

# Serra Club of Pittsburgh



## NEWS



JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2010

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### January 15, 2010

Luncheon, Noon - Rico's  
Fr. Matthew McClain,  
Director of Vocations

#### February 19

Luncheon, Noon - Rico's  
Video on Vocations

### Annual Christmas Party

The Annual Serra Club of Pittsburgh Christmas Party was held on Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at St. Paul Seminary in Domenec Hall. Approximately one hundred guests including Serrans, seminarians, priests and guests came together to celebrate this festive occasion.

Bishop David A. Zubik, Bishop William Winter, Serra Chaplain Very Reverend Joseph Mele, Rector of the Seminary, Very Reverend Dennis Yurochko, Director of Vocations, Reverend Matthew McClain and retired priests from St. John Vianney gathered at the beautifully decorated dining hall.

Entertainment was provided by eighteen Seminarians who sang a selection of Christmas music. Bishop Zubik asked the seminarians to introduce themselves; and each man shared interesting facts about himself.

Program Chairman Chuck Muzik had the party catered by the 4th Avenue Grill of Coraopolis. The food was outstanding. Tables were laden with bowls of punch, appetizers, fresh fruit, sandwich rings, shrimp, chicken, meatballs, scallops, quiche, vegetables and salads. A variety of desserts topped the savory meal. Greg Falvo generously provided the wine. Nunzio Galletta photographed the event. Everyone agreed that it was a very enjoyable evening. (See photos of the event on the insert page.) †

### Newly Installed Vicar Speaks at November Luncheon

Our speaker at the November meeting was Father Robert Guay, newly installed as Vicar for Region One of the Diocese. He said that by the year 2014 the population of the 49 parishes in the Vicariate, with 36 parishes the city of Pittsburgh and 13 in the suburbs, is expected to decline about two percent.

"It's not a dramatic decline," he said, "but it is an indication, among other things, that we have not been growing." Citing a few statistics to back up his comments, Fr. Guay said "we are facing a rather unique situation in the Vicariate, a situation in which we have a declining population, a growing elderly population, fewer younger people and a substantial number of people who consider themselves spiritual persons but who do not attend church services."

*Continued on next page*

## In Our Prayers

Pray for the repose of their souls:

Robert Deasy, Jr.  
Betty Berovik  
Janet Pschirer

Pray for the sick:

Cliff Berschneider  
Patricia Moriarity  
Cuozzo  
Bob Dougher  
Clark Martin  
Christopher Warwick

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 Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup> and February 23<sup>rd</sup> at **St. Mary of the Mount Rectory** on Mt. Washington beginning at 8:45 AM. The rectory is next to the Church. †

“ ... live life to the fullest, enjoying every day, praying and doing good works. ”

— Fr. Mele,  
describing the best way to honor deceased Serrans

**Newly Installed Vicar Speaks** *Continued from front page* Additionally, he said, there are 21 pastors in the Vicariate who are 60 years of age or older, and 10 who are 65 years of age or older. The age at which a priest is eligible for retirement is 70.

In the 36 parishes in the City of Pittsburgh, there are only a little more than three and a half priests who are associate pastors, formerly called ‘assistants.’ Ten years ago, he added, there were 15 associate pastors. Fr. Guay explained that ‘half a priest’ meant that the priest spends part of his time in the parish and part on other duties.

Fr. Guay added that priests in the Region One Vicariate serve in different ministries, such as college and hospital complexes, high schools, retirement communities. There are some 80 priests assigned duties in the Vicariate—not just diocesan priests but religious community priests who assist in other ministries in the Region.

“The purpose of the Vicariate system in the Diocese,” Fr. Guay said, “is to grow the church of Pittsburgh by working more closely with the priests and those in consecrated life, i.e., religious priests, brothers, and sisters and, of course, the laity.” One of the ways we hope to accomplish this is through better communications with the parishes, organizations and people through a ‘point man’ for the Bishop, namely the Vicar himself.”

Fr. Guay said he planned to meet with parish priests, the pastoral councils, the finance councils and other parish organizations and after two or three years, he expects to have a “pretty good idea” of what the Bishop needs to know to have a good understanding of what is going on in the parishes of the Vicariat. The Bishop, he said, can not be at all places at all times.

All of the Vicars, will meet with the Bishop every month to keep him up to date on what is happening in their areas of responsibility, especially in terms of parish viability and vitality of parish life. Is the parish growing or shrinking? Are there more deaths than baptisms? Is there daily mass or just on Sundays?

Fr. Guay expects to meet with every parish in the Region One Vicariate over a three year period. That includes meetings with parish staffs, pastoral councils and other groups. His visit would conclude with two or three masses at which parishioners would have an opportunity to speak in “a kind of town hall atmosphere” and where they could address their thoughts and concerns.

