

## **Mission and Ministry of Serra International**

*(Read the Opening Prayer and Scripture out loud.)*

### **Opening Prayer**

O God, who wills not the death of a sinner, a change of heart and life, grant we implore You through the intercession of the Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, Saint Joseph, Her spouse, Blessed Junipero Serra, and all the saints, an increase of laborers for Your Church. Fellow laborers with Christ, to spend and consume themselves for others through the same Jesus Christ Your Son. Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit God forever and ever. Amen.

### **Scripture**

“They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers..... All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”  
*(Acts 2: 42-47)*

*(Take time for silent reflection, then read the Introduction out loud.)*

### **Introduction**

Serra International is an organization whose members continue to study and learn about their Christian heritage, the Catholic faith and how to contribute to the daily needs of the world. This program focuses on sharing a deep faith and wanting to incorporate the teachings of Christ into daily life, and explore way to be true spiritual leaders who transform their communities while encouraging vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

*(Introduce a speaker or the facilitator can read the following paragraphs with pauses in between.)*

### **Documentary Tradition**

In 1934, four Catholic lay men in Seattle, Washington decided to meet for the purpose of growing in their faith by participating in programs of Catholic education and assisting in the education of young men for the priesthood. While financial support of seminarians loomed large in the 1930’s, Serra’s mission has evolved over the years in response to the changing times and needs of the Catholic Church in America and across the globe.

In 1968, Serra restated its purpose of continuing to make the encouragement of church vocations its hallmark by expressly stating its mission to foster and promote vocations to the ministerial priesthood of the Catholic Church by developing an appreciation for the ministerial priesthood and for all religious vocations in the Catholic Church, and by participating in fellowship and education to fulfill its Christian vocation to service.

While Serra enjoys international status, the United States has created an organizational structure that assists, educates and further develops men and women to fulfill their purpose in local clubs scattered throughout the country. All Serrans are asked to involve themselves in activities that will enrich their own spiritual and communal life while fulfilling the mission and purpose of Serra International.

This involvement in study and ministry is rooted in the Catholic vision of the laity in the world.

“The laity derive the right and duty with respect to the apostolate from their union with Christ their Head. Incorporated into Christ’s Mystical Body through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation, they are assigned to the Apostolate by the Lord. They are consecrated into the royal priesthood and a holy people in order that they offer the spiritual sacrifices through everything they do, and may witness to Christ throughout the world.” (*Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, #3*)

“Those who sincerely accepted the Good News, through the power of his acceptance and of shared faith, therefore gather in Jesus’ name in order to seek together the Kingdom, build it up and live it. They make up a community, which in its turn evangelizes. The command to the Twelve to go out and proclaim the Good News is also valid for all Christians, though in a different way.” (*On Evangelization in the Modern World, #13*)

“It is incumbent on those who exercise authority to strengthen the values that inspire the confidence of the members of the group and encourage them to put themselves at the service of others. Participation begins with education and culture. ‘One is entitled to think that the future of humanity is in the hands of those who are capable of providing the generations to come with reasons for life and optimism.’” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1917*)

*(The facilitator can read the Discussion Questions out loud for general or small group discussion.)*

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What is unique about Serra International that distinguishes it from other organizations?
2. How does Serra International foster the spiritual life of its members?
3. What contribution does Serra International make to its members, church and society?

*(If time permits invite the small groups to share with the large group any insights that they gain from the group discussion, then read the Closing Reflection.)*

### **Closing Reflection**

While fostering vocations is the hallmark of Serra activities, there is the danger of focusing on only the vocation of the professional religious. We can not neglect that through baptism every Christian has a vocation. That is to say, God calls every Serran to a specific way of making God’s love visible to the world. It is through participation in Serra that members are able to proclaim their faith and witness to the resurrected Christ by the way that they contribute to their families, the Serra organization, their local club, and the parish.

### **Bibliography**

Roman Catholic Church. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1992 English 1994.

Serra International Constitution and Bylaws.

The Second Vatican Council. “Degree On The Apostolate Of Lay People (Apostolicam Actuositatem ),” *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed. Piscataway: Association Press, 1966.