



The global lay apostolate for vocations in the Catholic Church

Handbook for Serrans

“Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” (Mt. 9:38)

Revised May 2007

Table of Contents

Introduction

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Messages to Serrans | 2 |
|---------------------------|---|

The Serra Movement

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Description | 3 |
| History and Development | 3 |

Organizational Structure

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Board of Trustees | 5 |
| Principal Officers | 5 |
| Trustees | 6 |
| Episcopal Adviser | 6 |
| Standing Committees | 7 |
| Executive Director | 7 |

The Serra International Foundation

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| History | 8 |
| Responsibilities | 8 |
| Objectives and Purposes | 8 |

International Events and Publications

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Annual International Convention | 8 |
| <i>THE SERRAN</i> | 9 |

Serra Councils

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Description | 9 |
|-------------------|---|

Serra Districts

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| District Governor | 9 |
| District Councils | 10 |

Serra Clubs

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Club Leadership | 11 |
| Club Board of Trustees | 11 |
| Club Officers | 13 |
| Club Committee Structure | 18 |
| Resources | 23 |

Evaluating the Serra Club and its Members

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Evaluating Serra Club Leaders | 24 |
| Evaluating Club Operations | 25 |
| Self-Evaluation as a Serran | 26 |

Introduction

Messages to Serrans

During Serra's Great Jubilee Pilgrimage to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome on 07 December 2000, His Holiness Pope John Paul II warmly greeted the 1,500 Serra pilgrims from all over the world and delivered this message:

Dear Serrans, you are committed in a special way to promoting vocations. Never forget that yours must be above all a commitment to prayer, prayer that is constant, unwavering and full of trust. Prayer moves the heart of God. It is the powerful key to the vocations question. Along with prayer, the work of fostering vocations also requires a constant effort to bring the need to people's attention through personal witness, so that God's call may encounter a ready hearing and generous response in those to whom it is directed. This is the aim of your efforts to spread an authentic culture of vocations. Your commitment to fostering vocations ensures that the problem of vocations does not remain a concern for pastors alone, but is brought to the attention of all, involving families and teachers in particular. Continue to make your contribution to this goal, in full harmony with your bishops. Be people of communion, supporting your priests with active affection. With your characteristic charity, reach out to the needs of vocations among the poor. The good that flows from this to the Church will be a pledge of abundant heavenly gifts, which I willingly invoke upon each one of you and the Serra movement through the motherly intercession of Mary, the Immaculate Virgin.

With these sentiments, I cordially bless you all.

At Serra's 63rd international convention in Bangkok, Thailand, His Eminence Zenon Cardinal Grocholewski, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education declared:

I deeply appreciate Serra for its beneficial contribution to the life of the Church. This meeting gives me the opportunity to say publicly and very warmly, first of all in the name of the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations, but also in the name of the Congregation for Catholic Education and in my own name, that I highly appreciate all the activities of Serra and I want to say a sincere thank you to all Serrans, scattered the world over, for all that they do for the sake of priestly vocations, with their prayer, help and various kinds of support, and for all they do to be close to their bishops and to the priests in their pastoral commitment.

The Serra Movement

Description

Serra International (“Serra”) is a voluntary association of all existing Serra Clubs, duly organized and chartered in accordance with the provisions of its Constitution and Bylaws. The Serra movement is global in scope, Catholic in emphasis and character, and democratic in practice. It takes its name from Father Junipero Serra (1713-1784), the noted Franciscan missionary who journeyed to the New World from Spain in 1749 to preach the Gospel first in Mexico and later in what is now the State of California. Father Serra was beatified by Pope John Paul II on 25 September 1988 and his cause for canonization continues to be actively promoted.

Members of Serra are known as Serrans. They are Catholic laymen, laywomen and permanent deacons who work together in Serra Clubs to achieve Serra’s objectives and purposes which have remained fundamentally the same since 1935. However, an amendment to the Constitution approved by the delegates at the annual international convention in 2005 restated Serra’s objectives and purposes as follows:

ARTICLE II Objectives and Purposes

The objectives and purposes of SERRA INTERNATIONAL are:

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

History and Development

The Serra movement can trace its beginnings to 1934, in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A. Four Catholic laymen, Dan Rooney, Richard Ward, Harold Haberle and Leo Sharkey, who had been meeting informally, recognized the need for an association that would advance Catholicism through lasting friendships among Catholics and continuing growth in their Catholic faith.

