



Serra GB

focus

September 2025



***“Rejoice and shine forth in the light of Our Lady’s birth.”
...St Augustine***

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>



Image courtesy Our Lady of Hope Parish

We Celebrate Our Lady's birthday on September 8th.

Only three birthdays are celebrated on the Church's liturgical calendar, the Birth of Our Lord (December 25th), the Birth of John the Baptist (June 24th), and the Birth of His Mother on September 8th. Thus, the Church uniquely honours the three principal figures connected to the Incarnation and the Redemption.

Mary's birth lies at the confluence of the two testaments, bringing to an end the stage of expectation and the promises, and inaugurating the era of grace and salvation in Jesus Christ.

The birth of Mary is ordained in particular toward her mission as Mother of the Saviour. Her existence is indissolubly connected with that of Christ: it partakes of a unique plan of predestination and grace. God's mysterious plan regarding the Incarnation of the Word embraces also the Virgin who is His Mother. In this way, the Birth of Mary, as that her Divine Child, is inserted at the very heart of the History of Salvation. This feast day is exactly nine months after the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on December 8th. The Church makes no claims as to the historical merit of either date. Rather, the dating serves a liturgical purpose in recalling the mysteries associated with Mary, in the same way as the nine months on the calendar between the Annunciation and Christmas.

"The most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the saviour of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin." -Pope Pius IX

Saint Augustine connects Mary's birth with Jesus' saving work. He tells the earth to rejoice and shine forth in the light of her birth. "She is the flower of the field from whom bloomed the precious lily of the valley. Through her birth the nature inherited from our first parents is changed." The opening prayer at Mass on this day speaks of the birth of Mary's Son as the dawn of our salvation, and asks for an increase of peace.



"God's love, mercy and goodness lie at the foundation of every vocation." including that of the pope.

At the Basilica of St Paul outside the Walls, at a prayer service dedicated to St. Paul, the so-called "apostle to the gentiles" who brought the Gospel to peoples across the central and eastern Mediterranean, exemplifying evangelical zeal and the missionary spirit. The Holy Father's visit was in part entrusting the beginning of this new pontificate to the intercession of the apostle Paul.

St. Paul received the grace of his vocation from God, acknowledging "that his encounter with Christ and his own ministry were the fruit of God's prior love, which called him to a new life while he was still far from the Gospel and persecuting the church."

Pope Leo as an Augustinian friar from the age of 20 reflected on St. Augustine, who founded the order in 1244, was also as a convert who experienced choosing God after having realized God had chosen him first, Pope Leo said. "We cannot love unless someone has loved us first."

The Holy Father continued "At the root of every vocation, God is present, in his mercy and his goodness, as generous as that of a mother who nourishes her child with her own body for as long as the child is unable to feed itself," he said, quoting St Augustine.



The Holy Father, before his final praying at the altar of the tomb of St Paul concluded "Faith leads us to 'open our hearts to this mystery of love and to live as men and

women conscious of being loved by God." The Holy Father continued. "Here we see, in all its simplicity and uniqueness, the basis of every mission, including my own mission as the successor of Peter and the heir to Paul's apostolic zeal.

"May the Lord grant me the grace to respond faithfully to his call."

Answering Questions?

We sometimes forget that being a Serran is to learn and understand more about our faith. ***“To assist our members to recognise and respond in their own lives to God’s call to holiness in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.”***

Recently in late June we were distressed to hear of the death of one of our founding members here in Great Britain, Mr Gerard Humphries. We extend our sincere condolences to his surviving wife and family. In remembering this man a High Court Judge by profession, he often addressed our members locally and indeed at our conferences even during that period of Covid with his little anecdotes on vocations, I recall him saying “I have been in Serra for some 36 years, so I must have learnt something about my faith” that quote was some 15 years ago. Being Serran we are often asked by our friends and family a question relating to our liturgy or some other question on our faith or even basic questions on religion. The answers given are often as a result of some speaker at conferences or discussion at our Serra meetings. Are we know it all? No! but we may then seek further information from our chaplains or bishop patrons.

A question on other rites and the Eastern Rite Catholics in Russia and Ukraine was posed recently. By sheer coincidence our Holy Father Pope Leo had just sent a message of congratulations to the participants of the Metropolitan Assembly of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the United States. In his message, The Goal and theme of that assembly being *“Come, let us worship and bow before Christ,”* to serve as a “cornerstone for unity, reflection, and spiritual renewal, bringing together clergy and laity from across the Metropolitan Church of Pittsburgh.”

