



Serra GB

focus

Christmas 2023



We wish all our Serrans and friends of Serra peace and joy for this Holy Christmas and an exciting and peace filled New Year.

To foster and promote vocations to the ministerial priesthood in the Catholic Church as a particular vocation to service, and to support priests in their sacred ministry.

To encourage and affirm vocations to consecrated religious life in the Catholic Church.

To assist its members to recognize and respond in their own lives to God's call to holiness in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

Consider joining our Serran apostolate contact the editor Alex Duncan: serra.glasgow@aol.com

Under the patronages of the His Eminence Most Reverend Vincent Cardinal Nichols and Most Reverend William Nolan Archbishop of Glasgow

For more information visit: <http://www.serragreatbritain.org.uk>



Christmas message from Chris Kelly President of Serra Great Britain

As President of Serra Great Britain, I wish to extend to you and your families a Happy and Holy Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

It would remis of me not to mention the conflict in the Holy Land, the birthplace of Our Lord. At this time of year, we usually focus on the joyful events in that part of the world instead we hear on a daily basis of the horrors of war. We reflect on the crises throughout the world where God's people are suffering the effects of war and indeed of climate change. We must keep them in our prayers and pray for the peace of Jesus to spare their suffering.

The Serra family in Great Britain has got smaller as some of our more senior members have passed onto the loving care of Our Lord. We pray for them and their families.

Encouragingly, we do have a number of new members who have joined us this past year. Our various vocations events have returned, following the covid period and surpassing with new ideas and programs. Please pray that our membership will increase this coming year enabling us to continue our necessary work in vocations promotion.

Finally, we keep in our thoughts and prayers all our priests and religious brothers and sisters, those who suffer poverty and strife, those who are troubled in mind and body. I wish all a Happy, Holy and Peaceful Christmas.

..... Chris

What is Christmas?

Christmas is an incredibly special time for the Catholics and indeed for Christians throughout the world. In many cultures you may not be Christian but still celebrate Christmas. People will join in for a good time. Every year, the festive season takes on a new level of joyful and frantic activity. Regrettably today, the true meaning of Christmas has been lost to a secularist society more intent on having good fun and a few days of work or school or burying heads in mobile phones or tablets. For many families, lots of preparation goes into making a perfect celebration but we should also remember to appreciate the real meaning of Christmas.

This 25th day of December signifies the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. So, what are we celebrating? Yes! It is a birthday. It is the birthday of Jesus Christ. The gift of God with us, Emmanuel. As Catholics we believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, The Christ, The Anointed one or the Saviour who came to become one like us to make us right with God after man had sinned against God.

When he was here on Earth as one like us, Jesus taught us how to live, how to love, how to pray. He taught us how to forgive and be peacemakers. Jesus told his disciples to greet people with peace when they entered homes. He said, "My peace I give you."

All of us have a longing for this peace especially today with a world at war through hate or misguided selfish values. But it is only when we embrace this gift of God's peace which is Jesus and when we allow it to live inside of us, then will it have an effect on others.

When true Peace comes and finds a home within you, you do not hurt anymore, you do not harm, or injure another person. It is then that we begin to work for love, justice and righteousness. That is the gift we celebrate at Christmas, the gift of true peace. Peace which the world cannot give, but it is the gift of God to us. The One whom God sent to restore peace to people everywhere is the Prince of Peace! Jesus, He is the ruler of Peace! For He is known from ages of old as Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace!

Today, our children are the most important people in this world. Teach them the values we should learn from this birthday. Teach them the value of peace and love, of justice and righteousness, not to hate or harm or injure one another. Teach them to forgive the misdeeds of others.

Christmas is the perfect opportunity for us to celebrate this peace of Our Lord's birth with our family and friends and to create joy and memories that will last forever. Give the greatest present of all, the peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ.



The Priests' Day Devotion

was founded by Father Paschal in the 1920's of
THE SALVATORIAN FATHERS, now at ABBOTS
LANGLEY, WATFORD, HERTS.

Father Paschal was an outstandingly zealous priest, who taught in one of the Salvatorian Junior Seminaries in the 1920's. He saw and realised the essential need of obtaining spiritual and material help for the students during the long years of training for the priesthood.

During his retreat in 1930 he first thought of the idea that every Catholic should be encouraged to help towards the education of poor students to the priesthood and to adopt them in their prayers.

In 1931 he discussed this matter with the Bishop of Berlin, who in turn spoke to the Princess of Saxony about it. Father Paschal met the Princess in 1933 and she suggested dedicating one day each month to prayers for priests and vocations.