Inviting several of their friends to join with them, they formed the first Serra Club in Seattle on 27 February 1935, with the encouragement of the Most Reverend Gerald Shaughnessy, Bishop of Seattle. John Janette, an early member of the first club in Seattle and later founder of the Serra Club of Chicago, proposed the work of fostering vocations to and assisting in the education of young men for the Catholic priesthood. On 12 June 1935, the original purpose of the Seattle Club was enlarged to include this work.

The founders searched for a name for their new lay apostolate. John Bray, also a charter member of the Seattle Club, proposed the name “Serra” after Father Junipero Serra, a Franciscan missionary who became known as the “Apostle of California” having founded the celebrated missions of San Diego, San Carlos, San Antonio, San Gabriel, San Luis Obispo, San Francisco, San Juan Capistrano, Santa Clara, and San Buenaventura. By agreeing to this proposal, the new Serra movement became a living memorial to the spirit of this humble but ardent servant of the Gospel.

During the next three years, new Serra Clubs were formed in Spokane, Portland, Tacoma, and San Francisco, under the leadership and direction of members of the Serra Club of Seattle. At this point it was apparent that there was need for unified direction and coordination of their programs. On 2 July 1938, delegates from the five clubs voted to form Serra International, adopting as its objectives the original aims of the founders of the first Serra Club. Dr. Thomas V. Sheehan of Seattle was elected as Serra’s first president and served in that office until 9 August 1941. Most Reverend Gerald Shaughnessy, Bishop of Seattle, became the first Serra chaplain, serving until 1946.

In 1946, Serra’s International Board of Trustees, encouraged by Samuel Cardinal Stritch, then Archbishop of Chicago and newly-invited Episcopal Adviser, decided to establish a headquarters in Chicago, Illinois, with full-time personnel to provide for Serra’s overall management and expansion. This decision was ratified at the annual international convention in Chicago in April 1947. Mr. Harry O’Haire was hired as Serra’s first Executive Director.

On third day of May in 1951, at the request of Cardinal Stritch, Serra’s Episcopal Adviser, and in recognition of its commitment to fostering and promoting vocations to the priesthood, Serra International was formally aggregated to the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations (within the Sacred Congregation for Seminaries and University Studies). Serra grew extensively throughout the world during the 1950’s with the chartering of new Serra Clubs in many regions of the U.S.A. as well as Canada, Mexico, Peru, England, and Italy.

During the 1960’s, brisk worldwide expansion spread the word of Serra to Spain, Venezuela, Brazil, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Australia. In recognition of its vital contribution to the life of the Universal Church, Serra was invited to participate in the First International Vocation Congress in Rome in 1962. Serra’s growth continued in the 1970’s assisted by the admission of permanent deacons as members and the formation of Serra Councils in Great Britain and Brazil.

In the 1980s, Serra expanded into New Zealand, Ghana, Nigeria, and Switzerland and Serra Councils were formed in Spain, Italy, Mexico and the Philippines. Serra participated in the Second International Vocation Congress in 1981.

At the 1986 international convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Serra's Constitution and Bylaws were amended to admit women as members.

In the 1990's, Serra conducted an extensive review of its past and looked to the future through a long-range planning process called "Vision 2000" which began in 1991. Serra's National Council for the United States and Canada (USACC) was formed in 1994 and the Serra Council of Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific (SCANZSPAC) in 1996. During the next ten years, the first Serra Clubs were chartered in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Romania, and Slovenia (Eastern Europe) and in Myanmar, Bangladesh, India and Singapore (Asia).

The Serra Clubs in Canada ceased to be part of USACC with the formation of the Serra Council for Canada in June 2000. The Serra Council of Thailand was formed in June 2001.

In Serra's first seventy-two years, a total of 1,090 Serra Clubs have been chartered in 45 countries located on every continent.

Organizational Structure

To operate efficiently, Serra's Constitution and Bylaws provide for a carefully defined organizational structure. Serra's governing body is the International Board of Trustees which includes the Principal Officers and the International Trustees. Serra also draws upon the services of an Episcopal Adviser, volunteer Standing Committees, and a full-time Executive Director and professional staff.

Board of Trustees

Responsibility of Board of Trustees

- management of the affairs of Serra International

Principal Officers

Composition

- President
- President Elect
- Vice Presidents (4)
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Immediate Past President

Terms of Office

The President, President Elect, and the four Vice Presidents are elected for one-year terms at the annual international convention while the Secretary and Treasurer are elected for staggered two-year terms.

Trustees

Responsibilities of Trustees

- serve as liaison and consultant to the district governors where no Serra Council exists in their area
- assist district governors in whatever way possible
- delegate to and work with Deputy Trustee(s) in areas where a Board member requests and the International Board of Trustees appoints

Composition

- eleven international trustees
- such additional trustees, not to exceed three, as from time to time may be determined by the International Board of Trustees.

