



SERRA CLUB of MELBOURNE Newsletter

April/July 2023

NEW MEMBER

The Serra Club of Melbourne welcomed the induction of a new member, Teresa Meyer, at the March meeting. This was a very welcome event, as club numbers have been falling because of illness or death. We hope and pray that we are able to encourage several more to join, as the need is so great, with some parishes being joined to neighboring parishes, as a result of the fall in vocations.

SERRA SOCIAL

It is not really a social, but it is planned to have a social and fundraising event on Sunday 17th September at St Joseph's Chelsea. It will be in the afternoon, approximately 2pm to 5pm, with good food a silent auction and raffles, so you will need your wallet. Please note the date.

SEMINARY VISIT

The Annual visit to Corpus Christi Seminary was held on Sunday 12th March. Because of COVID, the clubs were unable to attend, and so it was a great opportunity to renew contacts that members had with some of the Seminarians, particularly for members from Bendigo, as there were two men who were cousins, and nephews of Wilma McCormack.

A total of 29 Serrans were in attendance, representatives from all four clubs, and it gave an opportunity to meet the new Rector, Fr Cameron Forbes STL, who is no stranger to Serrans, as he had been a member of the Seminary Staff previously. Father welcomed the members attendance, and invited Melbourne Club President, John Short, to explain Serra to the Seminarians.

It is very well patronized, and clergy from other Denominations are also invited, with attendance usually about 100 or more in total.

John thanked Fr Cameron and outlined the aims and objects of Serra International. This included details of the size of Serra which has over 1,100 clubs in 47 countries on six continents, reflecting the universal church. There are seven clubs in Australia, with 4 in Victoria, and 3 in N.S.W.

John also introduced and congratulated the Chaplain of the Serra Club of Melbourne, Fr Gerard Dowling, and outlined his extraordinary achievements in conducting his radio program. Fr Gerard celebrated his 90th Birthday last year, and a thanksgiving Eucharist was celebrated at the Church of St Anne, Sunbury on 11th September together with Fr Kevin Dillon and Fr Jackson Saunders who concelebrated Mass with him. Fr Dillon spoke wonderfully well about Fr Gerard's priestly service including outreach to countless numbers of people through the medium of radio with his Sunday evening program. On Father's Day this year, Fr Gerard will be celebrating 50 years of his radio program, which is a wonderful achievement.

There are a few areas of activity that the members of Serra International are engaged in to encourage and support vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life.

Firstly, our commitment to prayer.

His Holiness, Pope Francis, reminds us 'that vocations are born in prayer and only in prayer can they persevere and bear fruit.

Members of Serra International pray daily for vocations and encourage others to pray for vocations through '31 Prayer Clubs' where people attend an extra Mass each month and pray daily for vocations.

The Melbourne Club has the privilege of attending Saturday morning Masses each month at 12 different Parishes in the region with a special devotion to pray for vocations. The Club very much appreciates the warm welcome from the Parish Priests, consecrated men and women and parishioners of these parishes in support of this devotion.

Serra Clubs typically have monthly Club meetings which may also include Mass and guest speakers on relevant topics.

Oakleigh Deanery has the proud tradition of a Travelling Chalice which is taken home by a family each week and is used as a central focus to stimulate conversation and encourage prayer for vocations. Which shows the importance of Parish encouragement for vocations.

Serra Club members are actively involved in Parish life, including vocation related activities and programs, which, among other things, helps to create a positive environment in which vocations can flourish.

Thirdly, we believe that it is important to explicitly recognize the wonderful work that priests and religious do in our community day in and day out, often in a very quiet and unassuming way in the communities in which they serve, to thank you for the sacrifices that you make and to re-affirm to you the vital importance of your vocation. We do this through, for example, Appreciation Lunches or Dinners and Jubilarian activities including the forwarding of cards to priests and consecrated men and women on the occasion of their significant anniversaries (around 250 cards per annum in the SCANZSPAC region which covers Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific).

There is also the importance of financial support, especially in relation to education and training.

Serra members support fundraising activities including those related to the Corpus Christi Seminary and for the Priests Support and Education Fund (e.g. annual Archbishop's dinner organized by the Knights of the Southern Cross in Melbourne). Sale Club hold an annual Sports Day which provides great support to the Sale region.

Support is also provided through the Serra Australia Foundation. The Foundation has a long history of over 40 years providing funds supporting programs which foster, encourage and support vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. These activities are either undertaken by Serra Clubs themselves or referred by the Clubs to the Foundation for consideration and support. The Foundation has supported a wide range of activities over the years including support for the expansion of facilities at the Corpus Christi Seminary, assistance with training and education and helping the Vocations Office of the Archdiocese of Melbourne with various initiatives including the support of young men discerning their vocation to the priesthood. In 2023,

the Foundation is also supporting Chaplains and young pilgrims attending World Youth Day in Lisbon. The long-term objective of the Foundation is to have sufficient funds to contribute directly to the education of priests and consecrated men and women.

Finally, John thanked the seminarians for being open to their calling to study for a vocation to the priesthood and for responding so positively to that calling, and for the invitation to be with you today and for your generous hospitality. He wished everyone all the very best in the coming year.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

April 26th St. Catherine's Church, 2 Buchan Street, Moorabbin
 May 24th Rosary 6.15 pm. Mass 6.30 pm. followed by Dinner
 Meeting in the Sweeney Centre.
 June **NO MEETING.** Some members at International Convention.
 July 26th

SATURDAY MORNING MASS for VOCATIONS

May	St Joseph's. Chelsea	9.00am
June	St Peter's, Clayton	9.00am
July	St Finbar's, Brighton East	9.30am
August	St Anthony's. Glen Huntly	9.15am

MASS ROSTER:

	<i>April</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>
Reader:	John	Anne	Frank
Prayers of the Faithful:	John	Anne	Frank
Offertory Procession:	-	-	-
Minister of Communion:	Frank	Christine	Co-Celebrants

Meals Clean Up: All Members urged to assist.

REMEMBERto say the Serran Prayer... DAILY