Whilst praying in the Basilica of St. Paul in Rome in 1934, the good priest first thought of the idea of a Votive Mass in honour of Christ, the Eternal High Priest. He wrote out his ideas for presentation to the Holy Father. On November 21st, 1934, Pope Pius XI welcomed the plan saying "We heartily praise and bless the work. We repeat!" "The plan pleases us, We praise and bless it heartily." In 1935 he authorised a new votive Mass of "Jesus Christ the Eternal High Priest." From that time onwards, millions of leaflets explaining the Priests' Day Devotion have been distributed throughout the world with the blessing and warmest approval of many bishops and priests.

The Priests' Day Devotion This consists in setting aside one day each month, usually the first Thursday or the first Saturday, for prayers and sacrifices for holy priests and vocations. Holy Mass and for this intention.

Communion are offered for this intention. Sickness, sorrow, infirmity and happiness can all be turned into a prayer and offered to God, through Our Blessed Lady,

Throughout the Serra world we have our 31 club which was founded by Serra in Australia similar to the Priests' Day Devotion when we ask parishioners to choose a day each month when he or she would offer their mass for the priests, sisters, brothers, deacons and lay ministers and that future church vocations will be forthcoming from their community.

You will find more information on the [resources page](#) of our website.

The history of the Priests' Day Devotion finishes with a simple reflection "What is a priest?" and a "Prayer for priests."

What is a Priest?

He is "a man taken from amongst men."

He could be your brother, the boy next door, the man over the way. Like you he can smile and laugh, eat and sleep, be happy or sad. When he becomes a Priest, God gives him very special work.

He entrusts him with our souls that are going to live forever.

He will baptize; Teach us about God and our Faith.



He will offer Holy Mass and give us Our Lord in Holy communion.

He will free us from our sins in Confession.

He will Bless the young couple on their wedding day.

He will visit the sick and help us to live and die as God's friends.

He will go on praying for us long after we are dead.

He is always there to help, advise, guard and guide.

God gives no greater vocation to any man.

He gives it to very few. We can all share it by our prayers and sacrifices for holy priests and vocations.

Prayer for Priests

D I V I N E SAVI O U R, Jesus Christ, who has entrusted the salvation of the world to Priests, I offer Thee, through the hands of Thy most Holy Mother, all the prayers, works, sacrifices, joys and sorrows of this day for the sanctification of The Priests. Enrich them more and more with true priestly holiness. Give them generous apostolic hearts full of love for Thee and for Thy people. Bless and make fruitful their work, when they instruct the children, preach to the people, console penitents and assist the sick and the dying. Grant me a true spirit of faith and humble obedience, so that I may ever look upon the Priest as the representative of God. Amen

“From the Frontier.”

Our friend Sr Joachim of the Missionaries of Charity was asked to write a letter for publication in Fides, the Vatican's magazine for Catholic missionaries. We thought you might be interested in reading it as it exemplifies beautifully the work that she and her volunteers undertake.

Dear Friends

We have just had a wonderful experience of the care and concern of the Church, through the short visit of the Nuncio here in Ethiopia.



Dereje, Sr Joachim, Ethiopia, Abdella, Abp Antoine Camellieri (Nuncio) Tesamma, Bethlehem, Jesus

We live on the ‘frontiers of the Gospel’ in Gode, a place where the vast majority of the population are Muslim; there is a small presence of Orthodox and Evangelical communities, and a tiny presence of the Church in our mission of seven missionary Catholics, three of whom are volunteers.

Normally the Prefect of the local Church visits us every two weeks to celebrate Holy Mass and help us in our mission of making Christ present both through our work with vulnerable women and their children, and the work of transforming our desert through growing fruit and vegetables to make us more self-sustaining. For various reasons, Fr Angelo, had to be absent, a priest who had kindly offered to come for a few days had a death in the family, and without any replacement we ended up having no Mass for more than a month, and the Eucharist which was reserved in our tabernacle could only be broken into so many pieces.....

The nuncio’s visit was a joy for all of us and coincided with the rain which we had hoped would fall since mid-October, we were well into the rainy season and had had very little till this point in time. So we received both natural rain and supernatural grace at the same time: Holy Mass, homilies on the Word of God, and the possibility of confession. We enjoyed hearing from the nuncio of the life of the Church in different places, to be refreshed with the news of the latest Apostolic Letter of the Holy Father on St Therese of Lisieux



Although the visit was only two days, the visit of the nuncio, broke our sense of isolation and helped us to feel part of the Universal Church again. We are grateful that the nuncio braved the plague of grasshoppers who arrived in the wake of the rains, and though his visit was short we are so very grateful.

