



# *Serra GB*

## *focus*



## *June 2024*



*“They were ordained by the laying on of hands”*

*(1 Timothy 4:14, 5:22)*

**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](mailto: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>*

# Why Serra?



Serra was founded in 1935 in Seattle in Washington State, USA. Becoming international in 1939, Our global Serra International office is in Chicago, responsible for over 12,000 members in 30+ countries in 6 continents.

We are recognised as the “Global lay apostolate for vocations in the Catholic Church.” and aggregated to the Dicastery for the Clergy and Pontifical work for Vocations and indeed work closely with the Directorate of the Pontifical work for Vocations in Rome.

Our mission is threefold:

**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 and

**To assist members** to recognise and respond in their own lives to God’s call to holiness in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

Where does the name originate. What do we do?

July 1<sup>st</sup> is the feast day of the man, Saint Junipero Serra, who inspired the foundation of Serra International. He was a Franciscan Missionary born in Petra, Majorca in 1713. Spending his early days at the nearby Franciscan school. Miguel Serra was quickly recognised for his intellectual abilities. Within a short time he became a novice in the Franciscan order taking the name Junipero after the beloved friend of St Francis. In 1749 he was sent to the missionary territories of the American West Coast where until the end of his life in 1785 he travelled north and south creating mission stations in what is the California of today. He founded some nine missions which have developed into such cities as San Francisco, San Diego, San Gabriel (Los Angeles) San Juan Capistrano, Monterey and Carmel where he is buried.

So why Serra? Each time Padre Serra reported to his superiors in Spain he said “Send me more priests”. Serra’s missionary life is the inspiration for Serra members throughout the world. His motto “Siempre Adelente!” Always go forward” has given us the motivation to expand our work worldwide.

We are there in Africa, America North and South, Asia, Oceania and of course here in Europe. Our members are generally recognised as Serrans in the dioceses and places where we work.

That work varies from country to country, America being the founding country we have the majority of our membership. There the work is in vocations awareness. In South America where we have some 2,000 members vocations are plentiful but predominantly come from the northern territories where the population is impoverished, our work there takes on a more supportive and resourceful role. That also applies to Africa. In Nigeria and Ghana for example vocations are

plentiful with some 3000 senior seminarians in Nigeria. Serrans there are very much in the role of providing resources for seminaries and seminarians. Our Serra International Foundation supports many projects throughout the world where the financial needs arise.

In Asia where Our Lord was born, a continent, which occupies two thirds of the world land area and has two thirds of the world’s population has less than 2% Catholics. We are there with some 500 Serrans in the Philippines, Thailand, Mynamar, Singapore, India and Pakistan. We are now progressing into China, very cautiously, being aware of the political tensions and persecution of our faith which exist there. The Bishops there welcome Serra with open arms. Serra’s mission to work in every country throughout the world in promoting vocations is exemplified strongly in Asia. Vocations are on the increase in Asia, so is Serran activity in their support. Australia and New Zealand, some 300 Serrans are there supporting the bishops and vocations directors in the work of vocations promotion. There the problems are very similar to those in Western Europe. So, let’s look at Europe.

Serra is well represented in Europe with some 1000 Serrans working from Italy, in Croatia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and Russia where Catholics are looked upon us as some odd religious sect. Great Britain of course we have representation in England and Scotland. I think you can divide Europe into two areas east and west. In the east we seem to have better results when talking statistics. I asked the question of the late a Polish Cardinal Grocholewski “Your Eminence how many seminarians do you have in Poland?” the reply “1000” my mouth fell in awe. You can imagine my thoughts coming from Scotland. Our numbers are just in the low hundreds. That is the difference between east and west albeit there are many reasons why we have such differences, nevertheless these problems have to be addressed.

The late Pope Benedict said of Europe” *No longer can we consider Europe as being the hub of Catholicism.* The problems in this secularist society is a disinterest in religion, a mentality and a culture that breeds immorality, short term thrills and happiness and little sense of service to others. However, I do believe that our young people are much better than suggested and can rise to the challenge of service and caring and love for others. Our task is to generate and cultivate these emotions with persistent enthusiasm and encouragement.

In St John Paul II apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* He made several very relevant statements in relation to vocations promotion. He said *‘Certainly, a generous commitment is needed - above all through insistent prayer to the Lord of the harvest’ because prayer moves the heart of God.* He placed emphasis on the need to implement an extensive plan of vocations promotion - the specific vocation of the laity and the promotion of forms of association. I think rather presumptuously that St John Paul II, since he had a great affection for our apostolate, was referring to us on that day with him in November of the Jubilee year of 2000

*Thank you for reading... Alex*



# Vigil for Vocations

Traditionally our Vigils for Vocations take place in Great Britain and indeed the Serra world on the Thursday or Friday preceding Vocations Sunday, The vigils, while centering around that date are ongoing throughout the year and National Vocations weeks in the various dioceses.

