



Serra International

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# Handbook for Serrans

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

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## Introduction

### ***A Message to Serrans***

*Prove to everyone with clarity and without compromise, your sincere adherence to Christ and to the Church. Prove, at home, at work in your associations, that the message of Jesus forms real men and women, capable of coping serenely with the harshness of daily life. Be available with all your strength to the construction of a civil society more worthy of mankind. Prove in your whole behavior that, with the grace of God, it is possible to put into practice in the modern world the "Sermon on the Mount" and the "Beatitudes," with all the radicalism they involve.*

*With these wishes I invoke the abundance of divine favors on your meritorious activity, on you all and on your dear ones, and I willingly impart my Apostolic Blessing.*

- Pope John Paul II

*Serrans must be leaders with big Christian vision, men and women who can bring about a great Christian social renaissance. This cannot be done by half-hearted Catholics. The first function of a Serra club is to give the Church trained resolute Catholic men and women who will stand for things Catholic, who will stand for things Christian.*

*Let me ask that you make a special effort to incorporate many of our younger Catholics so that we can train them, train them in the lay apostolate, train them for the day when they will have to be the leaders and carry on as lay persons with their bishops, priests and religious in another generation.*

Samuel Cardinal Stritch  
Episcopal Advisor, Serra International

*There are vocations which manifest themselves.*

*They must be fostered.*

*There are vocations which are not conscious of themselves.*

*They must be awakened.*

*There are vocations which do not dare manifest themselves.*

*They must be found and encouraged.*

*There are vocations which are in fear of being lost.*

*They must be reassured.*

*There are vocations which meet with opposition.*

*They must be strengthened.*

*There are vocations which are paralyzed by poverty.*

*They must be helped financially.*

## Description and History of Serra International

### ***Description***

#### **Serra International**

Serra International is a voluntary organization of Serra Clubs, duly organized and chartered in accordance with the provisions of its Constitution and Bylaws. Serra is international in scope, Catholic in emphasis, and democratic in practice. As of 2003, there are 808 clubs with 19,440 members in 34 countries. Serra is named after Blessed Junipero Serra, the noted Spanish Franciscan missionary priest, who played a leading part in early missionary work in Mexico and the Western United States.

Serrans, Catholic lay men and women and permanent deacons, join together in clubs to promote the objectives of Serra which have remained fundamentally the same since its founding in 1935. The objectives as ratified by the delegates at the 1968 International Convention are:

1. To foster and promote vocations to the ministerial priesthood of the Catholic church as a particular vocation to service and to develop appreciation of the ministerial priesthood and of all religious vocations in the Catholic church, and
2. To further Catholicism by encouraging its members, in fellowship, through education, to fulfill their Christian vocations to service.

### **Serra Clubs**

Serra Clubs guide their members "to put on the mind of Christ" (Phil.2:5) and meet the challenges set forth in the Sermon on the Mount. With their focus on Jesus Christ, Serra Clubs are organized on the model of a *University of Christian Principles* (as described by Samuel Cardinal Stritch.)

Volunteer Service is one of the cardinal principles of Serra and a prime factor in its success. All Serra Club members give their time and talent voluntarily to the work of Serra. The only remuneration desired by them is the satisfaction which comes from the increased success of Serra as an organization and the service which it is able to render to the Church in the many communities, dioceses, and archdioceses where local clubs are situated.

### **History**

Serra began during the fall and winter of 1934, in Seattle, Washington. After meeting informally, four Catholic laymen, Dan Rooney, Richard Ward, Harold Haberle and Leo Sharkey, recognized the need for an association that would advance the cause of Catholicism through lasting friendships among Catholics and continuing education in their Catholic faith.

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

The founders searched for a name for the new club. John Bray, also a charter member of the Seattle club, proposed the name of "Serra" after Father Junipero Serra, a Spanish Franciscan missionary in the Western United States. Father Serra is referred to as the "Apostle of California." He founded "El Camino Real," 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. The new Serra Club became a living memorial to the spirit of this humble missionary.

During the first four years, new 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 July 2, 1938, delegates from the five clubs voted to form Serra International, adopting as their common goals the original aims of the founders of the first Serra Club. T.V. Sheehan of Seattle was elected first president. Bishop Gerald Shaughnessy became first chaplain, serving until 1946.

In 1946, the Board of Trustees of Serra International along with Samuel Cardinal Stritch, then Archbishop of Chicago and newly-invited Serra Episcopal Advisor, decided to open a central office in Chicago with full-time personnel to aid in the overall management of Serra International.

This decision was ratified at the International Convention in Chicago in April 1947. An Executive Director was appointed by the Board of Trustees.

Serra grew extensively throughout the world during the 1950s. Clubs were formed in Canada, Mexico, Peru, England, and Italy. To support vocations work, the Serra International Foundation was established. On May 6, 1951, at the request of Cardinal Stritch, then Serra's Episcopal Adviser, Serra International was aggregated to the Pontifical Work for Priestly Vocations because it had been closely identified with the promotion of vocations to the priesthood and religious from its beginnings in the 1930s.

