



VOCARE

Newsletter of Serra Club of Bay Area
March 2026

February Program Meeting

Our February program was a discussion about opportunities and challenges we have as a club.

We started with the Serran prayer for vocations, which was inspired by Ezekiel 33:11 "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked man, says the Lord, but rather in his conversion, that he may live."

In Henri Nouwen's book "Can You Drink The Cup?" he says:

"Community is like a large mosaic. Each little piece seems so insignificant. One piece is bright red, another cold blue or dull green, another warm purple, another sharp yellow, another shining gold. Some look precious, others ordinary. Some look valuable, others worthless. Some look gaudy, others delicate. As individual stones, we can do little with them except compare them and judge their beauty and value. When however, all these little stones are brought together in one big mosaic portraying the face of Christ, who would ever question the importance of any one of them? If one of them, even the least spectacular one, is missing, the face is incomplete. Together in the one mosaic, each little stone is indispensable and makes a unique contribution to the glory of God. That's community, a fellowship of little people who together make God visible in the world.

In that spirit, our discussions touched upon several opportunities.

Some of the officer positions can be difficult to fill, especially the Vice President positions (Vocations, Membership, Programs, and Communication). Those should be considered as managerial positions. Members should be encouraged to contribute to those efforts. For example, the newsletter should not be the sole responsibility of the VP Communications. Members could contribute pictures of events, articles, etc., which could then be taken by the VP Communications and inserted into the newsletter format. By making the newsletter a team effort, the contributions from the membership would make for a better newsletter. Sharing in the effort to produce the newsletter not only highlights the talents of our members, but also lightens the burden for the team.

The same can be said of VP Programs, VP Membership, and VP Vocations. There have been numerous times when various members have suggested speakers for program meetings,

including keynote speakers for our Christmas banquets. Often, the member suggesting the speaker also reaches out to that individual to make the arrangements. Any member is welcome to suggest speakers. This idea is really nothing new for our club. It is certainly one that we need to continue so that we have quality program meetings.

Membership requires a multi-pronged approach. Reaching out to the pastors of our 15 parishes to introduce ourselves and request their collaboration in this effort is important. It is also helpful to invite prospective members to our program meetings and Christmas banquet. And it is essential that our members are informed about the three-fold mission of Serra:

1. Promote and support vocations to the ministerial priesthood of the Catholic Church as a particular vocation of service and support priests in their sacred ministry;
2. Encourage and promote vocations to the consecrated life in the Catholic Church;
3. Assist members to recognize and respond, each in his own life, to God's call to holiness in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

Vocations puts into practice items one and two of the three-fold mission of Serra. It requires us to work with the office of vocations where needed and to be aware of the programs that are available to guide individuals as they discern their vocation. It also requires us to work with our 15 parishes to help them develop vocation ministries/committees. This certainly requires a team effort from our membership.

Vocations, membership, programs and communication are all interlinked. In order work together effectively requires planning. It is essentially business 101, "plan your work; and work your plan."

We also discussed a couple ad hoc committees.

The affirmation team sends out birthday and anniversary cards to our priests, deacons, and religious. Currently, team members are assigned names by month for birthdays and anniversaries. Since some months have a disproportionate number of anniversaries, it may be helpful to spread out the load to other members. Evening out the load not only removes the burden for an individual, but also allows other members the chance to participate in this activity.

The Christmas wreath fundraiser has evolved into an online event that takes place in the fall of each year. One person chairs the fundraiser and coordinates the event. One important facet is placing a notification in church bulletins to advertise it. It was suggested that it would be good to have a co-chair and to also put together a brief plan for the event. This would make sure the club has information in our archives that shows how to work with the company that provides the wreathes and examples of bulletin advertisements. This would assure continuity for this fundraiser into the future. It would also allow interested members a way to directly participate.

Election of Officers

According to our club bylaws, election of officers occurs at the first meeting in March each year. I thought it might be a good idea to look at the pertinent sections of the bylaws.

Section 10. "...Elections shall be held at the first meeting in March of each year. Officers and Trustees shall be inducted at the annual District 10 installation banquet of each year and their term of office shall then begin and shall end when their successors have been elected and inducted."

Section 11. "A nominating committee appointed by the President shall make nominations for election of the principal Officers and Trustees not less than one month prior to the election. This committee shall consist of at least three members and shall present its report at the first meeting of members in February before election of new officers. It shall nominate one candidate for each of the principal offices and for each vacancy on the Board. Further nominations may be made from the floor at the time of the election. Election shall be by secret ballot as to any office for which there is a contest. Each member present shall be entitled to one vote and the candidate who receives the largest number of those votes cast shall be elected."

The club officers are as follows: President, immediate Past President, President elect, Vice President Programs, Vice President Membership, Vice President Vocations, Vice President Communications, Secretary, Treasurer, 1st year Trustee, 2nd year Trustee, 3rd year Trustee.

Trustees are elected for a three-year term. Those terms are staggered. A 1st year Trustee is elected each year. The current 1st year Trustee moves to the 2nd year Trustee position. The current 2nd year Trustee moves to the 3rd year Trustee position. The current 3rd Trustee rolls off the list of Trustees.

The club Chaplain is not elected. He is appointed by the Ordinary of the Archdiocese.

Note that the nominating committee is appointed by the club president. That should be done in November or December. The appointment does not need to occur at a meeting. However, the president should inform the membership of those who will serve on the nominating committee at the January business meeting. Should conditions require that the January business meeting be cancelled, the President should inform the members by email.