The Metropolitan Church in Pittsburgh with our Serrans of the Byzantine rite, served as our church for the liturgies at our Serra International convention in 2004 where we attended mass and received the Eucharist in the Eastern rite.

The Holy Father extended his gratitude for the witness of the Assembly’s forebearers, who established the Byzantine communities throughout North America in spite of difficulties and an unknown future. “Their legacy, he noted, continues in your courageous embrace of pastoral renewal, which is rooted in fidelity to your heritage.” The "Catholic Churches of the Eastern or Oriental Rite" refers to 23 autonomous churches within the Catholic Church that maintain distinct liturgical, theological, and cultural traditions rooted in Eastern Christian communities. These churches are in full communion with the Pope recognizing the Pope's authority and can share in sacraments with the Latin Church. They have their own unique histories, liturgies, and customs which we also can share, even receiving the Eucharist at mass.

The Eastern Catholic Churches trace their origins to various Eastern Christian communities, including those in the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, Eastern Europe, and South Asia. They are organized into five major liturgical traditions:

Alexandrian, Antiochian (West Syriac), Armenian, Chaldean (East Syriac), and Byzantine (Constantinopolitan). Some well-known Eastern Catholic Churches include the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Syro-Malabar Church, the Maronite Church, and the Chaldean Catholic Church. Eastern Catholic Churches may have practices that differ from the Roman Catholic Church, such as a married clergy, different forms of fasting, and different liturgical calendars.

On the original question on Russia and Ukraine, Yes! There are Roman Catholics in both countries although only a small percentage in number.



St Georges Ukrainian Greek Catholic Cathedral

However, as Christians, in comparison the UK, from a survey in 2024, has some 46% Christian population, Russia has a some 70 % namely Russian Orthodox (not in communion with the Catholic church since 1054) and Ukraine some 85% Christians namely Greek Orthodox and other Eastern orthodox denominations who are in communion with the Catholic Church.

There are so many conflicts and wars throughout this world, faith against faith, ideologies, territorial disputes, country against country, the pursuit of power. Let us give time to sharing prayer for an end to this conflict and the others who are suffering and dying through man’s inhumanity and lust for power.



Lord Jesus Christ, You are the true King of peace. In You alone is found freedom. Please free our world from conflict. Bring unity to troubled nations. Let your glorious peace reign in every heart. Give wisdom to world leaders. Free them from selfish ambition. Eliminate all violence and war. Amen

Eastern Rite Crucifix with footrest (suppedaneum). Indicating the balance between Christ's divinity and humanity.

The Last message of Pope Francis **"Pilgrims of hope: The gift of life."**

Pope Francis invites young people to listen to God's voice in their hearts so they may be signs of His love for our world. The Pope's recalls that every vocation, be it to ordained ministry, consecrated life, or the laity, should offer the world a sign of God's hope for every person.

He noted that young people frequently feel dismay and confusion when they look to the future, given the background of insecurity, identity crises, unjust treatment of others amid general indifference." Yet the Lord, who knows the human heart does not abandon us in our uncertainty, " said Pope Francis" He wants us to know that we are loved, called and sent as pilgrims of hope." The Holy Father urged young people to look to the saints to recognize that they are the " now of God" since youth is not an in-between time.

Every vocational call, he said, ignites in us a desire to love others and serve them, rather than a means of self-promotion. At certain points in life, added the Pope, God calls people to choose a path, whether it be to family life, the priesthood, or religious life. "Every vocation is inspired by hope marked by confident trust in God's providence," he said. "Vocations mature through the daily effort to be faithful to the Gospel and through prayer, discernment and service."

Pope Francis urged young people to take the time to listen to God's voice in prayer, even amid the constant bombardment of daily life and external pressures .He said it takes courage to pause, to pray and be open to God's dreams for our lives. "Prayerful recollection," he said, "helps us to realize that all of us can be pilgrims of hope if we make our lives a gift, above all by placing ourselves at the service of those who live on the world's material and existential peripheries." Every particular vocation, added the pope, is an expression of our overall Christian vocation to be Christ's presence where His light and consolation are most needed.

In conclusion, Pope Francis invited all Christians to pray for vocations and trust that the Holy Spirit will inspire young people to welcome their vocation. Let us never tire of asking the Lord for new labourers for His harvest, certain that with great love He continues to call them," he concluded." Keep walking as pilgrims of hope on the path of the Gospel !"

