



# SERRA CLUB of MELBOURNE Newsletter

January 2020

## FEBRUARY MEETING

The Mass and Meeting for February will be held on Wednesday 19th February, the third Wednesday in the month, instead of the 4th Wednesday. The reason for this is that 26th February is Ash Wednesday, and the club wants this occasion to be a great time in our history. This club was chartered in January 1970, and the initial meeting to establish Serra International in Australia was held in November 1967 at the home of Frank James and the decision was taken to launch Serra in Australia.

The first meeting to form a Serra Club was held at the Elizabeth Hotel Melbourne in February 1968 following Mass at St Francis' Church Melbourne.

Planning proceeded and Serra was formally introduced into Australia two years later. Serra was introduced into the Archdiocese of Sydney by Frank James, Kevin Lynch and Fr Brian O 'Dwyer. The Serra Club of Sydney was chartered on 27th January 1970. The Serra Club of Melbourne was chartered on 28th January 1970.

Over the following years, Serra Clubs were established in other Australian cities and in New Zealand.

All Serrans should be gratefully and prayerfully disposed towards Paul Mariani Junior from Los Altos, California. Without his persistence and encouragement, Serra may not have had a local presence.

Subject to other commitments, Archbishop Peter A Comensoli has accepted the invitation to be the Principal Celebrant.

Members must hope and pray that this milestone will be the catalyst that will give incentive to Catholics to accept the challenge of Jesus Christ that we must pray for 'labourers to come into the vineyard.'

The seminaries in Australia are currently training the largest number of men they have had for some considerable time, but; and there is always a but, our parishes are still relying on priests who should be able to retire, but are forced to continue on with even some who are struggling with ill health. We should thank God that these men do still want to serve. However, the need to support our priests and religious has never been greater. It is not easy for them to defend our faith, with the scandals that have been caused by some men, even though they are a minority. This must be a crushing burden for them, and so we should always defend priests, and support them. This is the very least that we should be doing. We must take every opportunity to refute unwarranted criticism, and not be the one 'to cast the first stone.'

In the 1980's there were ten clubs in Victoria, and this has now decreased to only four, Like the priesthood, Serrans are also ageing, and have difficulty in inspiring younger Catholics to take up this challenge.

Serra has been endorsed by every Pope since its inception, and there are bishops in Australia who are asking the SCANZSPAC Board to come and establish a club in their diocese. Every Serran should look out for prospective members, and invite men and women to a meeting, to let them see and hear the need for prayer, and what **our support does** for those who have accepted God's call.

## RETREAT AND SEMINARY VISIT

The Annual Serra District 89 Retreat has been booked at Holy Cross Retreat Centre, Serpells Road Templestowe, where we have been now for several years. The date is Saturday 28th March 2020. Bishop Terry Curtin DD will be the Retreat Master. This has been timed to coincide with the Serra members being invited to attend Mass and lunch at Corpus Christi College Seminary, on Sunday 29th March. This joint weekend will now be the third year that this has been arranged, and it certainly has proved very popular. It is vital that all members are advised of the dates so that they can make provision for it.

## DECEMBER MEETING

What a great occasion the December Mass and Meeting was. Bishop Peter Elliott was the Principal Celebrant, along with Club Chaplain, Fr Gerard Dowling, and Fathers Clem Cafarella, Barry Tobin, John O'Reilly, and Deacon Brian Murling.

A total of 33 were present, including Sisters Mary Batchelor, Delia Donohue, Margaret Fields and Fiona Shanahan, with members of the Serra Club of Oakleigh Deanery and other guests.

Bishop Peter delivered a wonderful Homily reproduced with permission.

### MARY IMMACULATE, OUR LADY OF GUADALOUPE

Bishop Peter J. Elliott

In prosperous countries pregnancy has become a sign of contradiction. On the street or at the supermarket the pregnant woman may draw scowls or smirks. She is even the butt of cynical comments - the cruel prattle of a sterile society, shamefully indifferent to its dangerously low birth-rate.