Terms of Office

All international trustees, principal officers, and the immediate past president serve on the International Board of Trustees concurrently for the duration of their elected office.

Episcopal Adviser

Responsibilities

- provide spiritual direction for Serrans through the International Board of Trustees
- counsel and advise the International Board of Trustees on the application of Catholic teaching to the conduct of the Serra apostolate

Term of Office

The International Board of Trustees invites a member of the hierarchy to serve as Episcopal Adviser for one or more three-year terms.

Standing Committees

Responsibilities

- develop and promote programs for the year in their respective areas of responsibility
- adhere to Serra's objectives and policies
- work in close harmony with national, regional, district and club committees

Composition

- Vocations
- Internal Program
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Membership
- Finance and Budget
- Long Range Planning
- Communications
- Audit
- International Convention

Terms of Office

Nine Standing Committees, each consisting of no fewer than three members, are appointed by the President, with the approval of the International Board of Trustees. In addition, the President may appoint special committees as needed.

Executive Director

Responsibilities

- works closely with the International Board of Trustees
- manages the day-to-day functioning of Serra's Headquarters in Chicago
- oversees the international convention, Serra publications and the Serra web site

Terms of Office

The Executive Director is appointed by and responsible to the International Board of Trustees.

The Serra International Foundation

History

- At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Serra International on 25 October 1951, The Serra International Foundation was created and incorporated in Illinois as a not-for-profit corporation.

Responsibilities

- To raise, invest and disburse funds in support of organizations whose programs meet the vocation objectives of Serra International

Objectives and Purposes

- to fund programs that foster and promote vocations to the ministerial priesthood of the Catholic Church;
- to fund programs of formation for men and women in consecrated religious life in the Catholic Church; and
- to enhance the recognition of Serra International as the global lay apostolate for vocations in the Catholic Church.

International Events and Publications

To further its objectives and conduct its business, Serra holds regular committee and general meetings and produces various publications including *THE SERRAN*.

Annual International Convention

Description

The annual international convention is an opportunity for Serrans to:

- share in the fellowship and inspiration, as well as acquire a clearer vision of the purposes and broad relationships of Serra
- strengthen their dedication to their organization through the convention program and contact with representatives of clubs from around the world
- advance the internationality of Serra
- stimulate better club work by establishing common policies, standards and program emphases

Serra's annual international convention is:

- self-supporting (convention operating expenses are covered by registration fees)
- held at a time and in a place approved by the International Board of Trustees
- where the business of Serra (including approving the annual budget, electing international officers and trustees, amending the International Constitution and Bylaws) takes place

THE SERRAN

Description

THE SERRAN is:

- the official publication of Serra International
- the official source of news about the election of officers and trustees, the annual convention and other important events throughout the Serra world
- published twice a year in June and December

Serra Councils

Description

Serra recognizes the beneficial role that a national or regional council can provide by representing Serra Clubs at a national or regional level and ensuring more effective extension work within the defined territory. The formation, constitution, and operations of Serra Councils are governed by Article IX of Serra's Bylaws. All Serra Councils must be approved by the Board of Trustees of Serra International.

There are Serra Councils in Great Britain, Brazil, Spain, Italy, Mexico, the Philippines, the U.S.A., SCANZSPAC (which covers Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific), Canada and Thailand.

Serra Districts

District Governor

The District Governor performs an essential coordinating role in Serra. Where a Serra Council exists, the district governor reports to the Serra Council. Otherwise, the district governor reports to the designated International Trustee.

Responsibilities

- meet with all clubs and their members annually

- maintain contact with the Ordinary and Vocation office
- communicate with clubs through personal contact, regular letters, and District meetings
- maintain regular contact with the national council or International Trustee where no council exists
- promote district-wide membership growth
- start or maintain a club-in-formation and identifies new areas for future growth
- encourage attendance at International Convention and District/Regional Convention
- develop and train club leaders
- supervise election of Governor Elect

Terms of Office

A two-year term is recommended. However, each district makes the decision regarding the length of term. The term of office begins at the conclusion of the annual international convention that follows his or her election. In the event of the resignation, illness or death of the Governor, the Governor Elect succeeds to the office and completes the Governor's full term.

District Councils

The coordination of the affairs of the district may be provided by a District Council. A District Council is composed of the district governor, governor elect, immediate past governor, deputy district governor, and club presidents of that district.

Purpose

To ensure effective continuity, balance, and co-ordination of policies, programs, activities, and relations throughout the district and its clubs.