***"May he rest in peace in the company
of the angels and saints"***



Christ of Saint John of the Cross

This has always been one of my favorite paintings by [Salvador Dalí](#) made in 1951. It is in the collection of and owned by the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow. It depicts Jesus Christ on the cross in a darkened sky floating over a body of water complete with a boat and fishermen.

Although it is a depiction of the crucifixion, it is devoid of nails, blood, and a crown of thorns, because, according to Dalí, he was convinced by a dream that these features would mar his depiction of Christ. The importance of depicting Christ in the extreme angle is evident in the painting.

The painting considered to be the greatest painting of the crucifixion in the 20th century is based on a drawing by the 16th-century Spanish friar John of the Cross. The composition is based on a triangle formed by Christ's arms and circle formed by Christ's head. The triangle, since it has three sides, can be seen as a reference to the Trinity, the circle may be an allusion but represents Unity: "All things do exist in the three."

On the bottom of his studies for the painting, Dalí explained its inspiration: "In the first place, in 1950, I had a 'cosmic dream' in which I saw this image in colour and which in my dream represented the 'nucleus of the atom.' This nucleus later took on a metaphysical sense; "I considered it 'the very unity of the universe,' the Christ!"

In order to create the figure of Christ, Dalí had a stuntman suspended from an overhead gantry, so he could see how the body would appear from the desired angle and also envisage the pull of gravity on the human body. The depicted body of water is the bay of Port Lligat, Spain, Dalí's residence at the time of the painting.

The painting was acquired for Glasgow in 1952 by Glasgow Museums for £8,200 including the copyright, a price considered high at the time. Today the painting has an estimated value of £60 million. The painting is celebrated as one of Dalí's most iconic works, It stands as a testament to Dalí's genius and his ability to blend the mystical with the scientific, the divine with the human. The painting was first displayed at the city's Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum June 1952. Since then millions of visitors have viewed the painting here and many galleries in Europe including the Vatican and has earned Glasgow Museums back the original cost many times over.

[St John of the Cross](#)

**We send our sincere congratulations to our
new president of Serra International
Emameule Costa**



At the inauguration of our new President of Serra international, Emanuele Costa receives his pin of office from Past President Moira McQueen.

Emanuele, from Italy was Appointed President at our 81st International Convention in Kansas City, Missouri. He is the sixth of nine children and grew up in Genoa, Italy. Graduating from the University of Genoa with a degree in economy and commerce. Emanuele spent some twenty years between Genoa, New York, and Miami managing the family-owned shipping business, he started his own private equity company, now based in Milan, Italy. He now resides in Lugano, Switzerland. Joining the Serra Club of Lugano in 1997, he has been Club President, District Governor, and President of the Italian National Council before joining the Serra International board in 2020. Emanuele and his wife Beatrice have three children and five grandchildren living in the United States.



At the banquet our Chris Kelly rear and center, and the final mass with some 475 Serrans from around the world.



**Serra Connects.
The July '25
edition.
Read the stories
from all over
the SerraWorld
[here](#)**



The current issue features 90 years of Serra 1935-2025 and the vision for a dynamic future, filled with inspiring articles on Serra and the Jubilee Year of Hope, reminding us of our shared mission to foster vocations with faith, courage, and joy..... Read [here](#).

Our 2025 Serra GB Conference will take place on Sunday 5th October

Normally held at a central location for our members from north and south of the border, last year's meeting was held using the Zoom platform. It was agreed, while the physical meetings were more desirable, the virtual meeting would eliminate the costs of travel and accommodation.

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 prayer activities, considering our small numbers, were of a good level of activity which included our vigils, holy hours, parish groups, school and university vocations evenings.

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 will be elected and agreed by vote from our members and other business matters considered. We look forward to another year of high activity in the promotion of vocations.

October the month of the Holy Rosary

Throughout Great Britain in the month of October our Serrans concentrate our prayers on the Holy Rosary for vocations. For many years we have extended that particular form of prayer in our parishes. Many parishes combine the Rosary with a Holy hour for vocations on a regular basis. It may be once per month or simply before or after our morning masses.

Why do we choose the month of October to promote this programme?

October 7th is the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. The Church chose that day and, by extension, the month of October to honour Our Lady of the Rosary because of a great victory which took place on October 7, 1571. The Church in Europe, in that year, faced a seemingly hopeless challenge. The Ottoman Empire had conquered the Middle East, slaughtering millions of Christians and forcing the survivors to convert to Islam. They then moved across the Mediterranean Sea, invading Crete and Cyprus. From these islands, they set their sights on Rome and the Christian kingdoms of the central Mediterranean.

