



Serra Club News

Meetings are held the first and third Friday of each month at noon at the Wheeling Civic Center

A publication of the Wheeling Serra Club

February 2009

Congratulations

By Dr. Bill Grubler

Congratulations to **Lou Costanzo** on being awarded the **Serran 50 YEARS pin** in recognition of his 50 years of service and dedication to Serra. The award was made by the USA Council Board of Serra International.



Through Lou's efforts and devotion, Wheeling Serra has been a banner contributor to the Serra International Foundation for many of those 50 years.

His famous sausage filled our hearts and stomachs for many years at Serra events.

It is Lou's devotion and attendance at Serra functions and his devotion to prayers for vocations that have inspired all of us to fulfill our purpose as Serrans.

Lou's son-in-law, our own George Smoulder, added a few salient points:

Lou Costanzo served our club for many years as president and treasurer. Unlike most of us, he wasn't invited to become a member by a fellow Serran – vocations were so important to Lou that he approached the club and asked to join.

He attended four or five Serra International conferences, and was extremely proud to be present at the conference at which our dear friend **Dr. Rizal Pangilinan** became Serra International president.

In addition to being known for his excellent sausage, Lou is famous in Wheeling for promoting the Holy Rosary by distributing rosary rings.

All of us in Serra send our warmest good wishes to Lou, along with prayers for his return to good health.

February Programs

Feb. 6 – **Father James McGoldrich** will give a presentation on his recent trip to the Holy Land. He plans to include a slide show of his photographs. Prayer Leader: **Rev. Mr. George Smoulder**

Feb. 20 **Rev. Mr. George Smoulder** will discuss lay vocations. Prayer Leader: **James Swann**

Upcoming Events

Feb. 6 - 8 – The Annual Vocations Awareness Weekend will be held at Paul VI Pastoral Center, Wheeling WV. Please continue to pray for the success of this event. Thanks to all who have been working on this project.

March 29 – The Bishop's Burse Dinner begin at 6 p.m. at Paul VI Pastoral Center, Wheeling WV. Thanks to **Larry Bandi** for coordinating the arrangements for this event.

Our Condolences

We send our prayers and condolences to Serran **Chuck Wagner** and his family on the death of his sister, **Sister Jeanne Marie Wagner CSSJ**. May God bless her and all the Sisters for their service.

Meet the Seminarians:

I am **José Manuel Escalante**, and I am studying for the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston of West Virginia. I'm originally from El Salvador and it is my honor to share with you my journey of faith. This is my second year of theology at St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.



In 1986, I traveled for the first time to the United States and I lived in the Northern Virginia area. Between 1988 and 1993, I worked as a volunteer in the Youth Ministry program in Blessed Sacrament Parish in Alexandria, Virginia. In addition, I worked with the Spanish Apostolate in the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, under the direction of **Rev. Jose Maria Ambrós**. Around the same time, I read a book of the life of St. Francis of Assisi. He changed my life forever and since then this great saint has been an inspiration to follow the footsteps of Christ.

In 1993, I returned to my homeland in order to answer and deepen my vocation. Once I arrived there, God in his providence allowed me to support and give counseling to Young Adult Groups. I

experienced their strong faith and commitment to the Church. Between 1996 and 1998, I was in a group of Franciscan Brothers called, "Missionaries of the Divine Mercy." They assist and comfort terminally ill AIDS patients at St. Thomas Hospital in Panama. This strong experience was the third and final calling from God to consecrate my life to Him.

In 1999, I returned to the United States for the second time and once again, I worked with the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, as a pastoral agent for the Spanish Community at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Winchester, Virginia. It was there that in God's providence I had the good fortune of meeting **Rev. Eugene Weber** from the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston—May his soul rest in Christ's peace. I must admit that life is not the same without Fr. Weber, my friend and mentor. Through his example, I learned that the art of prayer is essential in every aspect of life. It is the source of nourishment, happiness and reconciliation with God. In other words, the interior realization of God's presence is reflected exteriorly in our lives. No wonder the first impression that we have from a priest is his life of prayer or lack of it. Thus, I truly believe that a priest should have the capacity of giving of himself to God with all his being, with all his soul and with all his heart to radiate genuine love to everyone around him. It is through this mission that every priest pursues holiness.

I thank God every day for allowing me to work with Father Weber and learn from his spiritual strength and practical wisdom. He supported my decision to study for the priesthood from the very beginning. Thus, I live in gratitude to him and to all people who have been by my side supporting me with their prayers and love. I pray with confidence that the Lord will provide and walk with me all the way in my attempt to respond generously to God's call. May the Lord bless you!

Jose Manuel Escalante

Prayer for the Month

Loving God,
Is it I Lord?
Are you asking me to help
call others to the ministry of
leadership in the Church?
Open the minds and hearts of many
men and women to live your Word
and build your Kingdom.
Speak to me Lord.
Plant your Word within me so that
whatever you call me to be or do
I may say Yes, Here I Am Lord.
Teach me to do your
will, Lord.
And let your Holy Spirit
guide me! Amen