Objectives

- To work for the achievement of Serra's objectives within the district and through the clubs of the district
- To cooperate with Serra at all levels in organizing new clubs and educating and strengthening existing clubs within the district
- To further Catholicism through an increase of fellowship and cooperative effort of the clubs within the district
- To promote participation of the clubs of the district in the general purposes, programs and policies of Serra, the national or regional council and the district

Activities

- meet quarterly as a District Council to coordinate activities for and throughout the district.
- hold annual fall district/regional convention for all members of clubs within the district

- conduct District Leadership Planning Conference in April or May of each year for the training of new club officers

Serra Clubs

The basic unit of Serra International is the Serra Club. The Serra Club is the primary presence of Serra International in the local community. Serra’s international, national, regional and district structures exist to assist each Serra Club in functioning as efficiently as possible in its local community. Each Serra Club is governed by a Board of Trustees.

Serra Clubs meet weekly or semi-monthly, preferably at mealtimes, typically lasting approximately 75 to 90 minutes. The president presides at these meetings. The meetings are planned in advance with the cooperation of the various committees and subcommittees which are described below. The focus of the meeting is primarily on the program to be presented. Most club business is handled outside of the regular club meeting either through posted notices or the club newsletter. A typical club meeting would look like this:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Gathering and hospitality | 15 minutes |
| Opening prayer, meal or refreshments | 20 minutes |
| Special announcements | 2 to 3 minutes |
| Chaplain’s message | 3 to 5 minutes |
| Program presentation | 30 minutes |
| Discussion | 15 minutes |
| Adjourn with prayer | |

Club Leadership

The Serra Club presents an excellent opportunity for the training and development of skills in leadership. An effective leader is interested in the growth of the members as well as in club accomplishments. A leader creates in the group an atmosphere of ease, cooperation, and good fellowship where everyone works as a team to further the objectives of Serra International.

The best clubs are clubs in which the members are engaged, interested, and active, where every member assumes some responsibility in the club. Serra officers and committee chairpersons are always aware of members’ skills and interests, using these resources for the good of the club.

In addition, good Serra leaders are constantly identifying and training their own successors. The best legacy that a club office can leave is a well-trained successor who is able to assume the responsibilities of leadership with ease.

Club Board of Trustees

The Club Board of Trustees is the overall policy-making, governing, and coordinating body of the club. It has general control over all officers, members, committees, and budgets, approves all bills, and conducts all ordinary business. Its decisions are final unless overruled by a two-thirds majority of the active members present and voting at a regular meeting of the club.

The Club Board of Trustees meets at least once each month, preferably at a time and place separate from the regular club meetings. The members of the Board of Trustees are elected annually as provided in each club's Bylaws.

Responsibilities

- determine tasks and functions for the year
- assign appropriate responsibilities to the members, committees, and subcommittees
- establish the club budget
- oversee election of the club's delegate to the international convention and district meetings
- arrange regular meetings with all committee and subcommittee chairpersons
- ensure that each club officer performs his or her assigned duties
- ensure that required reports are sent promptly to the district governor, governor-elect, and/or deputy governor
- set club dues
- determine the amount of the annual burse given to the diocese or archdiocese, and the time and manner for presentation to the Ordinary
- may fill any vacancy in the office of a vice president, the secretary, the treasurer, or trustee for any unexpired term of such office
- is responsible for preparing, adopting and amending local club bylaws as needed or required

Composition

- President
- President Elect
- Four Vice Presidents
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Immediate Past President
- Club Trustees (three recommended)

Qualifications

A good understanding of and dedication to:

- Serra's objectives and purposes
- the Catholic Church and its role in society
- the needs of the group, the community, and the diocese or archdiocese in which the Serra Club functions
- Serra's Constitution and Bylaws
- The constitution, bylaws and policies of the local club
- consistent attendance at meetings and participation in club programs

- ability to get along and deal impartially with club members
- ability to lead justly and delegate responsibility
- dependably carry out club responsibilities
- have a calm, confident manner
- be an articulate speaker

Terms of Office

Club Officers serve one-year terms while the Club Trustees serve staggered, three-year terms.

