

# SERRA CLUB OF PITTSBURGH



## NEWS



JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2008

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Friday, January 11, 2008**

Vocation Awareness Weekend  
Kearns Spirituality Center

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**Friday, January 18**

Noon Luncheon - Amici (formerly  
Tambellini's)  
Installation of New Members

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**Friday, February 15**

Noon Luncheon - Amici  
Kris Williamson -faculty member  
Wheeling Jesuit College

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**Friday, March 14**

Noon Luncheon - Amici  
Bishop David Zubik

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### Upcoming Vocation Awareness Weekend

The Vocation Awareness Weekend will begin on Friday, January 11, 2008, at the Kearns Spirituality Center, 9000 Babcock Boulevard, Allison Park, PA 15101. The theme of the Vocation Awareness retreat is "Take The Plunge ... Celebrating Your Baptismal Call." The Pittsburgh Religious Vocation Council will be conducting the programs. A buffet supper will be served at 6:30 and Serrans are invited to attend. The program begins at 7:30 and will begin with a brief welcome by the Serrans.

Saturday's programs begin with Mass at 7:30 and conclude with a social at 9:00 p.m. The Mass on Sunday morning will be at 8:00 a.m. in the Visitation Chapel. This will be followed by brunch. Serrans are welcome to attend the liturgy and the brunch. If any Serran desires to attend the buffet supper on Friday or the brunch on Sunday, please contact Mary McDonald or Dan Haller, who are Co-Chairpersons. †

### January Luncheon Meeting

The January 18 meeting at Amici's will be the induction meeting for new members. Please make an effort to attend this meeting and show your support for new members who have joined Serra. In addition to the induction of new members, Father Mele, our Chaplain, will offer some reflections on his Chaplaincy of the Pittsburgh Serra Club.

Due to the possibility of a large turnout for the January 18 meeting, we would ask that you contact John Pillar or Jack Warwick to let them know you are attending and if you are bringing a guest. This will enable us to at least estimate the number of attendees so that we can advise Amici's in advance. Contact John Pillar at [japillar@nauticom.net](mailto:japillar@nauticom.net) or at 412-343-0970 (leave a message if you get voice mail). Jack Warwick can be contacted at [jwarwickcpa@aol.com](mailto:jwarwickcpa@aol.com) or at 412-381-8228. Please try to contact either John or Jack by January 15 if you are planning to attend. †

### Serra Christmas Party Delightful Evening for All

A total of seventy five Serrans, guests, retired priests from the Manor including Bishop William J. Winter, and Seminarians attended the Annual Serra Club Christmas Party held December 14, 2007 at St. Paul Seminary.

Bishop David A. Zubik, now the 12<sup>th</sup> Bishop of the Pittsburgh Diocese, was also present and stayed the entire evening visiting with the (Continued on next page)

The Serra Club of Pittsburgh NEWS is published bi-monthly for all active members. Newsletters are mailed to members and are available at the luncheons. Articles should be sent to the editor via e-mail at [rjgolebie@verizon.net](mailto:rjgolebie@verizon.net) or by phone at (412) 531-3670. Ideas for future articles are welcome.

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## In Our Prayers

Those in special need of our prayers this month include:

Cliff Berschneider  
Marie Deasy  
Jim Ferry  
Jim Finn  
Madeline Kosky  
Lou Manns  
Janet Pschirer  
Mrs. Selder (mother  
of Mary Alice)

If you know a member in need of our prayers, call Ray Golebie 412-531-3670 to have them added to our prayer list. †

## Board Meetings

The Board of Trustees will meet on the following Wednesdays: **January 23<sup>rd</sup>** and **February 27<sup>th</sup>** at St. Paul Seminary at 5:30 pm. Board Meetings are open to all members. †



Several of the Serra Club widows with Marie and Bob Deasy

Christmas Party *continued from page 1.* group. At the end of the evening Bishop Zubik thanked the Serrans for their efforts in promoting vocations.

The food and beverages were excellent and plentiful. The friendship that flowed indicated that a joyful Christmas Season would prevail. Bishop Zubik started his remarks by having the seminarians introduce themselves. The Bishop announced that Father Mele is no longer pastor at St. Sebastian and has been reassigned to the Seminary as Director of Post-Orientation Formation. He then asked the Serrans for help in achieving two of his goals.

The Bishop announced that one of his goals is to have 90 young men in training for the priesthood.

“When I arrived in Green Bay in 2003,” he said, “we had five young men in the seminary. When I left that Diocese a few months ago, we had 20 young men studying and working toward the priesthood. Here in Pittsburgh, we currently have 29 men in the seminary, so I believe my goal is a realistic one.”

The Bishop then appealed to Serrans to increase their efforts through prayer and other works to gain more individuals to study for the priesthood and the religious life. He said he would like to be able to send a large delegation of seminarians to Australia next summer for World Youth Day and asked Serrans for their support in this effort. The cost to sponsor a Seminarian would be approximately \$3,000.