Before closing the meeting, District Governor Joe Koepfinger presented Serran Ed Deenihan with a Certificate recognizing his 50 years as a Serran. Ed is a Past President of the McKeesport club which is now inactive. He served as District Governor from 1988 to 1990. Ed is 90 and drove himself from Wilmerding for the meeting. †

## Memorial Mass Recap

The Serra Club Memorial Mass and Luncheon were held this year at St. Joseph Church, Coraopolis, PA. There were 32 attendees including members, their wives, and the wives of deceased members. In addition, seven children from St. Joseph's School, who are junior members of Serra, were present and served as ushers and guides.

Fr. Richard Jones, Pastor of St. Joseph's Church, welcomed the group, and since he is into vocation promotion, was delighted to have us hold this Mass at his church. Fr. Joseph Mele, our Chaplain, was the celebrant of the Mass, concelebrated with Fr. Jones.

Fr. Mele began his homily by first thanking Fr. Jones for his assistance in making the Mass and luncheon a memorable event for Serra. Fr. Mele continued by stating that he thinks frequently of the humility of the late Pope John XXIII telling us that Pope John on the day after his election to become Pope visited the prisoners at Regina Coeli Prison in Rome where his cousin was a prisoner. He encouraged all of them to be humble and pray.

Father prayed for our deceased Serrans, especially Edward J. Fay, who died during the past year and stated the best way to honor deceased Serrans is "to live life to the fullest, enjoying every day, praying, and doing good works."

Also, assisting Fr. Mele at Mass was Robert A. Deasy, Lector, and Robert and Virginia Dougher, Gift Bearers. Mrs. Carol Lee Ponzio provided the music with her beautiful voice and organ accompaniment complimenting the solemnity of the Mass.

Lunch followed in the church hall with Fr. Jones blessing before the meal. Ms. Audrey Burgoon, as in the past, catered the meal, assisted by our ever faithful, long term volunteer Norman McDonald, husband of Serran Mary Kay McDonald. John Pillar, Past President, welcomed the widows and presented each with the traditional rose.†

## September Luncheon

In his introduction, Chuck Muzik stated that Bishop Winter had confirmed over 50,000 children. The Bishop lives at John Vianney Manor with 16 other retired priests. Every morning, these retired priests celebrate mass together. The Bishop said his primary duty as a retiree is to pray. The retired priests are available to assist pastors when there is a need. Bishop Winter also serves on the Marriage Tribunal.

An announcement was made about the coming Chimbote Dinner. The Bishop told the Serrans how the Serra Club was involved in the origination of the Chimbote Dinner. It started as a small dinner with basically only Serrans and now has evolved into the great fundraiser it is now.†



Widows of Serra Club members at the Memorial luncheon.

## In Loving Memory

Serran James J. Pschirer, Sr. wrote this poem in memory of his wife, Janet, who passed away on October 22, 2009 after a long illness.

*She sleeps.  
The day is long from morn  
to night.  
Even longer from night to day.  
She hears.  
Her loving eyes flutter open as  
she hears a familiar sound. Her  
mouth forms a smile of recogni-  
tion but then she sleeps.  
She smiles.  
The sound is soft like a son,  
or a daughter, or a husband,  
or perhaps another one dear  
to her.  
She smiles again and then  
she sleeps.  
She eats.  
She eats the food prepared a  
special way. She drinks little  
sips at a time and when she is  
done - she sleeps.  
She believes  
as she sleeps I'm sure that  
thoughts go through her mind  
and I'm sure she knows  
that her God will someday take  
her to sleep that final sleep  
wrapped in the blanket of His  
love for all of us.  
She sleeps - we sleep.  
We will awake together again.†*



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**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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## Member News

Clark Martin was rushed to the hospital on Halloween night. He spent a few days in Intensive Care at Suburban General. Final diagnosis was water on the lungs. Clark is recuperating at home. Our best wishes for a speedy and complete recovery.†

## Membership

Robert R. Sacco and Owen J. Gavugan, both from St. John & Paul Parish, attended the Christmas Party and were welcomed as new members. They were sponsored by Brian Hardy, VP Membership.

Serrans Greg Falvo and Jack Warwick invited their wives to join the Serra Club. We welcome Cynthia Brusco Falvo and Dolores M. Warwick, both from St. Mary of the Mount Parish, as new members. All members are encouraged to invite their spouses to join the Serra Club.

As a matter of information, a spouse member dues is one-half the annual dues.

Serrans are always searching for new members. For information on membership, contact Brian Hardy, Membership Chair at 412-486-1341 or 412-562-9117. Brian will always have membership applications at the monthly luncheons.†

## Serra Websites

For easy access, put the following websites in your "Favorites" folder:

Serra Club of Pittsburgh: <http://serraclub.catholicweb.com>

District Governor: <http://Mysite.verizon.net/tjpbsp/>

The Serra Club site will carry past newsletters for your reference.