Club Officers

Club President

Responsibilities

- preside at club and board meetings
- prepare agenda with assistance of club secretary
- arrive at meetings prior to starting time
- call meetings to order at appointed time
- conduct each meeting according to suggested Serra procedures
- develop democratic and effective club committee structures
- confer with committee chairpersons on appointment of sub-committee chairpersons and members
- attend committee meetings as often as possible
- coordinate work of committees -- check for duplications
- help chairpersons identify and understand their responsibilities and duties
- require good record-keeping of officers and chairpersons
- with secretary, bring club history up-to-date prior to expiration of term of office
- induct new officers at first regular meeting of their term of office, unless function is performed by the district governor
- represent the club at all inter-club meetings and activities, and district meetings
- represent the club at the international convention when designated as delegate
- represent the club in the community
- represent the club in its contacts with the Ordinary of the diocese
- serve as a member of district board of trustees
- maintain close contact with the district governor
- visit the Ordinary with a committee of the board of trustees to maintain the appointment of a club chaplain
- invite the Ordinary to charter night and to visit the club periodically
- perform such other duties as board of trustees may assign, or as may be required by the club's bylaws

Club President Elect

Responsibilities

- attend all club and board of trustees meetings
- serve on the club board of trustees
- at the request of the president, serve on specific committees
- in partnership with the president, ensure timely implementation of National or Regional Council and/or International Board of Trustees actions
- attend and actively participate at the Spring Leadership Planning Conference
- attend regional and district conventions as requested by the president
- provide advice to the current president when requested
- participate in budget preparation for the next fiscal year
- develop working relationship with diocesan vocation organizations
- identify potential officers, chairs and committee members
- perform such other duties as may be assigned by the President and Board of Trustees

Club Vice President for Vocations

Responsibilities

- chair the club vocation committee
- maintain the success of all club vocation efforts
- encourage the formation of a diocesan and/or deanery Church vocations committee
- invite the following to participate in club vocations efforts:
 - Serrans
 - club chaplain
 - local vocation directors from both the diocese and the religious orders
 - priests, religious and laity interested in Church vocations
 - representatives of priests' senates, sisters' councils, seminarians and novices
 - other organizations that are actively involved in supporting vocations, such as the Knights of Columbus, Diocesan Council of Catholic Women

Goals

- to study particular needs and problems at the diocesan level
- to consider possible activities and carry out those that offer the greatest promise
- to initiate and maintain successful vocations programs that meet the needs of the local diocese

Club Vice President for Membership

Responsibilities

- chair the club membership committee
- maintain the success of all club membership efforts
- recommend assignments for each club member to the club president
- takes over the functions of the vice president for program if absent
- invite other club members to serve on this committee and as chairpersons of the following subcommittees:
 - Search
 - Orientation
 - Induction
 - Reception
 - Attendance
 - Health
 - Extension

Club Vice President for Program

Responsibilities

- chair the club program committee
- presides and takes over duties in absence of president
- plan, conduct and evaluate one year of bi-monthly, educational Serran programs
- arranges place of meeting
- arranges seating at head table (if head table is used)
- consults with president on special announcements
- supervises distribution of literature and other material
- introduces speaker or arranges for introduction
- plan and communicate schedule of programs
- determine financial requirements of club programs
- coordinate programs with the club president and the club board of trustees
- ensure that the club programs clearly relate to the two objectives of Serra International
- educate and inform club members on Catholic issues and subjects through lectures, discussions, debates, videos or films, and case studies
- delegate responsibilities to club program committee members to involve each one of them
- develop a follow-up method
- recommend Serrans for membership on the club program committee
- develop and distribute the agenda for each program committee meeting

Goal

- carry out the third objective of Serra, namely, to assist Serrans to recognize and respond in their own lives to God's call to holiness in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit

Club Vice President for Communications

Responsibilities

- chair the club communications committee
- maintain a high standard in all club communications efforts
- develop a long range plan for public relations with specific goals for the current year
- establish contacts with and keep the local media informed of Serra events including the editor of the local Catholic newspaper, religious editors of secular newspapers, and electronic media personnel
- maintain contact with the communications committee of the Serra Council and keep the district informed of club events
- serve on the club board of trustees and remind members about ways their projects can be public relations projects
- develop a cadre of club spokespersons who are available to talk with the media as the need arises
- implement communications projects developed by Serra at all levels

Club Treasurer

Responsibilities

- chair the finance committee
- recommend the level of club dues
- collect all dues
- keep the books and accounts
- obtain financial statements of preceding fiscal year from predecessor
- have custody of all funds of the club
- deposit all funds of the club in the account of the Serra Club in a bank designated by the board of trustees
- prepare periodic reports of the club as directed by the club president including financial status of club at each trustee meeting and the status of delinquent payment of dues by club members
- pay all bills and obligations
- arrange, through resolution of the trustees, for new signatures for all banking accounts
- along with the club secretary and vice president for membership, maintain an up-to-date roster of members
- perform such further duties as ordinarily pertain to the office of treasurer