Every year Serra Glasgow hold their Vigil for Vocations particularly around that time when our Holy Father sends his message for Vocations Sunday, the fourth Sunday of Easter, encouraging vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

The Holy father's message and theme; "Called to sow seeds of hope and to build peace" for the 61<sup>st</sup> "World day of prayer for vocations" 2024 is now available [Here](#)

The Vigil having started in Glasgow in 1989 became a Serra International vocations programme in the year 2000 and is now celebrated throughout our country and the world at the same time thus praying and promoting vocations continually for some 24 hours. We know from various surveys that the number of parishes participating around the world is in the many thousands but started in our city of Glasgow.



In Glasgow for some thirty-five continuous years except for that dreadful year of Covid. Glasgow Serra has organised the Vigil in various parishes throughout the city. This year we focused on the parish of St Eunan's in the Dunbartonshire West Deanery of our Archdiocese, specifically the parish of our recently appointed chaplain to Serra and our Archdiocese Vocations director Fr Patrick Boyle.

Our Vigil held on the 19<sup>th</sup> April just before the Holy Father's vocation message for the following Sunday centering our hearts and minds on the need for vocations to the priesthood, deaconate and religious life, particularly in our own Archdiocese. Commencing with our themed vocations celebration of the Eucharist followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with Rosary



for Vocations and reflections on vocations, that night on the theme of Samuel's call and the conversion of St Paul

and concluding with night prayer and Benediction. There was of course the obligatory break for refreshments.



The one point in comment throughout our many years of doing these vigils is made by newer participants when leaving the vigil "The night was great and went so quickly" an indication of the success of the evening and hopefully their continued prayer to Our Lord to "Send more labourers into his harvest."



The vigils are one of our favourite programmes! Should you wish to have a vigil in your area contact your nearest Serra club for details .....Alex

## July 1<sup>st</sup> the feast day of our patron St Junipero Serra



Serra is named after St Junipero Serra, the Franciscan missionary born in Petra, Majorca, Spain who played a leading role in the early missionary work of our Church in Mexico and California. His feast day is 1<sup>st</sup> July frequently used as the first day of our nine day novena. Pray this nine day novena to give us the strength

and courage to continue the necessary work of fostering and promoting vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life in our Catholic Church The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few " Luke 10-2

[Download the Novena here](#)

*"Always forward, never back"*

## One of our Speakers

Catia Andrade, President of South Herts Serra Club was delighted to welcome Spiritan seminarian Chris Oneal (back row 3<sup>rd</sup> from left) to visit the club on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May.



Holy Mass was celebrated by our chaplain Fr Paul Antwi-Boasiako (front row 3<sup>rd</sup> from left). Fr Paul is also a member of the Spiritan order and parish priest of Our Lady & St Michaels church in Garston.

After Mass we shared a simple buffet style supper and then Chris delivered an inspiring talk describing his journey of formation towards the priesthood.

He is now in his 8<sup>th</sup> year of formation having initially studied in his native Gabon then at the Spiritan seminary in Cameroon. He is now on his pastoral year in England where he is currently based in Stoke on Trent.

Chris made the point that he very much values the support of a group like Serra and he is very happy that his vocation is strengthened by our prayers.

Chris is the middle of 5 children (4 boys and a girl) in a committed Catholic family and at aged only 8 he remembers telling his mother that he was inspired to see the priest on the altar and that he said “Mum, I want to be like him”.

He then became an altar server and later on he met a lady, who he did not know, who said to him “My son answer the call – God needs you”. This had a big impression on Chris. So he joined a local vocation group of young people thinking about religious life. His mother though was still not entirely convinced so he spoke to his uncle who is a priest who encouraged him. Chris studied Management at University in Gabon and then joined the Spiritan community where he studied Philosophy in Cameroon as part of his vocational training.

He had to make a choice between the Jesuits, Dominicans, Spiritans or diocesan seminary but he chose the Spiritans as they had brought the faith to Gabon and he warmed to the community aspect of the order. He has a strong desire to be a missionary priest and the Spiritan charism is to serve the poor in places where others are not keen to minister.

Our President Catia thanked Chris for sincerely sharing his vocation story and assured him of our continued prayers for his future.

## “Eucharistic Adoration for Vocations?”



In Serra we are strong advocates of “Adoration for Vocations” before the blessed Sacrament during our Holy Hours, or Vocations Vigils. Eucharistic adoration can be a time of silence away from the madding crowd, a time of contemplation, a time to just think and pray for our families, our priests,

deacons and those thinking of the vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life.