During the 1960s, brisk worldwide expansion spread the word of Serra to Spain, Venezuela, Brazil, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Australia. As a testament to its vital role in the Catholic church at the international level, Serra participated in the First International Vocation Congress in Rome in 1962. Serra's continued success in the 1970s was reflected in the establishment of National Councils in Great Britain and Brazil and the admission of permanent deacons as members. In addition, Serra became a member organization of the National Catholic Vocations Conference.

In the 1980s, Serra formed National Councils in Spain, Italy, Mexico, and the Philippines and expanded into Africa, New Zealand, Ghana, Nigeria, and Switzerland. Serra participated in the Second International Vocation Congress in 1981. At the 1986 International Convention in Milwaukee, WI, the Constitution and Bylaws were amended to admit women as members.

With the ongoing, long-range planning process called "Vision 2000" which began in 1991, Serra moves forward toward the millennium. Serrans around the world have accepted the challenge to become the "Vocations Arm of the Church." In the U.S. and Canada, a National Council, formed in 1994, serves the specific and diverse needs of Serrans with many ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. With the political changes in Eastern Europe, Serra Clubs were chartered in Hungary, Croatia, and Slovenia. In June, 2000, Canada formed its own council.

## **International Structure**

To operate efficiently, the Serra International Constitution and Bylaws provide for a carefully defined organizational structure. Led by an International Board of Trustees which includes the Principal Officers, Serra also draws upon the services of an Episcopal Advisor, volunteer Standing Committees, the Serra International Foundation, and a full-time Executive Director and paid staff.

### **Principal Officers**

#### *Responsibilities*

*For information on the duties of the International Officers,  
see Article IV, **Duties of International Officers**  
in the Serra International Constitution and Bylaws.*

#### *Composition*

- President
- President-Elect
- four Vice Presidents
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Immediate Past President

### *Terms of Office*

The President, President-Elect, and Vice Presidents are elected for one-year terms at the International Convention while the Secretary and Treasurer both are elected for two years.

### **Board of Trustees**

#### *Responsibility of Board of Trustees*

- general control and supervision of Serra International

#### *Responsibilities of Trustees*

- serve as liaison and consultant to the district governors when no national council exists in their area
- assist district governors in whatever way possible
- delegate to and work with Deputy Trustee in areas where a Board member requests one and the International Board appoints one

#### *Composition*

- eleven area trustees
- eight principal officers
- immediate Past President
- such additional trustees, not to exceed three, as from time to time may be determined by the Board of Trustees.

### *Terms of Office*

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

### **Episcopal Advisor**

#### *Responsibilities*

- lead Serrans in the development of their spiritual life and vocation
- counsel and advise the International Board on general policies and the principles of faith

#### *Term of Office*

The International Board of Trustees invites a member of the hierarchy to serve as Episcopal Advisor for a term of three years.

### **Standing Committees**

#### *Responsibilities*

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

*For details on the specific responsibilities  
of the nine Standing Committees,  
see Article V, **International Committees**, Sections 1-10.*

#### *Standing Committees*

- 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 less than three members, are appointed by the President, with the approval of the Board of Trustees. In addition, the President may appoint special committees as needed.

### **Serra International Foundation**

#### *Responsibilities*

- provide financial support to Serra International
- raise, invest and disburse funds so as to provide the means to carry out the objectives of Serra International

#### *Terms of Operation*

- At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Serra International on October 25, 1951, the Serra International Foundation was created and incorporated in Illinois as a not-for-profit corporation.
- The Foundation obtains its funds from private and corporate sources and those who wish to advance the objectives of Serra International around the world.

### **Executive Director**

#### *Responsibilities*

- works closely with the International Board of Trustees
- manages the day to day functioning of the International Office
- oversees the International Convention, publications and committees

#### *Terms of Office*

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

## **International Activities**

To further its objectives and conduct its business, Serra International holds regular committee and general meetings and publishes the *SERRAN* Magazine.

### **Annual International Convention**

#### *Description*

The 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

In addition, the International Convention is:

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

### **The *SERRAN* Magazine**

#### *Description*

The *SERRAN* Magazine is:

- the official publication of Serra International

- the official source of local and district as well as International news and inspiration on every phase of Serra organization and activity
- published four times a year in June, August, December and March

## **National Councils**

Serra International recognizes the beneficial role that a National Council can provide by representing the clubs at the national level and ensuring more effective extension work within the country. The formation, constitution, and operations of National Councils are governed by Article IX of the International Bylaws. All National Councils must be approved by the Board of Trustees of Serra International.

Serra has National Councils in Great Britain, Brazil, Spain, Italy, Mexico, the Philippines, Canada, the USA, and SCANZPAC, which covers Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Serra International maintains offices in several countries to support the work of Serra there.