Two Serrans present at the meeting responded. Dick Ponzio said he would sponsor the trip for two seminarians. George Wasson volunteered to sponsor another Seminarian. After concluding his remarks, the Bishop led the group in singing the hymn, *Salve Regina*. †

## Memorial Mass Wrap Up

The Annual Memorial Mass and Luncheon was again held at St. Bonaventure Church, Glenshaw on November 2, 2007. Forty Serrans and Guests were in attendance. Fr. Joseph A. Mele, Chaplain, celebrated the Mass and paid tribute to the deceased members of the Pittsburgh Serra Club in his

beautiful homily. Fr. Joe was assisted at Mass by John Warwick, Altar Server; and Tom Politylo, Lector. Mrs. Carol Lee Ponzio, directed the music, and Ray and Emma Golebie were the Gift Bearers.

After the Mass lunch was served in the Church Hall, John Pillar welcomed the group and distributed red roses to the widows of deceased Serrans. Our special thanks go to Norman McDonald, husband of Serran Mary K. McDonald, who for the past six years has volunteered to assist the caterer in serving and cleaning up after the Luncheon. Many thanks also to Fr. John Sweeney, Pastor of St. Bonaventure, for the use of the facilities. †



Dorothy Loebig, Maureen and William Boyle and Jean Comber

## Serrans At Work

It was a beautiful summer day on September 17, 2007 when two Serrans (Clark Martin and George Wasson ) traveled to Oglebay, West Virginia to be at the registration (between the hours of 3:00 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.) of the priests at the Pittsburgh Diocese Convocation. Father James Wehner invited the Club to send several members to promote membership in Serra. We had an opportunity to greet the priests and distribute literature. Father Mele was with us part of the time and introduced many pastors, always encouraging them to seek possible members to Serra from their parish. It was heartwarming to hear so many priests say that they appreciated all the Serrans do to promote vocations. Father Schreck, one of the newly ordained priests, was very thankful and said we should not be discouraged in our efforts and to keep praying. Sometimes the Holy Spirit seems to have strange ways of answering our requests. It was a great opportunity to see so many priests that we know and to see a large gathering of priests enjoy themselves. †

## Immigration a “Hot Button” Issue in Election

Immigration and its ramifications will likely be a major hot button issue in the coming presidential elections said Sister Janice Vanderneck, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph, who works with and is an advocate for the Latino Community in the Pittsburgh area.



*Bob Deasy presents Sister Janice with a gift.*

Sr. Janice has a background of working with Hispanic people. She spent several years working as a missionary in the Amazon and has a master’s degree in theology.

Speaking at the November 16 meeting of the Serra Club, Sr. Janice said there is a great need for comprehensive immigration reform in the United States.

“It is virtually impossible today for many immigrants to arrive legally in the United States,” she said. “Visas are not available, especially for unskilled workers. Many of these people are living in the shadows in this country. The consequences of this broken system result in lost lives in the desert, exploitation in the workplace, abuse at the hands of unscrupulous smugglers, lack of health care and lack of opportunity for education.”

Sr. Janice said she is opposed to illegal immigration but the simple fact is that the economic situation for many people draws them to the United States as they seek “a better life for their families.” “This is not a city problem nor is it a small town problem,” she said “It is a national challenge that we must meet.”

“Comprehensive reform would create legal avenues for workers who wish to migrate to this country,” she declared, “where they can work in a safe and legal environment instead existing in the shadows where they are now hidden.”

*(Continued on next page)*

## Welcome, New Members

The Serra Club welcomes the following new members:

**Robert T. Brennen**  
*St. Bonaventure*

**Dr. Donald J. Humer**  
*St. Sebastian*

**Paul C. Kress**  
*St. Sebastian*

**Anita M. Letterie**  
*St. Bonaventure*

**Dr. George J. Pavlic**  
*St. Sebastian*

**James J. Pschirer**  
*St. Sebastian*

Our Chaplain, Father Joseph Mele is to be commended for his work and encouragement in bringing so many new members to the Serra Club in the past year. In 2007, seventeen new members joined the Pittsburgh Serra Club.†

## Quote of the Month

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

— Leo Buscaglia

Immigration a "Hot Button"  
*continued from page 3.*

Sr. Janice noted that, on the question of immigration, "our stance is based on the human dignity of each person and that our faith tradition is to welcome the stranger with love and compassion." She encouraged Serrans to look at the U.S. Bishops' web site and search out the recent document, "Faithful Citizenship." †

## A Journey Thru Cultures and Contrasts

By Jim Ferry

This past October and November Mary Carleen and I traveled half way around the world to just touch on 8 Cities in 6 South Eastern Asian Countries in 23 days. We left from Marco Island FL (no Serra Club), and traveled via Dallas and Tokyo for 37 hours to Bangkok, Thailand, (where, as you know, there are Serra Clubs.) But due to crossing the International Date line, daylight savings, and the time difference, it was 2 hours earlier the same day. Now that can mess up a nights sleep!

In addition to Bangkok we visited Singapore, Saigon, (now called Ho Chi Minh), Nha Trang, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Okinawa, Shanghai, Nagasaki, and Beijing.