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, acknowledging our faults, and telling him all that concerns us, our thoughts, our fears, our projects, our desires, and in all things seeking his counsel.” ..St. Ignatius of Loyola*

**Get Started!** You can 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.

## Liverpool Serra



On Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> of May the Liverpool Serra Club celebrated their annual Mass for deceased Serrans, held at the Cenacle Convent Liverpool. The event was well attended by Serrans, with sisters from the convent and friends and relations. The celebrant Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP .

who is very supportive of our organization noted during his homily that he has celebrated this Serra memorial Mass for over ten years running and that he always enjoyed coming to this particular Serra event.

After Mass we all enjoyed a social evening and buffet supper during which Sr Lynne FcJ, our vocations director, gave us her reflections on the value of praying for vocations.



## Schools events

We have reached that time of the year when our focus is turned to our schools events. Pupils generally from our senior fifth and sixth years having completed their exams and applying for university, college etc. are considering their future careers, spend some time in the company of our religious guests mainly diocesan priests and brothers and sisters from religious orders. There is an opportunity for the students to engage with our guests asking questions about their work and vocation choices. The object of this programme is not to badger or harass the students but hopefully just plant the seed or notion of vocation as their lifestyle choice. The one day programme finishes with our vocations mass.



*A travelling vocations team comprising priests from dioceses, religious orders and sisters and brothers and of course our Serrans.*



The Vatican began a new initiative this year in which they offer an hour of Eucharistic Adoration in St. Peter's Square every second Tuesday of the month on the steps in front of St Peter's Basilica. The purpose of the time of prayer is to put the focus on the reality of Jesus in our midst and to help pilgrims experience the reality that Christ continually dwells in the world through His Church. Being a frequent visitor to Rome, I will focus my time in front of the blessed sacrament and pray for an increase in vocations particularly in my own country



**Our congratulations to**

**Mgr James Curry**

Appointed Auxiliary Bishop for the Diocese of Westminster.

*"His appointment, will be widely welcomed. I welcome it myself, with gratitude to him for his generous response."*

*Cardinal Vincent Nichols*



## Sad News

It was only in our last edition that we were congratulating two Bishop-elects for Scottish Dioceses.

It is with regret and sadness that we now announce the death of Bishop-elect Martin Chambers for the Diocese of Dunkeld, Scotland.

Fr Martin passed away on April 10<sup>th</sup> at the age of 59. He was scheduled to be consecrated as its new bishop on April 27, "May he rest in peace and may his family and loved ones find consolation in the Risen Lord "

## The Holy Father's message for World day of prayer for Vocations.

*Each year, the Holy Father invites us to reflect on the precious gift of the Lord's call to each of us, as members of his faithful pilgrim people, to participate in his loving plan and to embody the beauty of the Gospel in different states of life. Pope Francis in his message for the 61st World Day of Prayer for Vocations 2024 on the theme "Called to sow seeds of hope and to build peace" asks us to be pilgrims and builders of peace, that, means to base our lives on the rock of Christ's resurrection, knowing that every effort made in the vocation that we have embraced and seek to live out, will never be in vain.*

*In His final message to young people he says "Rise up!" Let us awaken from sleep, let us leave indifference behind, let us open the doors of the prison in which we so often enclose ourselves, so that each of us can discover his or her proper vocation in the Church and in the world,*

Read the [Holy Father's message](#) for this World day of prayer for vocations.... [here](#)

# The Serra GB National AGM Sunday October 6<sup>th</sup>

Following the success of our conference in October '23, which was held virtually by a Zoom meeting, we have decided to hold our 2024 conference using the same platform.

This seems to be the most appealing way to join in our conference and Annual General meeting eliminating the need for travel by our members from north and south of the border.

Our conference will therefore take place as planned on Sunday October 6<sup>th</sup> at 2.00pm. Preparations have now started to ensure that the meeting of our Serra GB members will be of great interest and of value in our work in promoting vocations to the priesthood and consecrated religious life.

More details will follow in our September edition of focus

## The Statistics

Just released is the Pontifical yearbook offering the latest information regarding the life of the Catholic Church throughout the world covering the period December 1st 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023. The statistics show an increase of the number of Catholics in the world to 1.39 Billion, approximately 1 in every 5 people on earth. The Statistics also show the numbers of clergy, religious orders etc worldwide noting fewer priests and permanent deacons in our part of the world while there are increases in other parts.

