



The USA Council of Serra International

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## **Chaplain's Manual**

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

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## Introduction

*The first function of a Serra Club is to develop international, resolute Catholic men and women who will stand for things Christian. Serrans must be leaders with big Christian vision, men and women who will bring about a great Christian social renaissance.*

Samuel Cardinal Stritch  
Episcopal Adviser, Serra International (1946-1958)

*Serra clubs are known for their work of promoting and preserving vocations to the priesthood. However, the direct result from active membership for the majority of men and women who join Serra is their own resurgent sense of vocation, not only within their careers but especially as Christians.*

John Cardinal Wright  
Prefect, Sacred Congregation of the Clergy

*Within the Church we observe all sorts of groups whose members are vowed to the perfect practice of this or that particular virtue: mercy, detachment, the splendor of the liturgy, the missions, contemplation. Why should there not be men and women vowed to the task of exemplifying, by their lives, the general sanctification of human endeavor? Men and women whose common religious ideal would be to give a full and conscious explanation of the divine possibilities or demands which any worldly occupation implies - men and women, in a word, who would devote themselves, in the fields of thought, art, industry, commerce, and politics, etc., to carrying out, in the sublime spirit these demands, the basic tasks which form the very bonework of human society?*

Teilhard de Chardin  
The Divine Milieu

We believe that Serra is the group that de Chardin describes. To make this a reality, however, each Serran needs the support of the chaplain.

### **Purpose**

This guide is intended primarily for the club chaplain. It describes the dual responsibilities of the club chaplain, both spiritual and practical. It may be helpful to other club officers; for example, when making recommendations to the bishop for a new chaplain.

## Being an Effective Club Chaplain

The Serra club chaplain has two primary responsibilities, practical club duties and spiritual development of Serrans. The club chaplain is selected annually, based on the recommendations of the club Board of Trustees which is submitted to the bishop for his consideration. Appointment by the bishop makes the chaplain the bishop's liaison with the club and its spiritual adviser.

To be an effective club chaplain, he must understand Serra's organization, its structure, its two main purposes, and its history. Above all, the club chaplain must know the two objectives of Serra:

- 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,
- to further Catholicism by encouraging its members, in fellowship, through education, to fulfill their Christian vocation to service.

### Responsibilities

#### *Practical Club Duties*

While not interfering with the governance of the club and its elections, the chaplain should know:

- what it takes to make a good member of Serra;
- what type of Serran men and women can discharge effectively the duties of the various club offices;
- be familiar with the duties of each of the club officers.

The club chaplain is expected to:

- attend:
  - every regular club meeting
  - meetings of the board of trustees
  - district/regional conventions
  - Serra International conventions
- 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

### *Spiritual Development*

The club chaplain is most needed in the area of spiritual formation. He sets the example of living the Gospel publicly and daily, an example which Serrans should imitate. A Serra Club needs a club chaplain who can:

- effectively lead the club in prayer
- aid Serrans in reflecting upon the priesthood and religious life and their places in society
- describe the priesthood and religious life
- help Serrans appreciate and understand their own Christian vocation to service
- motivate them to share their faith publicly with others and act on it
- encourage frequent meditation on the sacramental mystery of the Eucharist and the place of the priest in his or her own life

A club chaplain is expected to:

- occasionally conduct an entire program on spiritual formation
- encourage attendance at or conduct a retreat
- hold days of recollection
- annually remember the deceased members of the club
- Preside at the liturgy of the Eucharist for the Serra club.

### *Resources*

- Club office manuals
- **THE SERRAN** magazine
- **serraUSA** magazine
- Attendance at International Conventions, especially the Chaplains' Program
- Attendance at District/Regional Conventions and Conferences
- Interaction with other Serra clubs
- Dialogue with Serrans, Vocation Directors, Religious, and Clergy
- Contacts and conferences with other successful chaplains

"I've been in many Church organizations and when I was invited to join Serra I thought I'd check it out. I firmly believed God called on me to get involved to promote vocations. At first I wasn't so sure, but when I got acquainted with our chaplain, I felt so very good about the mission of Serra!

"He inspired with his dedicated leadership, his spirituality, his friendliness and his full belief that we could make a difference doing God's work in promoting vocations and supporting our priests and religious."

-- Don DeDecker, Serra Club of Northwest Metro Denver, CO

**Serra International  
USA Council  
Suggest Club**

**Position Description for the Club Chaplain**

**Position Title:** Club Chaplain

**Reports To:** President

**Position:** Attends all Board Meetings. Provides communication linkage with the USA Council Episcopal Advisor. Periodically assesses the Club in the accomplishment of its mission and objective as related to the spiritual, vocational and ethical activities of the officers and committees. Communicates with Ordinary of the Diocese and the Diocesan Vocation Directors to strengthen and improve the relationships with the Club. When requested, represents the Club in meetings, conferences and/or conventions. In concert with the President and Club Trustees, provides guidance and suggestion to improve the Club's vocation activities. Attends training for the club Chaplains.

**Principal Responsibilities:**

1. Attends all Board meetings and Annual Serra International Conventions
2. Attends, when possible, Regional and district Convention
3. Provides suggestions and guidance to the Club furthering the Club's external relationship with other organizations involved in vocation ministry
4. Provides suggested initiative to implement USCCB vocation programs
5. Gives consultation and guidance to the Vice President of Vocations on specific programs and activities affecting local Serra Clubs.
6. Gives guidance to the Vice President of Programs in the use of effective programs that have been developed for club use that contain the current teaching of the Bishops, encyclicals and episcopal statements
7. Makes himself aware of the activities of all of the standing committees of the Club and provides spiritual oversight
8. Responds to requests from Club Officers for counsel and guidance in matters and relationships affecting the club

**Position Requirements:**

1. Thorough knowledge of Serra and its Objects and Purposes and the USA Council and its Objectives and Purposes
2. Ability to work collaboratively with club officers and members

**Desirable Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**

1. Ability to communicate clearly and concisely orally and in writing

The USA Council of Serra International  
65 East Wacker Place, Suite 802  
Chicago IL 60601  
USA  
(312)201-6549  
(888)777-6681 USA only  
Fax (312)201-6548  
Fax (888)777-6803 USA only  
Visit us on the Web: [www.serraus.org](http://www.serraus.org)  
e-mail: [serraus@serraus.org](mailto:serraus@serraus.org)  
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