Once the nuncio had left, we returned to some of the practical challenges that were brought on by the welcomed rainfall. It is usual that when rain falls heavily, as it did for a few days, the local electricity from the town cuts out, and whilst we have a generator, the high cost of petrol means that we have to be careful, and anyway it can’t substitute all our electrical needs, one of which is to be able to pump water for our needs and to be able to pump 20,000 litres of water a day for our neighbours in the prison.

Of course, in a place like Gode, electricians are few and far between, and so the simple task of calling an electrician to fix the problems caused by the electrical ‘outage’ was a challenge in itself; finding out what the exact problem was, another and then discovering the way to fix it yet another! Every missionary knows the functioning or malfunctioning of



the structures of the mission can be so challenging and downright depressing as you see all the resources of the mission being absorbed in repairs and unforeseen costs, that it is easy to lose sight of the mission itself, and so the visit of the nuncio was a great help keeping our minds and hearts fixed on the mission which, as Pope Francis reminded us in his Mission Sunday Message, “the Lord is greater than all our problems, above all if we encounter them in our mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the world. For in the end, this mission is his...” This was also brought home to us by the response to our litany of lamentations to our Prefect, Fr Angelo, the simple sentence, “Jesus is risen!”

Read Sr Joachim’s letter [here](#)

The Final profession

7th October, 2023. A few members of our South Herts Serra club were guests at the final profession of two young ladies, Sr Maria Thùy Duong and Sr Maria Tâm Nguyen for the Dominican Congregation of St. Catherine of Siena at Rosary Priory Sacred Heart Bushey.



It was an historic occasion because these two young women were the first Vietnamese to join the Congregation. In the presence of family members, sisters from South Africa, Rome, and England. Sr. Ann Cunningham, the Congregation Prioress, formally accepted the final profession of Srs. Thùy and Tâm during the celebratory Mass. The chief celebrant was Fr. Joseph Thang Nguyen OP assisted by Fr. Huong Tran OP. Also present were our faithful chaplains Frs Leo Elgar OP. and Anthony Pellegrini. Sr. Ann thanked them for their ongoing support and friendship. Because our lovely chapel is small, we could not invite our many friends to the ceremony and the celebratory meal that followed.



Having given their lives to the service of Our Lord, we wish them the great joys they will receive and assure them of our prayers. We praise God for a new beginning and value your prayerful support.

Courtesy of our parish priest Fr. Jim McNicholas and an able group of technicians, several hundreds of people from all over the world could view the profession online. [here](#)

A Vigil for vocations



The Serra club of Glasgow held their recent Vigil for Vocations on September 8th in the parish of St James the Great, Crookston, Glasgow.

With us for our two hour event following our Mass for vocations celebrated by Dean Martin Kane, parish priest of St James the Great and adoration were Fr Darren Meslan SSS of the Blessed

Sacrament Fathers, Liverpool and Sr Catherine Farrelly from the sisters of the Gospel of Life, Glasgow. Both gave an interesting insight to their own vocation and that divine call which asks each of us to consider in our lives the possibility of religious life.

The evening was considered by many attendees particularly first time attenders as a great experience which seemed to pass too quickly. The vigil was concluded with Night prayer and Benediction in honour of Our Lady's birthday.



Our Vigils which are popular throughout Great Britain and indeed the world usually follow a programme of: Eucharistic celebration followed by Adoration, silent reflection, Rosary for vocations, our guest speakers focusing on priestly and consecrated religious vocations, concluding with Night prayer and Benediction.

Should you wish to have a vigil in your area please contact your nearest Serra club.

“Vocations 28 Club”

Not to be confused with our 31 Club programme, A recent promotion by one of our primary schools, the staff of St Nicholas primary, Glasgow, have written beautiful vocation prayers which are recited daily by their pupils. [The 28 club](#)

Each year of the 7 years of primary classes will take one of the 4 weeks of the month and lead the prayers for vocations. It is our hope and prayer that this be adopted by other primary schools. Contact your nearest Serra club for more information.....*Ricky*

The Serra GB National AGM

Our annual Serra GB council meeting changed this year. Normally held at a central location for our members from north and south of the border, this year was held using the Zoom platform thus eliminating the costs of travel and accommodation. Our National chaplain Fr Tony Cogliolo offered Sunday morning mass and intentions for the success of our meeting and indeed for our work in promoting vocations throughout Great Britain.

Following on from last year we can report that our membership from some areas had fallen but had increased with new members in the north and south of the country. Importantly our vocations activities, considering our small numbers returned to a precovid level albeit with some modifications reflecting the national changes particularly in our school events.