Pope Pius V called on rosary confraternities of Europe to public recitation of the Rosary asking the intercession of Our Lady. The Holy league rallied to engage the Islamic threat. The Battle of Lepanto ensued between the Christians and the Ottoman Empire. The Christian fleet was far outnumbered and appeared to have no hope of winning. On the first Sunday of October 1571, the Christian fleet met and defeated the invading Turks off the coast of Greece.

A Serran "Rosary for vocations"

You can download [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



You are invited to join with representatives from America, Europe, Asia and throughout the Serra world in a recitation of the Rosary for vocation.

Saturday Sept 27th at 2.00pm GMT, continuing on the last Saturdays of every month.

Join us free, use Access Code: 314-315-91. at: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/314315981>

An opportunity to join us internationally



The Serra Meets programme is now a routine webinar broadcast on the second Saturday of each month throughout 2025.

Enjoy virtual lectures from leading clergy and experts on the topic of Catholic vocations.

Our next Meets, Sept 13th, 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

"Eucharistic Adoration for Vocations?"



"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.

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

Remember and pray for our priests



Some live alone, pray alone, cook alone, eat alone. Other priests live in remote areas, isolated. There are priests who live in dangerous places, their vocation to preach the gospel and celebrate the Eucharist and their very lives always at risk. Some have no means of transport. They walk long distances. Some are in poor parishes living and sharing the basics of food and accommodation. Yet they look after the sick and poor of God's people. People who need God's love.

Pray for our priests.

Father, we pray for all priests who are most troubled discouraged and suffering as they labour to serve our families in an unbelieving and hurting world. May they serve with listening and compassionate hearts, gently guiding families, especially those who are afraid and troubled. We ask this through the intercession of Our Lady, the Mother of all priests. Amen

It's a Joke!

A wife was making a breakfast of fried eggs for her husband. Suddenly, her husband burst into the kitchen. 'Careful,' he said, 'CAREFUL! Put in some more butter! Oh my gosh! You're cooking too many at once. TOO MANY! Turn them! TURN THEM NOW! We need more butter. Oh my gosh! WHERE are we going to get MORE BUTTER? They're going to STICK! Careful. CAREFUL! I said be CAREFUL! You NEVER listen to me when you're cooking! Never! Turn them! Hurry up! Are you CRAZY? Have you LOST your mind? Don't forget to salt them. You know you always forget to salt them. Use the salt. USE THE SALT! THE SALT!'

The wife stared at him. 'What in the world is wrong with you? You think I don't know how to fry a couple of eggs?' The husband calmly replied, 'I just wanted to show you what it feels like when I'm driving.'

Global Catholic population 2025

The global Catholic population increased by 1.15% between 2022 and 2023, rising from approximately 1.39 billion to 1.406 billion,

Africa. Includes 20% of the Catholics of the world. The Democratic Republic of Congo confirms its first-place with almost 55 million, followed by Nigeria with 35 million; Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya also register significant figures.

Americas. Almost half of the world's Catholics, reside in South America (Brazil, 13% with 182 million. North America 6.6% and the remaining 13.8% in Central America. Compared to the total population, Argentina, Colombia, and Paraguay stand out, with a Catholic incidence exceeding 90% of the population.

Asia records a growth of Catholics of 0.6% over the biennium, and its weight in 2023 is around 11% of the global Catholic population. In 2023, 76.7% of Southeast Asian Catholics are concentrated in the Philippines, with 93 million, and in India, with 23 million.

Oceania numbered just over 11 million in 2023, an increase of 1.9% compared to 2022.

Europe, while hosting 20.4% of the world Catholic community, shows an increase of just 0.2%. This variation, translates to a slight improvement, which reaches nearly 39.6% in 2023. Italy, Poland, and Spain boast a Catholic incidence exceeding 90% of the population. Full world details [here](#)

Fewer priests and religious however!

We must encourage more prayer for vocations, more celebrations of the Eucharist, Vigils, Holy hours, individual prayer, family prayer.

Invite our young people to be aware of Our Lord's call to a wonderful vocation in life.

Support our treasured priests and religious.
Thank you all for being priests and religious



Glasgow. St Andrew's Cathedral annual Mass for vocations, 25th Aug 2025

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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