



Fall 2017

The secret sauce that holds Serra together: Christ'ed Friendships.

In most dioceses that have Serra Clubs, Serrans are rightly and properly identified with the many vocations activities that they do for the Church with regular frequency. It's a given that most Serrans are known as "doers." One will find that typically Serrans are active on many fronts, some focused on vocations, while also supporting some other worthy and important parish or diocesan cause.

However, participation in vocations fostering or affirmation activities is only part of the picture of a top Serra Club. Equally important to a club's efforts to foster and support vocations to the priesthood and religious life (Serra mission objectives #1 and #2) are its efforts to support that important third objective: "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 (Serra mission objective #3). It's my belief that the secret sauce of Serra is its internal spirituality programs, and its efforts to develop what I call *Christ'ed friendships*, enduring friendships that place Christ at their center. It is this element of Serra which holds it all together and makes Serrans 'Serrans for Life.'

So how does a local Serra club insure that it is working on this all-important objective of Serra while it is doing all the good work that it does in fostering and affirming religious vocations? Let's start with your club meetings. Top clubs will plan more club programs which provide spiritual growth and faith development.



This is what many call inspiration. My observation is that many club meetings are strong on information but light on inspiration. A good club meeting is always a mix of both, but for long lasting Serran friendships, inspiration comes in the form of fully developed club programs that grow Serrans spiritually.

A rich resource for spiritual topics can be found on your recently updated www.SERRAUS.org website, with its many ready-to-use spiritual topics, found under the tab “Programs and Club Meetings.” All of the topics presented are complete, stand-alone programs and the subjects are timeless, dealing with fundamental spirituality of Catholic Serra Leaders. Other programs are 1) seasonal, providing a robust assortment of liturgical year programs, or 2) topical, so that possibly a series on one particular subject, say Virtues, can be investigated and embraced in depth. Further, in keeping with long-standing but often forgotten Serra learning principles, these programs can and should more often be led by Serrans. Serra teaching Serrans: What better way to learn than to have to teach something?

Club member spirituality will also be enhanced greatly by annual days of reflection and pilgrimages. Days of reflection are common among top Serra Clubs, providing a richer and deeper spiritual enrichment by a holy and local spiritual director. These days of reflection become poorly attended when clubs adopt a “same thing, different year” attitude about them, however. Each year, energy must be given to the planning of these special day-long retreats. Think bigger. Think deeper. Think out of the box on your retreats. And then how about a pilgrimage to a holy shrine, a special location that may be only a few hours way; or a religious abbey, or a seminary, or something that requires a bit of a trip, a pilgrimage? Top clubs frequently organize trips to these shrines to feed their Serrans’ appetite for the spiritual depth that satisfies. In addition, when taken as a pilgrimage another good thing happens, Serrans meet new Serrans. It’s a road trip, with all the comraderie and fun that attends such a group gathering.

When improved member spirituality becomes an important club focus, it is then that your members will begin to realize that being a Serran is more about who they are, rather than what they do. To be a Serran is one of the greatest gifts in the



world --- one that is treasured by those who find themselves called to serve this noble mission. And it is Christ'ed friendships that make the difference. With these friendships come a mutual understanding and spiritual maturity that makes Serra one of the great organizations in the world. And adds immense meaning to your personal profession: I am a Serran.

Grateful,

Greg Schwietz, President

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