



# SERRA COUNCIL of AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND and the SOUTH PACIFIC

July 2017

## SCANZSPAC Board Meeting

The first SCANZSPAC Board held its second meeting for 2017 on 15th July. It continued its policy of moving the meeting venue to the location or city where there is a Serra Club. This gives the local club the opportunity to attend all or part of the meeting to observe proceedings. Hopefully this may inspire members to appreciate the work done by the Board, and maybe offer their services by becoming a part of the Executive. The meeting on this occasion was held at Holy Rosary Parish Centre, White Hills in Bendigo, which provided the Serrans with the opportunity to attend Mass at Our Lady of the Rosary Church prior to the meeting.

President Anne Larkins, opened the meeting and expressed thanks to the Serra Club of Bendigo for arranging the meeting venue and for the club's hospitality, and welcomed members of the Bendigo Club who had accepted the invitation to be observers.

Anne's report as president gave a detailed outline of events at the 75th Serra International Convention held in Rome in June 2017.

## SERRA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

The Convention was one of the best attended for several years, with over 600 in attendance, and the great privilege of celebrating Mass at St Peter's and the opportunity of attending a private audience with Pope Francis in the Pope Paul VI Auditorium.

His Holiness said that he wanted to reflect on something that Dante Vannini, the President of Serra International, had said, when he said that Serrans wanted to be friends to priests and religious, sustaining their vocation and accompanying them in their ministry.

Pope Francis said that this is central to the experience of faith: to be friends. With this great gift you enrich the Church. This is, above all else, what a Serran is—a "special friend", whom the Lord has brought into the lives of seminarians and priests.

He went on to say that the word "friend" had become a bit overused. In our daily lives, we run into various people whom we call "friends", but this is just a word we say.

When Jesus speaks of his “friends, he points to a hard truth. True friendship involves an encounter that draws me so near to the other person that I give something of myself.

He went on to say that it is good to reflect on what friends do. They stand at our side, gently and tenderly, along our journey. They listen to us closely, and can see beyond mere words. They are merciful when faced with our faults, they are non-judgmental. They are able to walk with us, helping us to feel joy in knowing that we are not alone.

This is also the kind of friendship that you seek to offer to priests. Serra helps foster this beautiful vocation of being laity who are friend to priests.

Further on, His Holiness said that in this way, you are to priests like the home of Bethany, where Jesus entrusted his weariness to Martha and Mary, and thanks to their care, was able to find rest and refreshment.

He urged Serrans to keep moving forward, with courage, creativity and boldness. Do not rest on your laurels, but be ever ready to try new things.

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Session 1 of the Convention was presented by Chainarong Monthienvichienchai, the Chancellor of St John’s Catholic University Bangkok who spoke about the courage of vocations. (*Secretary’s Note*: Chainarong is a former Serra International President).

Session 2 was presented by Sister Maria Gloria Riva, founder of the Perpetual Adorers of the Blessed Sacrament, who spoke of her path to vocation.

Session 3 was presented by Archbishop Jorge Wong from Mexico who is Secretary of Seminaries at the Congregation for the Clergy. Archbishop Jorge spoke of experiencing the Father and Jesus through the people who accompany him through life.

Session 4 was to be presented by Andrea Torielli but, due to a family medical emergency, his work was presented by Vicente Morgandi. Andrea developed his talk on the Pope’s call to pastoral conversion.

In the “Serra around the World” session, Anne had a 5-minute opportunity to speak of Serra in Australia.

There were six Australians present, the President of SCANZSPAC, Anne Larkins, the president of the Melbourne Club, John Short, the president of Wagga Wagga Club, and also Governor, District 92, Andrew Kennedy and his wife Diane, and Sheelagh and Phillip Connors.

Before the convention, Anne was asked by the incoming President of Serra International to accept a position on the Board. She agreed and is now Trustee for the next two years, and has been appointed to the Audit Committee of the Board.

Anne was also asked to present a five minute program about the state of Serra in Australia, as were other presidents of National Councils. She did this brilliantly, and was widely congratulated on the quality of the presentation, which was in sharp contrast to some of the others, which went far too long and were difficult to follow.

## Vice-President Programme

Terry Scanlan, provided the following:

Clubs were asked to consider four membership objects that had been identified at the last Board Meeting;

- Encourage membership of an existing Club from migrant/ethnic groups;
- Invite members of the Catholic Community to join Clubs for coffee/tea and chat about Serra on an informal basis;
- Personally invite (tap on the shoulder) parishioners to come to a Serra Meeting and see what can be done;
- Promote Serra Mass and Dinner Meetings within the parish (notice in parish bulletins).

The Programmes and Meetings Manuals have been updated and PDF versions were sent to Clubs on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

Terry also reported on the North Shore Club, which celebrated its 35th Anniversary of Charter. Bishop Peter Comensoli wrote to the club offering his warmest and prayerful congratulations on the wonderful occasion.

Membership is now 25, up from 23 last year, with the potential for a number of visitors to join in the future.

## Vice-President Vocations

David Carson reported that the Australian Catholic Youth Festival will be held in Sydney in December 2107. Although not directly related to Vocations to the Priesthood and to the Consecrated Life, it is anticipated that this will be a visible sign of faith to attendees. It is strongly supported by the Clergy.

David also reported on some of the Seminaries—Vianney College (Wagga Wagga) - One Deacon will be ordained this year. The majority of Seminarians are from the Diocese of Wagga Wagga. There are some Seminarians from the Diocese of Lismore and some from other areas.

The Seminary of the Good Shepherd (Sydney) - Six Deacons, two from Sydney, two from Kampala, one from Canberra/Goulburn, one from the Chaldean Eastern Rite, will be ordained this year. There are 48 seminarians at Good Shepherd.

Corpus Christi College (Melbourne—2 priests for Melbourne and 3 Deacons, one each from Hobart, Melbourne and Port Pirie, have been ordained. There will be four more priestly ordinations and three more Diaconate ordinations later this year.

Redemptorist Mater Seminary (Sydney) - The Seminary has 23 students. There have been two priestly ordinations in Rome for the Prelature of Opus Dei in Rome. The newly ordained will return to Australia upon completion of their studies.