Yet there is no greater sign of hope than the expectant mother. She is the "one who waits" for the pain and joy of childbirth. She affirms the strength of womanhood, cherishing the living hope slowly taking form in her womb, or "beneath her heart" as St John Paul II put it so well in *Evangelium Vitae*.

Therefore, at the very heart of Advent, the Church sets before us one unique pregnant woman. On December 8<sup>th</sup>, she points us all towards Christmas. She is the "great sign" of hope, Mary Immaculate.

### THE PREGNANT MADONNA

Mary is rarely presented in Christian art as a pregnant woman, that is, until you look closely at one of her most widely reproduced images, the holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico City. This unusual image was mysteriously printed on the cloak or *tilma* of the poor indigenous man, St. Juan Diego, in 1531. It is the central object of devotion in the most visited Marian shrine on our planet, where Mass is celebrated twelve hours each day, on the hour!

To see Mary's image in the modern basilica, built in a brutal style in the 'Seventies of the last century, you get on a moving walkway, such as is found at airports, and you glide past, one in a continuously gazing or gaping crowd. Better to step back and look more carefully at the simplicity and mystery of this female figure.

Here is a strong young woman, of Aztec countenance and small stature; her head is inclined in humility, her fingers are gently joined. At first sight it is a typical sixteenth century representation of the Immaculate Conception, but here Mary is pregnant. In the same era, the Spanish mystic, St. John of the Cross evoked this in a poem:

*"With the divine Word made pregnant,  
the Virgin walks this way,  
would that you might let her stay with you."*

#### THE "GREAT SIGN" OF HOPE

Chapter 7 of the Book of Revelation presents the same image: the pregnant woman is a "great sign in heaven". She is clothed in the sun, crowned with stars the moon beneath her feet, details later added to the Mexican image. But there is a paradox here. How can we combine the celestial queen of the Book of Revelation and the obscure village maiden of the Gospel infancy narratives?

We turn to one of those narratives for the key. St Luke tells us that this maiden, perhaps only sixteen years old, was hailed by her older cousin as "The mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:43). That is a royal title reserved for the "queen mother", the king's mother or "great lady" who ranked first after the king in the royal families of the Middle East in the time of Christ.

The Eastern royal title affirms that this maiden is the human being on whom all history is poised. Through her, the Messiah King will come to save his people. His reign depends on the consent of this young Jewish woman, in an obscure village in a remote province of the Roman Empire, a virgin chosen to be the mother of the Messiah, an honour for which all Jewish women would long. Indeed she is a Queen.

## HOPE AND JUSTICE REIGN

The royal responsibility of Mary brings joy: “Blessed are you among woman and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” cries her cousin. But it also brings pain: “and a sword will pierce your heart.” predicts Simeon, the Temple prophet. If John the Baptist must offer his life to “prepare the way” for Jesus the Messiah, the chosen Mother must endure another kind of martyrdom to complete his journey.

At the cross, Mary, the second Eve will take her stand with the second Adam, Jesus her Son. Together they will be united in a healing work of obedience at the new tree of life. This mystical theology is a strong theme in the writings of the Fathers of the Church.

The fruit of the new order of Jesus and Mary is *justice*. Mary’s song the *Magnificat* is the cry of the hope of poor women: “...the almighty has done great things for me.” She sings a song of justice for the poor: the rich and powerful humbled, the poor and hungry fed, the just reign of the true Messiah is coming! Tremble as the Kingdom of Heaven breaks in!

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Virgin of Guadalupe as their sister. She raised them up, she called them to faith and brought about a new spirit of reconciliation. In a turbulent colonial era, people of all races and classes, indigenous and colonial, came together at her shrine.

**May we also find reconciliation in the Immaculate Virgin. May she bring the hope of the new life in her womb to our sterile and materialistic society. May she bring justice to wipe away indifference and complacency among all.**

Australians, especially moving towards true reconciliation with our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

### THE ONE WHO WAITS

Mary Immaculate is the Advent reminder of how God prepared the way for his coming in flesh among us, the Incarnation. All the saving events in Israel, the sufferings of God's chosen people, those prophecies and dreams led up to one perfect point, to the Woman, the new Eve. Mary immaculate is God's new creation, God's new beginning.

