiting plan.

Getting people who already know something about Serra to become members is easier than approaching total strangers. Low-hanging fruit is just as sweet as those that grow in the top limbs of the tree.

Low-hanging fruit: Recruiting members who already know about Serra
Your Mission, Should You Choose to Accept It...
Try this “Friends and Family” Membership Drive in Your Club

by Mark Bonkiewicz
Serra’s USA Council Secretary

Fall is the perfect time to launch your Serra club’s membership drive. Potential members are back from summer vacations, and seminarians are back in school. Your club has returned with fresh energy after a summer break.

If your club wants to organize an effective drive but isn’t sure how to begin, the following Fall Membership Drive Campaign strategy developed in 2016 by the USA Council Membership Committee is for you. Here, the committee takes the guesswork out of running a membership drive, and focuses on a logical target demographic for new members: the friends and family of our priests and religious.

We’ve been reminded that we should ask our own family and friends to join us in our vocations apostolate. But even more so, family members and close friends of priests and sisters are ideal membership prospects.

Why? In most cases, the parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and close friends of priests and religious have a highly personal, loving connection to the vocation story of that particular family member. They already know and understand the process of discernment, at least by way of witness. Many of these family members and friends would welcome a more formal and organized way to show their support.

How to Find Prospective Serrans Who Are Friends and Family of Priests and Religious

Who are the priests near and dear to your heart? These are the priests who married you and your spouse, baptized your children, or were sources of strength when you lost a family member.

Who are the nuns or other religious near and dear to your heart? They may have taught your children, ran a Catholic hospital, or delivered valuable parish ministry.

Those beloved priests and sisters form the basis for your membership inquiry.

Step 1
Have each member of your club write down the names of four priests or sisters whom they would be willing to call to ask them for the names of four family members who live in your diocese and whom they think could be good Serrans. You can use the following suggested form:

Priest or Sister’s Name ___________________________
Current Parish ______________________
Reason you are close friends/family _____________________________________________

Step 2
Have your club’s Membership Team collect and collate the names submitted from all members and remove duplicates.

Step 3
Once duplicates are removed, the Membership Team will then return to each member their list of priests and sisters for contact.

Step 4
Contact each priest or sister on your list using the following script or something similar:

Hi Father (Sister). This is ________ and I’m calling to chat with you for 2-3 minutes. As you know, I have deep appreciation for my Catholic faith. I also enjoy being a Serran and helping with our mission to promote vocations to priesthood and religious life. We are holding a Serra club membership drive to find the next generation of Serra leaders. I would like to ask you to share the names of a handful of your relatives or friends who live in our diocese that you think would consider joining our prayer and action team. When would be a good time to call you back to acquire their names, phone numbers, street addresses, and email addresses?

Step 5
Call back the priests or sisters who have given their consent to be contacted again. Write down the following in-
formation provided by the priest or sister, and give it to your club’s Membership Team within a week:

**Family Member Name**

_______________________________________________

**Relationship (sibling, nephew, cousin etc.)**

_________________________________

**Street address (with City, State, Zip)**

_______________________________________________

**Phone** ______________________________

**Email** _________________________________________

**Current parish** ____________________________

**City** _______________________________

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**Williamson County**

*Continued from page 5*

monthly Serra board meetings and to become future board members. Many of the new members are younger and are already very active with volunteer positions.

“For example, Judy and Ken Gordon became members in November 2017, and joined the board in June 2018 as Communications vice presidents,” says Guthrie. “They are responsible for bringing in seven new members this year!”

As with many Serra clubs, Williamson County faces an aging membership challenge. From a practical care standpoint, the club offers carpool or driving for those who are not able to drive to the evening meeting.

The Serra Club of Williamson County is unique in that it covers one county only, encompassing four parishes in and around Franklin, Tennessee. All four parishes are represented on our Serra Board. This geographic arrangement, plus the fact that Catholics represent a very small minority in the area, promotes a feeling of community within the club. This is further strengthened by monthly potluck dinner meetings where members try to “out-cook” each other.

“These dinners are very positive and fun,” adds Guthrie.

“We all look forward to seeing one another and leave renewed in our mission to pray and work for vocations.”

**Guthrie offers a few specific bits of advice for clubs looking to grow their membership:**

• Schedule the meetings at a convenient time for your local membership needs.

• Keep the dues LOW so that it is possible for anyone to be a member.

• Include women/spouses in the club.

• And most importantly, extend a personal invitation to friends/prospects to attend a monthly meeting.