### **The USA Council**

The USA/Canada Council (USACC) was organized in 1994. Canada formed its own council in 2000. The United States has been divided into 13 regions corresponding with the 14-region structure of the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). Each region has a Regional Director. To permit better communications, the United States is divided into two areas, East and West, with one half of the regional directors reporting to one Regional Coordinator and one half to the other. The district governors within each region report to the USA Council through the regional directors.

### **District Governor**

Where a national council exists, the district governor reports to the national council. Where there is no national council, the district governor reports to the designated Serra 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 Area 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

#### *Term 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 Serra 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 seek to attain the objectives of Serra International within the district and through the clubs of the district.
- To cooperate with Serra International 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 the district, the national council, and of Serra International.

### *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
- plan Spring District Leadership Planning Conference in April or May 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, area and district structures exist to assist the Serra Club in functioning as efficiently as possible in the 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 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
- insure that each club officer performs his or her assigned duties
- insure that required reports are sent promptly to the district governor, governor-elect, and/or deputy governor
- 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*

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

### *Qualifications*

- understanding of and dedication to:
  - Serra's objectives
  - the Catholic Church and its role in human society
  - the needs of the group, the community, and the diocese or archdiocese in which the club functions
  - the Constitution and Bylaws of Serra International
- 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 following term of office, unless function is performed by district governor
- represent club:
  - at all inter-club meetings and activities, and district meetings
  - at International convention when designated as delegate
  - in community
  - in its contacts with local Ordinary
- serve as member of district board of trustees
- maintain close contact with district governor
- in new club:
  - visit Ordinary with committee of the board of trustees to ask for appointment of club chaplain
  - invite local Ordinary to charter night and to visit new club periodically
- perform such other duties as board of trustees may assign, or as may be required by 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, insure timely implementation of Local National Council and Serra International Board action
- 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

### **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
- Identify and collaborate with 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

### **Vice President for Membership**

#### *Responsibilities*

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

### **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
- duties at meeting
  - 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
- insure 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 second principle of Serra, namely, to further Catholicism by encouraging members, in fellowship, through education, to fulfill their Christian vocation to service

## **Vice President for Communications**

### *Responsibilities*

- chair the club communications committee
- maintain the success of all club communications efforts
- develop a long range plan for public relations with specific goals for the current year
- establish contacts and keep with the local media informed of Serra events
  - Catholic newspaper editor
  - religious editors of secular newspapers
  - broadcast personnel
- maintain contact with the Communications Committee of Serra International 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 the Serra International and Local National Committee Communications committees

## **Treasurer**

### *Responsibilities*

- chair the finance committee
- set 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
  - 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

## **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 International Constitution and Bylaws and 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 stationary printed
- prepare periodic reports as required

## **Chaplain**

### *Responsibilities*

- be familiar with the duties of each of the club officers
- attend:
  - every regular club meeting
  - meetings of the board of trustees
  - district meetings
  - Serra International conventions
- 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

- 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

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

### Membership

- 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
- attends chaplain's workshop at International convention and district meetings

## **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 of the bishop, vocation directors, and competent priests, religious, Serrans and other lay persons.

### *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 (Sept. 30, Dec. 31, and June 30) 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 carry out the second principle of Serra, namely, to further Catholicism by encouraging members, in fellowship, through education, to fulfill their Christian vocation to service

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 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, 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. Typical ad hoc committees are:

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

### *Resources*

- Manuals
  - 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 International Constitution and Bylaws
  - Suggested Local Club Bylaws
  - *SERRAN* Magazine

## **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.

*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 Operation**

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

1. All club members have a thorough understanding of Serra's objectives.
2. The club occasionally analyzes Serra's objectives in terms of today's problems and needs and the results of this analysis communicated to all members of the club.
3. The club demonstrates 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. Club leaders continually develop club members in their spirituality and vocation work.
5. Club officers and committee members 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. Club officers are nominated and elected from among those who have been members of the Board of Trustees and/or have served on at least one committee.
7. All officers and members of standing committees have and use appropriate Serra International manuals and other materials related to their areas of responsibility.

8. The terms of club committee assignments allow for a reasonable amount of carry-over of experience from one administration to another.
9. Committees have a balance of experienced and new members.
10. Club leaders are continuously trained including instruction in the basic principles of leadership.
11. The club plans and schedules events in advance including regular club meetings, special meetings, board meetings, meeting programs, vocations activity, finances, and conventions.
12. Most members actively participate in club decision making.
13. Actions of the Board of Trustees are promptly communicated to club members.
14. The content of the talks given at regular Serra meetings are related to the club's activities.
15. Qualified members are given opportunities to participate in the meeting program in order to continue their interest in the club and to utilize potential talent.
16. Club programs allow for discussion and analysis of contemporary Catholic and Church issues.
17. Club leaders 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 reading the SERRAN and other pertinent literature.
3. I continue to develop a deeper understanding of the Church, its principles, and its problems.
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 Church 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.