Read the [Full Report](#)



*For over 60 years  
we have published  
our quarterly  
magazine.  
Stay up-to-date  
with all the Serra  
news.*

*This March 2024 issue  
features the state of Serra  
and the vision for a  
dynamic future in*

*vocations promotion with articles from throughout the Serran world online. We take a look at how the Serra Foundation is utilizing funds to promote vocations through discernment groups throughout the world.!*

[HERE](#)

## Join us for Serra's 81st International Convention in New Orleans, 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> 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.

New Orleans boasts an array of exciting attractions that make it an ideal convention destination. Enjoy the city's lively music scene, from jazz clubs to street performers, filling the air with soulful melodies. Take a leisurely stroll along the iconic Mississippi River, delve into the city's fascinating history, and visit the renowned WWII Museum. New Orleans offers an unforgettable blend of cultural experiences.



Beautiful Churches

Cathedral of St. Louis & the Shrine of Our Lady of Prompt Succor



The French Quarter

World-famous music, art, and beignets at Cafe du Monde

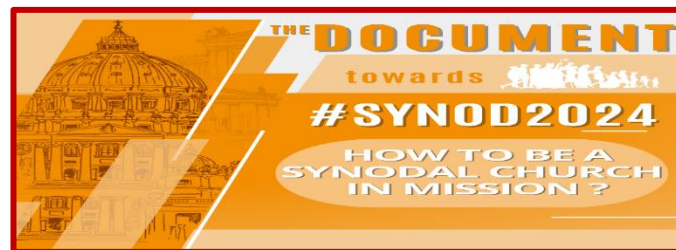
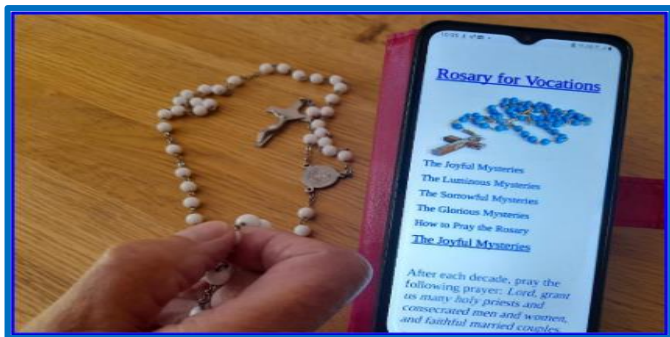
As always, our Serra Convention is a profound opportunity for spiritual growth and learning. Engage with well-known speakers who will inspire with their deep wisdom and insights. From practical workshops to inspiring keynote addresses, you'll enhance your faith and be equipped with the tools to strengthen your efforts to foster and promote vocations!

The convention is being held at the New Orleans Marriott on Canal Street, located between the French Quarter and the Warehouse District, close to popular attractions such as Jackson Square, the Audubon Aquarium, the WWII Museum, Harrah's Casino, and much more.

[MAKE YOUR RESERVATION HERE](#)



## A Serran “Rosary for vocations”



The Synod on Synodality 2020/24 eagerly expected since 2021 has now started and gathering pace with some 365 Bishops religious and members of the laity from around the world. The latest document “How to be a Synodal church in Mission

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.

We will report on the second session which is due to take place on October 2nd-27th  
Download the [latest news from the Vatican](#)

## 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 are June 8th, July 13th, August 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

## It's a Joke

A husband and wife from England were driving through Scotland. As they approached the little town of Auchtermuchty, they started arguing about the pronunciation of the village. They argued back and forth, then they stopped for lunch. At the counter, the husband asked the blonde waitress, "Before we order, could you please settle an argument for us? Would you please pronounce where we are very slowly?" She leaned over the counter and said, "Burr-gerrr Kiiing."

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>*

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

**District 60**

**Liverpool**

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

email; [serra.liverpool@gmail.com](mailto:serra.liverpool@gmail.com) tel: 0151 724 6249

**Manchester**

Contact email; [serramanchester@gmail.com](mailto:serramanchester@gmail.com)

tel; 01625 477 215

**North Cheshire**

Contact

email; [serra.northcheshire@outlook.com](mailto:serra.northcheshire@outlook.com)

tel; 0161 973 3339

**South Lancs**

For further information on Serra club of South Lancs

email; [secretary@serragreatbritain.org.uk](mailto:secretary@serragreatbritain.org.uk)

or tel: 0151 724 6249

**District 62**

**South Hertfordshire.**

We meet 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto:serra.dunkeld@hotmail.com) tel; 01382 322920

**Glasgow**

We meet 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:serra.glasgow@aol.com) tel; 0141 571 8313

**Paisley**

For further information on Serra club of Paisley

email; [secretary@serragreatbritain.org.uk](mailto: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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