Communications via this newsletter and our website showed an increase in the number of people enjoying our resources pages using our various vocations programmes within their homes and parishes.

Our Serra GB board and slate of officers were agreed by vote and will continue as last year. Considering this change to virtual, we would think that there is still a need to meet physically but also enjoyed seeing more faces than would be possible with travel.

Our AGM of 2024 will take place on Sunday 6th October by a physical gathering or zoom?

Our past National Chaplain to Serra Great Britain for over 10 years and chaplain to the Serra club of Manchester for over 30 yrs, Fr Tony Dearman celebrated his diamond jubilee on Saturday 28th October.



Our photograph taken in the chapel of Nazareth House Care Home where today he is the chaplain. Fr Tony is third from the right while third from the left is Fr David Quiligotti who succeeded him in Manchester. We wish him and all those pictured “Ad Multos Annos”

The changes

In Glasgow we sincerely thank our past chaplain Fr Ross Campbell for his guidance and support over the past ten years. He has now moved on to pastures new, as parish priest of two parishes in our West Dunbartonshire deanery. We will keep him in our prayers.

We welcome Fr Patrick Boyle our new Vocations Director, recently appointed by our archbishop as Chaplain to Glasgow Serra. Affectionally known as Fr Paddy, he is well known to Glasgow Serrans having accompanied us as seminarian and priest on many of our events and vocations programmes over the years.

We also welcome Canon Gerry Conroy our new University chaplain who will continue to work very closely with Glasgow Serra.

Thailand Convention Recap

You can watch the video replay of Serra's 80th International Convention in Chiang Mai by visiting this playlist, featuring 5 Keynote speakers, 3 masses, the global rosary, and an inspiring session of young Serrans. All above were possible with the generous support of [LiCAS News](#), the Catholic news agency for the Church in Asia.

Join us for Serra's 81st International Convention in New Orleans, 8th-11th August 2024



The perfect destination for an unforgettable convention! Immerse yourself in the rich Catholic heritage of the city, explore the beautiful St. Louis Cathedral, stroll the renowned French Quarter, and savor delicious Cajun cuisine while connecting with Serrans from around the world! Keep up to date[here](#)



The Synod on Synodality eagerly expected since 2021 has now started with the gathering of some 365 Bishops religious and members of the laity from around the world.

We recall that the purpose of the Synod is not to produce documents, but to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands.

Download the [latest news from the Vatican](#)

A Serran “Rosary for vocations” can be downloaded [here](#): or our [web site](#): resources page.



Pray the Rosary with the intercession after each decade. “Lord grant us many holy priests and consecrated men and women and faithful married couples”.

Finish with Our Serran prayers for vocations:

Serran prayers for vocations.

O God, Who wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, grant we beseech You, through the intercession of Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, Saint Joseph, her spouse, Saint Junipero Serra, and all the saints, an increase in labourers for Your Church, fellow labourers with Christ to spend and consume themselves for souls, through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Serran Prayer for the Perseverance of Vocations

O God, You have constituted Your only-begotten Son, supreme and eternal priest, for the glory of Your majesty and the salvation of mankind: grant that those whom He has hosen ministers and dispensers of His mysteries, may be found faithful in fulfilling the ministry they have received

Serra International Rosary for Vocations



On the last Saturday of every month, you are invited to join with representatives from America, Europe, Asia and throughout the Serra world in a recitation of the Rosary for vocation. The Serra International Rosary continues Saturday Dec 30th at 2.00pm GMT continuing into 2024 on the last Saturdays of every month. Join us free, use Access Code: 314-315-91. at: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/314315981>

“Eucharistic Adoration for Vocations?”



Does your parish have adoration or Holy Hours for vocations?

It is during these quiet and prayerful times away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life that you can escape and concentrate, with the help of the Holy Spirit, on prayer, which will assist in the solving our daily problems.

“We must speak to God as a friend speaks to his friend, servant to his master; now asking some favour, now acknowledging our faults, and communicating to him all that concerns us, our thoughts, our fears, our projects, our desires, and in all things seeking his counsel.”

St. Ignatius of Loyola

"Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God." But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or "out of the depths" of a humble and contrite heart? He who humbles himself will be exalted; humility is the foundation of prayer, only when we humbly acknowledge that "we do not know how to pray as we ought," are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. "Man is a beggar before God."

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2559)

Get Started!

God is waiting for you. He will lead you to the path for which you were created.

He has the best plan for your life! "Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

Pope St. John Paul II

You can also browse through our resources page on our [website](#), to help you focus, particularly on your vocation in life or that of religious vocations, during that special time with Our Lord. Download and print off for your own or your parish use. Encourage prayer for all vocations.