Free from original sin from the first instant she existed in Ann's womb, Mary is free to love, free to give, unimpeded by human failings. By her consent, she is no mere "instrument" and yet her consent in innocence brings her deeper suffering, for she will become the "Queen of Seven Swords", as Chesterton put it. In a fallen world, the innocent ones suffer most. She is a person whose consent to a divine plan is a "yes" to greater risks and more acute pain. Yet the faithful one chosen to be the Mother of the Lord waits expectantly to travel South with Joseph, from Nazareth down to Bethlehem.

This is why mothers best understand Advent. They know how to wait and hope, as they sense their time drawing nearer. So, through Mary immaculate, we catch the breathless anticipation of Mother Church crying out with godly impatience: "COME, LORD JESUS! DO NOT DELAY!"

### **Deceased Members of the Serra Club of Melbourne All these men and women contributed so much to Serra.**

<b>Judge Arthur Adams</b>	<b>1982</b>
<b>Harry Beven</b>	<b>1995</b>
<b>Jack Canavan</b>	<b>1994</b>
<b>Hugh Carr</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Jim Carroll</b>	<b>1997</b>
<b>Pat Church</b>	<b>1989</b>
<b>Jack Clements</b>	<b>1992</b>
<b>John Clifford</b>	<b>1998</b>
<b>Bill Cook</b>	<b>1979</b>
<b>Keith Coster</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Kevin Croagh</b>	<b>2018</b>

<b>Peter Farewell</b>	<b>1994</b>
<b>Leo Fitzgerald</b>	<b>1998</b>
<b>Roger Gheller</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Arthur Griffiths</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Bryan Hart</b>	<b>1996</b>
<b>Wal Hollier</b>	<b>1998</b>
<b>Kevin Hurley</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Frank James</b>	<b>1995</b>
<b>Marie Johnson</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Jim Kennedy</b>	<b>1988</b>
<b>Noel Larkins</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Peter Larkins</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Jim Malane</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Richard Malshowski</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Br. Michael McMurray</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Phil Meade</b>	<b>1999</b>
<b>Pat Melia</b>	<b>1997</b>
<b>Leo Melville</b>	<b>1994</b>
<b>Leo O'Bree</b>	<b>2001</b>
<b>John O'Connor</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Joe O'Donohue</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>John Phillips</b>	<b>1982</b>
<b>Pat Piggott</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Bill Pringle</b>	<b>1995</b>
<b>Bill Sage</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Pat Scarlett</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Ralph Sierakowski</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Mary Simpson</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Jim Smith</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Brian Stegley</b>	<b>1974</b>
<b>Phil Sullivan</b>	<b>2001</b>
<b>Harry Thalmann</b>	<b>1998</b>
<b>Les Treloar</b>	<b>1995</b>
<b>Tom Walshe</b>	<b>2000</b>

**NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

Feb 19th 50th Anniversary  
 March 25th St. Catherine's Church, 2 Buchan Street, Moorabbin  
 April 28th Rosary 6.15 pm. Mass 6.30 pm. followed by Dinner  
 Meeting in the Sweeney Centre.

**SATURDAY MORNING MASS for VOCATIONS**

January	St Catherine Labourè, Moorabbin	8.30am
February	St Mary's, Hampton	8.30am
March	St Leonard's, Glen Waverley	9.15am
April	St Joseph's, Elsternwick	10.00am

**MASS ROSTER**

	<b>February</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>April</b>
<b>Reader:</b>	John	Frank	Anne
<b>Prayers of the Faithful:</b>	Anne	Christine	Dan
<b>Offertory Procession:</b>	Guests	Max/Anne	Jo/John
<b>Minister of Communion:</b>	Concelebrants	Dan/John	Frank/Terry
<b>Meals Clean Up: All Members urged to assist.</b>			

**REMEMBER ..... to say the Serran Prayer ... DAILY**