People in general, were extremely kind and polite, especially in Japan & Thailand. Their small living quarters, stores, streets and cars were eye openers. The people were generally small, trim, soft-spoken and very courteous. Motorbikes and bicycles are everywhere. They simply do not have space for too many big streets and vehicles.

Our southern most point was Singapore at a little over 1 degree above the equator, to our northern most at Hong Kong, roughly the same Latitude as Pgh. In the Southern Countries (Bangkok, Singapore, S. Vietnam) the Buddha Temples and Shrines were everywhere—in storefronts, homes and front entrances, even empty lots.

We saw a few Catholic Churches, especially in Bangkok, Singapore, and Hong Kong (areas lacking strict Communism), and only one in Saigon where we went into Notre Dame Cathedral. Though we saw no sign of a priest or Masses in Notre Dame, the guide (who would not enter) told us there is a practicing Catholic population here. While there may be some Catholics, I personally doubt there is much open practicing - but granted our exposure was brief and my impression subjective.

In all of the countries we visited motorbikes, bicycles and walking is how most of the ordinary people got around. No American overweight problems there! If they have a car it is typically very small and old.

It also seemed that housing for most poor and middle income people consists more of huts of one or a few small concrete block rooms, shamefully small and inadequate by our standards. In the older central parts of town, a family of 2 or 3 generations lives together in these clusters of 2 or 3 small rooms usually only 1 story high, and sometimes connected by a very small vegetable garden/courtyard. It is hard to tell where one family's cluster ends and another begins. Most rooms had running water but seldom toilets. The government provides a men's and women's toilet in each block which it cleans 4 times a day. I used it but you would not like it.

Singapore, Hong Kong and Beijing were amazing. While they seem to have somewhat the same low and middle class conditions, commerce, industry and shipping are obviously rampant. Their economic success is staggering, especially Singapore which as the crown Jewell of the trip was modern beautiful



New Member Bob Irr smiles  
with Fr. Mele.

and clean. Shouldn't there be a message here to the hard-line Chinese about free enterprise? Japan is no slouch either. "Tokyo, its Capital, is home to 9 of the worlds 10 largest banks, the largest airline, the worlds 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> largest construction companies, and conglomerates controlling major blocks of important real estate throughout the world."

Mary Carleen says that Nagasaki, Japan was the most interesting of the land tours. It was made infamous at 11:02 on Aug 9<sup>th</sup> 1945 with the dropping of "Fatman" the second atomic bomb. Displays and museums tell from an historical perspective the events surrounding the dropping of the atomic bomb without taking or placing blame.

As we have worked our way north we seem to have the lost the popularity of the temples and Buddha, with little sign of any religion in these more Communistic countries.

We ended our tour in Beijing, China. They are doing an amazing job of upgrading every part of the City that will be seen during the 2008 Olympics. The world will then see a beautiful China—but go one street over, which the world will not see, and again they have the woeful crowded living conditions, public toilets, and tiny often dirty streets.

In the newer parts of town, or in rehabilitated old neighborhoods, the government builds high-rise apartment buildings, often 40 to 60 stories high. Again 2 or 3 generations (only 1 child allowed - preferably a male) living in 2 or 3 small rooms. Only 1 very small playground outside, with the buildings pushed tightly together.

South East Asia was a wonderful Trip. There is more that we did not see and learn than we did. Perhaps that is for another day. †



*John Pillar presents Fr. Mele with his Chaplain pin.*

## From the Serra Club Of Ogdensburg, NY

Our Serra Club sponsored and organized a **Vocations Pilgrimage** on September 13, 2007 to St. Joseph's Shrine in Montreal. About 160 people participated—riding in three coach buses and a few autos.

Our first stop was at the Basilica of our Lady of Montreal where we had a guided tour and a prayer service led by Fathers Gaffney, McEwen and Amoyt.

The next stop was at St. Joseph's Oratory (Blessed Andre Bessette) where we enjoyed a box lunch provided by a local restaurant. Then during free time until the Mass, we toured the shrine and viewed the large and very beautiful display of hand-crafted creches from all over the world.

The celebrants of the 3 pm Mass in the lower chapel were our Bishop Robert J. Cunningham, seven priests and one deacon of the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

We departed the oratory at about 4:30pm to arrive at the huge parish dining hall at the Church of the Holy Angels at Altona, N. Y. (a few miles south of the U.S./Canada border near Plattsburgh, N.Y.)

Our Serra Club of Ogdensburg, N.Y. has sponsored many such vocations prayer pilgrimages, almost yearly, to Canada (St. Joseph's Oratory, Our Lady of the Cape

and Ste. Anne de Beaupre), to the Jesuit Martyrs' Shrine in Auriesville, N.Y., to Washington, D.C. and to Rome, Italy. The prayer pilgrimages to Canadian shrines have been the most popular in terms of the numbers of the people participating.

We plan to continue vocation prayer pilgrimages as one means by which to increase awareness of the great need for constant prayer for vocations on the part of all the Faithful. †

# Shrine Photos From the Serra Club Of Ogdensburg, NY

