



December 2023/March 2024

SERRA CLUB of MELBOURNE Newsletter

FATHER GERARD DOWLING

Our Chaplain, Fr Gerard Dowling, of the Serra Club of Melbourne, very sadly, died on November 26th. He was 90 years of age, and has been in frail health for several years, even though he enjoyed his continued involvement with Serra, and the many other organisations with which he was involved, especially his role as a counsellor on the radio.

Father commenced as Chaplain in February 2003. He was Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, and Fr (now Bishop) Les Tomlinson was the then Chaplain of our club, and so it was suggested that they could exchange roles, to which he agreed.

While it had not been a close association Father had had contact with Serra for many years, and was the celebrant at the first Mass to honour the parents and relatives of priests and religious. This was at St Michael's North Melbourne on Trinity Sunday 1986. He also concelebrated with Archbishop George Pell on the first occasion that the Mass was transferred to the Cathedral in 1999.

On his appointment as Dean to the Cathedral, Fr Dowling decided to institute a barbeque for priests on Melbourne Cup Day, and Serrans had been involved with assisting with this barbeque each year. The aim of the day was to provide the opportunity for priests to get together in a relaxed manner.

Father outlined how from an early age he had the desire to be a priest, and after entering Corpus Christi Seminary at Werribee, he was ordained in 1958.

After serving as assistant priest in various parishes, he was asked by Archbishop Mannix to undertake studies at the University, from where he graduated as a Social Worker in 1963. He then began working for the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau—now Centrecare - and was still doing the same work of counselling, and must be the only priest in the Archdiocese

who was still doing the task to which he was appointed by Archbishop Mannix.

In 1973 he was offered the opportunity of one hour a week on radio, at 11pm on a Sunday. It was so successful, it was extended to three hours a week. And this had also continued until just recently.

He was also approached by "The Advocate", the Catholic Diocesan paper, to write a column and then continued to write for its successor, "Kairos", until its demise.

He considered he was in a very privileged position in his role as a counsellor, and had established links of love and trust with many of his clients.

Father has always said that Serrans must never underestimate the value of their role in encouraging and sustaining vocations to the priesthood and religious life. There are a lot of priests who do not get the encouragement and support that they need.

SEMINARY VISIT

Each year the Serra Clubs of District 89 has been invited to join the Seminary Staff and Students for Mass and lunch at Corpus Christi Seminary. The current invitation is for Sunday 10th March 2024. Mass will be at 11.30am in Sacred Heart Church Carlton. Followed by lunch at the seminary.

This is always a most joyous occasion, with the opportunity to renew acquaintances with the staff and seminarians, and to meet the young men who have joined in 2024.

If you wish to attend, you have to contact Frank McCulloch to reserve a place.

K.S.C. DINNER

This is another annual event that is not only a very enjoyable outing, but also the occasion to meet other like minded Catholics, including many priests and religious.

The date is Friday 30th August, and it is assumed that it will, once again, be held at Moonee Valley Racecourse.

APPRECIATION LUNCH

Once again the Serra Club of Melbourne will arrange a Luncheon for our priests and religious, and to demonstrate our appreciation for all that they do for both our religious life and their friendship over the years.

The function will be held at the Bentleigh R.S.L. on Wednesday 11th September, commencing at noon for 12.30pm. Club Secretary, Frank McCulloch, will be sending invitations and if you wish to invite someone, please contact Frank.

ORDINATIONS

Three men were ordained to the priesthood for the Melbourne Archdiocese at St Patrick's Cathedral on Saturday 25th November.

The new priests are Fr Thomas Christie, Fr Peter Nguyen and Fr Tien Tran. Jean-Sebastien Géry was also ordained to the transitional diaconate, the penultimate step in the journey to becoming a priest.

During his homily, Archbishop Peter A Comensoli reminded the ordinands of what constitutes a vocation in Christ: "(St) Paul talks of charity, selflessness, gentleness, patience, unity and peace. We might firstly note just how closely these vocational elements harmonise with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

"They do not name tasks to be done, nor roles to be lived. Neither do they speak of a place or status within the Church. They are, instead, ways of living a life in Christ.

"For the four of you to be ordained today, either into the priesthood or diaconal life, (these) elements are the measure to which we are called.

REMEMBERto say the Serran Prayer... DAILY

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Dec 6th St. Catherine's Church, 2 Buchan Street, Moorabbin
 Jan NIL Rosary 6.15 pm. Mass 6.30 pm. followed by Dinner
 Feb 28th Meeting in the Sweeney Centre.
 March 27th .

SATURDAY MORNING MASS for VOCATIONS

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| Dec | St Joseph's, Springvale | 8.00am |
| Jan | St Catherine's, Moorabbin | 8.30am |
| Feb | Stella Maria, Beaumaris | 9.15am |
| April | St Leonard's, Glen Waverley | 9,15am |

MASS ROSTER:

| | <i>Jan</i> | <i>Feb</i> | <i>March</i> |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Reader: | Anne | Frank | John |
| Prayers of the Faithful: | - | - | - |
| Offertory Procession: | - | - | - |
| Minister of Communion: | John | Teresa | Anne |

Meals Clean Up: All Members urged to assist.