Club Secretary

Responsibilities

- notify members of all meetings
- notify members of appointments to club committees and special assignments in writing
- arranges for reporting visiting Serrans
- publish and maintain club committee lists
- work with the club committees on the club bulletin/newsletter
- assist the president in preparing the agendas for each club meeting
- help prepare the agenda and attend Board meetings
- prepare and maintain a current roster of members
- take minutes of each meeting for the permanent file
- keep accurate and permanent attendance records at all club meetings
- maintain the permanent club history
- authenticate by signature all records and documents
- bring a copy of the Serra's Constitution and Bylaws and the club bylaws to each meeting
- read all papers as requested by club
- pay speaker's fee and expenses
- write letters of appreciation to speakers
- have new stationery printed as required
- prepare periodic reports as required

Serra Chaplain

Responsibilities

- be familiar with the duties of each of the club officers
- attend every regular club meeting
- attend meetings of the board of trustees
- attend district meetings
- attend Serra's annual international convention
- preside at the liturgy of the Eucharist
- oversee the spiritual development of the club members
- work regularly with the club committees in the following ways:

Programs Committee

- organizing a resource group of priests, religious and Serrans to plan the year's program
- assisting in the planning of a broad-based program
- suggesting specific topics and speakers
- suggesting books and pamphlets for study

Vocations Committee

- contacting the bishop, the diocesan vocations director, and other priests
- assisting the committee in finding specific, material ways to create an atmosphere in which vocations can flourish

Membership Committee

- sharing his knowledge of the parish and diocesan structures
- suggesting new parishes from which new members could be invited
- introducing the membership chairperson to the pastors of parishes where Serra is not represented
- attend chaplain's meeting and special sessions at Serra's annual international convention

Club Committee Structure

Each Serra Club has a committee structure to plan and do the work of the club. The most basic structure for a club consists of six standing committees, executive, finance, vocations, membership, program and communications committees. In addition, the president and the board of trustees may organize ad hoc committees as needed.

The four vice presidents serve as chairs of their respective standing committees. Both the executive and finance committees are made up of the officers of the club with the president serving as chair of the executive committee and the treasurer as chair of the finance committee. Each committee chair may create subcommittees that are assigned specific tasks within the committee area. Club members are appointed to committees by the president with the assistance of the committee chairs and other club officers.

Below is a description of each committee, its structure and composition.

Club Vocations Committee

Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the club vocations committee is to establish a comprehensive vocation program through joint efforts involving the bishop, vocation directors, other priests and consecrated religious, as well as Serrans and other laypersons.

Structure

The size of the club's vocation committee should be determined by the nature of the job to be done. It should be small enough to facilitate good progress, but both large and diverse enough to make the programs work.

In larger clubs, this committee should consist of three to nine people appointed on a rotating basis. Where deemed advantageous or appropriate, subcommittees may be appointed.

Composition

Members on the vocations committee should:

- have special interests in Church vocations
- have the time and energy to work on vocation projects
- represent a variety of experiences and points of view
- be of a variety of ages
- have previous experience as a club officer, if possible

Meetings

The committee should:

- meet monthly or more often in order to fulfill its responsibilities
- send notices of the meeting to the committee members in advance along with the proposed agenda
- keep and circulate adequate records

The committee also should work closely with the internal program committee to help Serrans themselves gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for Church vocations.

Club Membership Committee

Goals

- to invite new members
- to orient and induct new members
- to retain current members
- to form new clubs with the district governor

Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the club membership committee is to establish a comprehensive membership program and obtain good, active members. Because of Serra's need and demand for regular attendance (members are expected to attend all meetings and must attend at least 55%), some particular committee duties are:

- to encourage all members to attend every meeting, including special events;
- to maintain with the club secretary a correct, current club roster and keep a complete, permanent record of all membership attendance;
- to call any member who misses two consecutive meetings and let the member know he or she is missed;
- to submit quarterly attendance reports (at the end of September, December, and June) to the club board of trustees.

Structure

The size of the club's membership committee should include two to three members for each active subcommittee appointed on a rotating basis.

Composition

Members of the membership committee should:

- have the time and energy to work with potential new members, priests, and bishops
- understand clearly what Serra is and be willing and able to explain Serra to others
- be of a variety of ages
- be interested in promoting Serra among diverse ethnic and age groups

Subcommittees

Typical subcommittees of the membership committee are:

- **Search:** Seeks new members and recommends them to the board.
- **Orientation:** Acquaints new members with the history, objectives and requirements of Serra, and sees that all members are periodically re-oriented. The orientation subcommittee should include Serrans who understand the role of the Church in the modern world and the special part Serra must play. It is suggested that this committee include three Serrans and the club chaplain
- **Induction:** Plans a formal induction ceremony, usually at Mass, and sees that new Members become active and are made to feel at home in the club.
- **Reception:** Create a friendly and hospitable atmosphere within the Serra club. Subcommittee members are expected to:

Greet new and old members and provide necessary introductions.