After working around the clock to help put on a successful and memorable Serra International convention in Nashville, on top of surpassing lofty membership goals, you'd think the Serra Club of Williamson County could rest on their laurels for a while. Not a chance – they're still pushing forward, having recently expanded into a new parish and already laid some groundwork for Hispanic membership outreach.

Serra Club of Williamson County, we salute you!
As of this writing, Serra’s United States Council is supporting the formation process of several clubs. The Serran mission is coalescing in very early stages of formation spearheaded by new groups in New Orleans and Shreveport, Louisiana; Yakima, Washington; Superior, Wisconsin; Chicago, Illinois; and Kansas City, Kansas. Already working toward charter are clubs in formation in Rapid City, South Dakota, and Springfield - Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

Serra USA Council Past President Greg Schwietz and Membership Vice President John Halloran are deeply involved in this process of bringing the vocations intentions of the vocation directors, bishops, and potential Serrans in these areas to fruition. Past President Schwietz in particular is traveling extensively to these locations to support the hard work of existing Serrans in the field laying the foundation for new clubs.

The Serran Magazine asked Past President Schwietz what he’s learned from observing these efforts to create new clubs in today’s Church. Here’s what he reported.

Dioceses interested in establishing Serra clubs see the value of a national, established organization with local representation through the club structure that will enhance and elevate the call to priesthood and consecrated religious life to be a noble, worthy, exciting, and fulfilling life-long service to God’s people. Supporting and sustaining a culture for religious vocations is our great mission, and no one does it with more focus, comprehensiveness, energy or legacy than Serra and its many local clubs.

We are learning that while there are good intentions regarding starting a Serra club, so much of a successful, sustainable club start-up depends upon finding and recruiting many committed and capable Catholic leaders. In addition, the assistance of an extension team from a nearby Serra club makes a tremendous difference in how fast the new club gets on its feet and can stand alone.

It is important that new clubs in formation meet regularly and get their feet wet by getting to work on some easy projects. We find that encouraging the use of one or more of the Serra Spark activities, most notably using some of the easier programs, such as establishing a 31 Club vocations calendar, begin to give the new club a sense of purpose that is beyond just recruitment. We find that the sooner the work is begun, well before the charter date, the more successful the new club will be in attracting new prospective members.

At the most recent National Conference of Diocesan Vocations Directors (NCDVD) in Phoenix last September, Serra leaders in attendance spoke to many vocations directors about Serra and its proven potential to positively impact the support their vocations effort. Here’s what we told them:

• First, if you have what you consider to be a vibrant and energetic Serra club in your diocese, ask the club to do more for you. You can expect more from them, and Serra clubs ‘on the grow’ will embrace the challenges.
• Second, if you have a Serra club in your diocese, but that club is weak, then contact us to help you revitalize Serra in your area.

• Third, if you do not currently have a Serra club in your diocese, contact us to help you start one. In addition to great, time-tested vocations programs for fostering and affirming religious vocations, local Serra clubs also provide necessary "boots on the ground" to provide personal support and resources to begin or support current activities.

• Finally, Serrans do all this in the context of praying, faith-loving communities.

If your club is looking to strengthen its relationships with your local ordinary, or if you are considering forming a new club – which every district should be doing in support of Serra International President Biscardi’s goals – you can use the three points listed above when you talk to the vocations director and bishop in your area.

Serra may well be the best kept secret in the work of vocations, but it is becoming increasingly less so, as Church leaders become more aware of the power of an active Serra club or clubs in their dioceses. When the Holy Spirit inspires you to start a new Serra club where none exists, arm yourself with your own club’s portfolio of successful activities and press clippings. Show this to the local ordinary, and be sure to bring a copy of the SPARK Sampler. Finally, a wonderful resource for this effort is the Organizing a New Serra Club Manual, which can be downloaded from the Membership Materials page at www.serraus.org.

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**In the Footsteps of Saint Junípero Serra: California Mission Trail Pilgrimage**

A pilgrimage tour of seven California missions is planned for all who stay after the Serra Rally, starting on Sunday, January 20 and ending on Wednesday, January 23 with a flight home on January 24. Coordinated by Canterbury Pilgrimages and led by Fr. Jim Heyd of Chicago, this will make the 2019 the most special Rally yet. Connect to your Serran spirituality like never before when you treat yourself to this California Mission Trail pilgrimage.

Find out more at www.serraus.org
Serra’s USA Council’s popular annual Serra Rally event is moving to Ventura in 2019!
Expect a super-charged leadership and inspirational weekend in a place infused by the spiritual presence of our patron, Saint Junípero Serra. Register at www.serraus.org

REGISTER BY DEC. 17 AND SAVE $50 OFF THE REGULAR REGISTRATION FEE PRICE OF $340