An opportunity to join us internationally



The Serra Meets programme is now a routine webinar broadcast on the second Saturday of each month throughout 2023/24 with virtual lectures from leading clergy and

experts on the topic of Catholic vocations.

Our next Meets, Dec 9th, Jan 13th 2024, Feb 10th 2024, at 5.00pm GMT. Serra Meets broadcasts can be accessed at [Serra MEETS](#). All past talks are recorded and posted on the Serra International You tube channel, click this. [link](#) and make your choice. Patterned after a regular Serra meetings, Serra Meets events will open and close with prayer, featuring a notable keynote speaker, followed by a short business topic. Serra Meets is hosted by the US Council of Serra International

Holy Father's 60th World Day of Prayer for "Vocation: Grace and Mission"

The Holy father tells us "Within the Church, all of us are servants, in accordance with the variety of our vocations, charisms and ministries. Our common vocation to give ourselves in love develops and finds concrete expression in the life of lay men and women, devoted to raising a family as a small *domestic church* and working as a leaven of the Gospel to renew the different sectors of society; in the testimony of consecrated women and men who are completely committed to God for the sake of their brothers and sisters as a prophetic sign of the kingdom of God; in ordained ministers – deacons, priests and bishops – placed at the service of preaching, prayer and fostering the communion of the holy People of God. Only in relation with all the others does any vocation in the Church fully disclose its true nature and richness.

The Holy father offers the prayer that Saint Paul VI composed for the first World Day of Vocations, 11 April 1964

"O Jesus, divine Shepherd of souls, you called the apostles and made them fishers of men. Continue to draw to yourself ardent and generous souls from among the young, in order to make them your followers and your ministers. Give them a share in your thirst for the redemption of all... Open before them the horizons of the entire world... By responding to your call, may they prolong your mission here on earth, build up your Mystical Body which is the Church, and be 'the salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world'. The Holy [Father's message](#)



The New Serran Magazine

This New issue features the state of Serra and the vision for a dynamic future in vocations promotion with articles from throughout the Serran world online!

[HERE](#)

It's a Joke

A food critic visits a local restaurant to review its food for the local newspaper. The restaurant manager welcomes him and shows him to the table. The food is served and after a while, the food critic calls the owner to say that there is something missing from his bowl of soup. The owner asks whether it is too spicy or sweet or salty. When the food critic says no, the owner decides to taste the soup himself, but he can't find the spoon. "Yeah," says the critic "That's what's missing."

Serra clubs of Serra Great Britain.
**You can contact us by email or
telephone for information.**

District 60

Liverpool

We meet at 6.30pm 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Cenacle Convent, Tithebarn Grove, Lance Lane, Liverpool L15 6TW.

email; serra.liverpool@gmail.com tel: 0151 724 6249

Manchester

Contact email; serramanchester@gmail.com

tel; 01625 477 215

North Cheshire

Contact

email; serra.northcheshire@outlook.com

tel; 0161 973 3339

South Lancs

For further information on Serra club of South Lancs

email; secretary@serragreatbritain.org.uk

or tel: 0151 724 6249

District 62

South Hertfordshire.

We meet 2nd Tuesday of every month (except August)

7.30pm at Our Lady and St. Michael's Church, Crown Rise, Garston, Herts WD25 0NE.

email; serrasouthherts.co.uk tel; 01923 661692

District 63

Dunkeld

We meet last Tuesday of the month at 6 pm with Mass at 7pm at The Immaculate Conception, Lochee, Dundee DD2 3AP

email; serra.dunkeld@hotmail.com tel; 01382 322920

Glasgow

We meet 1st and 3rd Thursdays, August to June at 10.00am

Our Lady of Lourdes, thereafter at Millhill, Cardonald and University of Glasgow Chaplaincy (as programmed)

email; serra.glasgow@aol.com tel; 0141 571 8313

Paisley

For further information on Serra club of Paisley

email; secretary@serragreatbritain.org.uk

or phone: 07754 514318

Mary. Mother of vocations. Pray for us.
St Junipero Serra. Pray for us.



**Are you interested in supporting
and fostering
VOCATIONS**

**To the priesthood and
consecrated religious life?**



**Do you want to enhance
your own
SPIRITUAL LIFE
in the company of others?
Do you see the need for
PRAYER?
for an increase in priestly
vocations?**

**If the answer is Yes!
Contact your nearest Serra
club.**

**Send us Oh Lord many
active lay people to support
us in our prayer and work
for more vocations as
priests and religious.**

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