Introduce each new member to older members and assist in membership incorporation.

Distribute, collect and store identification badges for each meeting and social event.

Extend club hospitality to guests and arrange for their introduction, seating and comfort and provide name tags.

Supervise physical arrangements for each meeting including seating, tables, food services, lectern, bell, and Father Serra statue and attend to storage of physical equipment.

Procure, distribute and collect Serra guest attendance cards for mailing.

- **Attendance:** Encourages new members to attend all meetings and cooperates with the club secretary in maintaining a permanent record of attendance.

- **Health:** Promptly informs club members about a serious illness or the death of a Serran or family member.
- **Extension:** Assists the district governor in the formation of new clubs.
- **Nomination:** Nominates club members for officer positions. The subcommittee should try to mix old with new wherever possible, allowing the new members to get a feel for the club operations from the inside and selecting officers from those people who have done their committee jobs well.

Meetings

The committee should:

- meet monthly or more often in order to fulfill its responsibilities;
- send notices of the meeting to the committee members in advance along with the proposed agenda; and
- keep and circulate adequate records.

The committee also should work closely with the other club committees to help find the most suitable club responsibility for each member.

Club Program Committee

Responsibilities

- The primary responsibility of the club program committee is to work to achieve the third objective of Serra, namely, to assist Serrans to recognize and respond in their own lives to God's call to holiness in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit

Subjects for each program are generally developed within the committee which is chaired by the vice president for programs. By talking to other club members and reading the Catholic press, committee members identify subjects relevant to the times. Subjects which interest each club member and make them enthusiastic about the continuing education program are subjects that would receive high priority during the committee planning process.

Structure

The size of the club's program committee should be determined by the amount of work to be done. The committee should be small enough to facilitate good progress, but both large and diverse enough to make the programs work.

It is recommended that committee members be appointed on a rotating basis. Where deemed advantageous or appropriate, subcommittees may be appointed.

Composition

Ideally, the program committee should consist of a member who is:

- involved in diocesan and/or parish affairs and knows many potential speaker sources
- a veteran Serran to provide history regarding identified programs
- a new and young Serran to provide new insight to the committee

The Serra Chaplain should be an advisory member of the committee.

Meetings

The committee should:

- have a defined agenda of subjects to be explore
- meet on a regular basis in order to fulfill its responsibilities
- delegate responsibilities for Action Items to individuals or small groups of committee members who work on them outside of committee meetings
- develop a follow-up system to assure the work on assigned items is satisfactorily progressing to the completion date
- be aware of district events, Serra International requirements and outside sponsored events
- be aware of the financial impact of all programs and communicate budgetary needs to the club president, treasurer and board of trustees for budgeting and ultimate approval
- send notices of the meeting to the committee members in advance along with the proposed agenda
- keep and circulate adequate records

The committee also should work closely with the vocations committee so that vocations activities and internal programs fully support each other and fulfill the two objectives of Serra.

Club Communications Committee

Responsibilities

The primary responsibility of the club communications committee is to establish a comprehensive communications program and facilitate good communications on the club, district, council and international levels.

Structure

The size of the club's communications committee should be determined by the number and types of jobs to be done. There are specific responsibilities like producing a newsletter that may require a separate subcommittee with its own board or chair.

In general, the communications committee should consist of a sufficient number of people to accomplish the stated objectives. It is suggested that all committee members be appointed on a rotating basis. Where deemed advantageous or appropriate, subcommittees may be established.

Composition

Members on the communications committee should:

- have special interests in public relations
- have the time and energy to work on press releases, newsletters, or generating publicity
- have previous experience in public relations, journalism or advertising, if possible

Meetings

The committee should:

- meet monthly or more often in order to fulfill its responsibilities
- send notices of the meeting to the committee members in advance along with the proposed agenda
- keep and circulate adequate records

The committee also should work closely with the other club committees to gather ideas and information that can be used in public relations efforts.

Ad Hoc Committees

From time to time, a president may need to appoint a temporary committee to perform a certain function. Examples of ad hoc committees are:

- a convention committee, responsible for promoting District Conventions, Leadership Conferences, and International Convention and obtaining materials on registration and accommodations, coordinating transportation (car pools, airline/train schedules)
- a bylaws committee, responsible for reviewing any proposed deletions, additions, or amendments to the local club bylaws and/or Serra's Bylaws and Constitution and reporting the club's recommendations to the club Board of Trustees

Resources

Manuals and Other Resources

- President's Manual
- Vocations Manual (including Vocation Project Portfolio)
- Membership Manual

- Organizing a New Serra Club
- Program Manual
- Communications Manual
- Secretary's Manual
- Treasurer's Manual
- Chaplain's Manual
- Serra's Constitution and Bylaws
- Approved Local Club Bylaws
- *THE SERRAN*

Evaluating the Serra Club and its Members

Our spiritual advisers tell us that if we are to make progress in our personal lives, occasionally we must take inventory of how well we are doing. The same principle applies to a Serra Club and its members: if we are to progress, our leaders must regularly evaluate how well things are going in the committees and the club, how well each member is performing, how to continue what is successful, and how to remedy what needs improvement.