The main page will list all current activities of the club.†

# SERRA INTERNATIONAL



From the desk of Serra Region 3 Director, Tom Politylo

*"You have a ministry as a Serran. You are a channel for God's presence, power and love to the world."*

## Are We Falling As Catholic Christians?

Why would anyone ask such a question? *"Christianity is rooted in and transforms culture. Knowledge and revelation come from the religious symbols and practices of the people they serve. The Church must meet each group on its own turf."*

Bishop Stephen E. Blaire

Recently, I received a demographic on population conditions concerning Christian cultures, which is not only frightening but also shocking. Some with which we don't usually equate. At the Spring leadership conference in Erie, PA I gave each club in District 21 a copy of an intelligent Briefing for CEO's of major corporations. It was held in Switzerland. Herbert Meyer generated the report. It stated that America is the last Judeo-Christian culture where entrepreneurs from other countries can come to raise families and own businesses. Europe and Japan are aging because of low birth rates. They are no longer interested in families and the Christian culture is almost non-existent. There are more mosques than churches in France. France, Italy and Germany did not enter Iraq or Afghanistan because of their large Muslim population and are afraid of rioting.

To paraphrase Cardinal Sandoval's talk from the Serra International Convention in Atlanta, he stated that: *the mores of secular society dominates and deters from the Catholic Christian way of life resulting in a lack of interest in vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life because propitiation of the family name. The freedom offered by liberalism is not one of truth but a deception. The family cell is the basis for Christian life.*

Diminishing populations can be attributed to economics, abortion and family planning. In most cases the idea that God will provide for family doesn't seem to ring true in the modern day world. Stuff, personal wealth and pleasure are foremost. For example: season tickets to sport and entertainment venues, which support multi-millionaires, supercede family healthcare insurance. Sarah Palin, an example of American Christian motherhood, shows one can have a career and still raise a family.

From a recent demographics report: The fertility rate in America must be 2.4 to sustain our Christian culture. In the U.S. today the fertility rate is 1.6. With Hispanic immigrants it is raised to 2.11, which barely sustains the culture. 80 percent of the 23 million Hispanics in the U.S. (not including Puerto Rico) are Catholic. As of the 2000 census there were 2.3 million African-Americans in the U.S. but only 500 African-American priests. The Islamic religion has surpassed the Catholic religion in the world. In 5-7 years it is projected to be the dominant religion in the world. On average, an Islamic family has 8 children. In 1970, there were 100,000 Muslims in the U.S. Today there are 9 million Muslims in the U.S.

*"At a meeting of 23 Islamic organizations in Chicago their transcript stated they will evangelize America through journalism, politics, education and more. In 30 years it is projected there will be 56 million Muslims in America. The U.S. will be a Muslim nation."*

*"There are signs that Allah will grant victory to Islam in Europe without swords, without guns, without conquest. There are 50 million Muslims in Europe."* Gaddafi

America, as the only nation in the world founded on Christian principles, and with every preamble of each of the 50 states constitutions alluding to God, are we to sustain our Christian ideals or fail our descendents? Our Blessed Mother, the Protectress of the Americas, states in many of her visions throughout history that wars can be stopped and natural law reversed through repentance, the rosary and fasting. Demographics state if we don't sustain a fertility rate of 2.11 our culture will be history. **The Challenge:** we must procreate and strive to move ahead in a multi cultural Catholic Christian society.

References also include Fertility of American Women 2006 (U.S. Census) Fertility of European Women

*Yours in the Bond of Christ,*

Tom Politylo

St. Mary Knights of Columbus Church Director

***No God...No Peace.....Know God...Know Peace...***



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# The Serra Christmas Party - December 2009

- 1 The Seminarians entertaining the group with Christmas carols
- 2 Bob, Marie Deasy & Bishop Zubik
- 3 Barbara Doerfler with Bishop Zubik
- 4 Serrans enjoying the Seminarians
- 5 Fr. Mele & Jean-Pierre Nsanzabera
- 6 Steve Oslica & his wife
- 7 Terry & John Abbott, Bishop Zubik
- 8 Ann and Nunzio Galletta
- 9 Fr. Harry Bielewicz, Vicar for Clergy; Fr. James Gretz, Director of Worship; Fr. Daniel Straughn, Episcopal Master of Ceremonies; & Fr. Matt McClain, Vocations Director
- 10 Joanne & Tom Keck
- 11 Joe and Gen Koepfinger
- 12 John Pillar, Bishop Winter, Frank Thomas. Leo Russell