Evaluating Serra Club Leaders

From time to time, club members should rate their club leaders as “S”(Strong), “A” (Average), or “W” (Weak) on the following points.

Do my Serra Club leaders:

1. have a thorough understanding of Serra: its objectives, history, bylaws, policies, organization structure, and activities?
2. use the organization's objectives and policies as the basis for leadership activities.?
3. elicit wide participation in decision making?
4. apply sound criteria in selecting other leaders?
5. delegate responsibilities effectively?
6. encourage short and long range planning of goals and of the steps needed to accomplish those goals?
7. adjust their efforts to the unique characteristics and needs of the club and area?
8. provide in-service training of other leaders in the organization?
9. see that budgets are planned, approved, and executed effectively?

10. coordinate the various phases of the organization effectively?
11. communicate effectively inside and outside the organization?
12. check the progress of the club periodically against the objectives and policies of the organization and adapts or adjusts accordingly?
13. exemplify sound principles of human relations in organizing and directing the club?

Evaluating Club Operations

Various policies, procedures, principles, and suggestions for successfully conducting a Serra Club are mentioned throughout this Handbook. Periodically Serra officers should rate their clubs “S” (Strong), “A” (Average), or “W” (Weak) on the following points, then take whatever action is indicated by this analysis.

Do my club officers and other members:

1. have a thorough understanding of Serra’s objectives and purposes?
2. occasionally analyze Serra’s objectives and purposes in terms of today’s problems and needs and the results of this analysis communicated to all members of the club?
3. demonstrate its concern with many groups related to the priesthood and religious life through its various activities: youth, seminarians, sisters, brothers, deacons, associate pastors, pastors, parents, and others?
4. continually develop club members in their spirituality and vocation work?
5. regularly study all material on club leadership found in this *Handbook for Serrans* and other manuals for assistance and guidance in serving the club competently?
6. nominate and elect officers from among those who have been members of the Board of Trustees and/or have served on at least one committee?
7. insist that officers and members of standing committees have and use appropriate Serra manuals and other materials related to their areas of responsibility?
8. plan the terms of club committee assignments so as to allow for a reasonable amount of carry-over of experience from one administration to another?
9. Ensure that committees have a balance of experienced and new members?

10. Arrange for club leaders to be continually trained including instruction in the basic principles of leadership?
11. Plan and schedule events in advance including regular club meetings, special meetings, board meetings, meeting programs, vocations activity, finances, and conventions?
12. Ensure that most members actively participate in club decision making?
13. Ensure that actions of the Board of Trustees are promptly communicated to club members?
14. Monitor the content of the talks given at regular Serra meetings to ensure that they are related to the club's activities?
15. Arrange for qualified members to be given opportunities to participate in the meeting program in order to continue their interest in the club and to utilize potential talent?
16. Ensure that club programs allow for discussion and analysis of topical Catholic issues?
17. Encourage the creativity of all of the members and implement ideas whenever possible?

Self-Evaluation as a Serran

From time to time Serrans should rate themselves as “S” (Strong), “A” (Average), or “W” (Weak) on the list of statements which follow:

1. I have a reasonable understanding of organization and structure of Serra International.
2. I increase my understanding of Serra's role in the Church today by regularly visiting Serra web sites, reading THE SERRAN and other pertinent literature.
3. I continue to develop a deeper understanding of the Church, its principles, and its teachings.
4. I am a better Catholic as a result of the opportunities offered me by Serra.
5. I am developing a deeper understanding and appreciation of priestly ministry.
6. I do my share to encourage Church vocations especially by assisting my own parish priests.
7. I attend Serra meetings faithfully.
8. I devote a reasonable amount of my time to Serra activities, in addition to regular attendance at Serra meetings.

9. I help develop a spirit of friendliness and fellowship among all members of the club.
10. I have been responsible for adding at least one new active member to the club during the past three years.
11. I carry out any assignments or responsibilities given to me in the club.
12. I attend other Serra meetings, conferences, and conventions.
13. I grow in my ability to serve Serra in a leadership position.