Metyko Award

The District Governor solicits all the clubs of the district to submit nominations for candidates to receive the Metyko Award. Each club should follow the award criteria to select and nominate someone from the membership. Following is the District 10 Metyko Award criteria and procedures.



District 10 Serra International

DISTRICT 10 “FRANK METYKO AWARD”

CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

1. AWARD CRITERIA:

All worthy Serrans in District 10 are eligible to be nominated for the award with two exceptions: (1) the current active governor cannot receive the award during his/her terms as governor, and (2) a person who has received the award cannot receive it again.

Candidates for the award should possess most or all of the following characteristics:

- A reputation as an active, participating Catholic lay person. One who regularly attends Mass and receives the Sacraments.
- Has been a member of Serra for at least five years to establish some history of dedication to, and effective work for, Serra. In this regard, should be a Serran who-

Regularly attends club meetings and functions.

Promptly pays club dues.

Actively participates in club programs.

Willingly accepts assignments when requested to do so including club and district officer positions.

- A Serra who is recognized by his own club membership and District 10 management (Governor, Governor-Elect and Past District Governor) for his/her dedication to, and effective work toward, fulfilling the two prime objectives of Serra. In this regard, the level of dedication and the effective work should be considered to be well beyond that of the average Serra membership.
- When considering an individual as a nominee for this award, primary emphasis should be given to the individual's performance and contribution during the previous one to two years with secondary (but also important) consideration to the individual's history of sustained and continuing performance and contributions over time.
- The individual's accomplishments, especially within the past year, should be truly significant, measurable, and above and beyond that of the average Serra member.
- Recipients of the award should be those who are clearly recognized by their dedication to Serra, its principles and objectives and their significant personal efforts and accomplishments for Serra.

2. AWARD PROCEDURES:

- Annually the Governor will request the club president to forward their club's award nominees (if any) in March. Clubs should submit a nominee only when such person meets the spirit and established criteria set forth herein.
- Each club's nomination should be supported by a comprehensive statement specifically justifying the reasons for the nomination and signed by the club president.

- The selection committee is to be organized as follows: Three Serrans from the District will normally form a core group – the current Governor, Governor-Elect and the immediate past Governor. They will choose two other past governors to fill out a committee of five. If only two of the positions making up the core group are filled, those two will choose three past Governors to complete the committee of five. In selecting the committee members, the core group will strive to have as many Serra Clubs as possible represented. The two or three past governors selected normally should not be from the same club, and preferably not from the same clubs as the core members. (It is possible for the three core members to be from the same club). The core group will check to see what clubs were represented in the recent years past, and then try to select members from clubs not previously or recently represented. This will give all clubs that have had governors a turn a being on the selection committee.

If there are two members on the committee from the same club, each will have a vote! If there are three members from the same club, they must vote as a unit- the three will have a single vote. This assures that there will be either three or five total votes – an odd number to prevent a tie vote. The current Governor will chair the selection committee. A majority vote is needed.

- If in the opinion of the selection committee, none of the nominees adequately meet the spirit and criteria of the award program, they may, at their discretion, elect not to make an award in that year. This in order to maintain the value and integrity of the Award.
- The “Award” shall be presented at a suitable District- wide function in May or June of each year in which an award is granted.

March Birthday

The following Serran has a March birthday:

- Bill Clary

Responding to God's Call to Holiness

The following is the text of the Message of the Holy Father Leo XIV for Lent 2026, on the theme: "*Listening and Fasting: Lent as a Time of Conversion*":

Dear brothers and sisters,

Lent is a time in which the Church, guided by a sense of maternal care, invites us to place the mystery of God back in the center of our lives, in order to find renewal in our faith and keep our hearts from being consumed by the anxieties and distractions of daily life.

Every path towards conversion begins by allowing the word of God to touch our hearts and welcoming it with a docile spirit. There is a relationship between the word, our acceptance of it and the transformation it brings about. For this reason, the Lenten journey is a welcome opportunity to heed the voice of the Lord and renew our commitment to following Christ, accompanying him on the road to Jerusalem, where the mystery of his passion, death and resurrection will be fulfilled.

Listening

This year, I would first like to consider the importance of making room for the word through *listening*. The willingness to listen is the first way we demonstrate our desire to enter into relationship with someone.

In revealing himself to Moses in the burning bush, God himself teaches us that listening is one of his defining characteristics: "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry" (*Ex 3:7*). Hearing the cry of the oppressed is the beginning of a story of liberation in which the Lord calls Moses, sending him to open a path of salvation for his children who have been reduced to slavery.

Our God is one who seeks to involve us. Even today he shares with us what is in his heart. Because of this, listening to the word in the liturgy teaches us to listen to the truth of reality. In the midst of the many voices present in our personal lives and in society, Sacred Scripture helps us to recognize and respond to the cry of those who are anguished and suffering. In order to foster this inner openness to listening, we must allow God to teach us how to listen *as he does*. We must recognize that "the condition of the poor is a cry that, throughout human history, constantly challenges our lives, societies, political and economic systems, and, not least, the Church."^[1]

Fasting

If Lent is a time for listening, *fasting* is a concrete way to prepare ourselves to receive the word of God. Abstaining from food is an ancient ascetic practice that is essential on the path of conversion. Precisely because it involves the body, fasting makes it easier to recognize what we

“hunger” for and what we deem necessary for our sustenance. Moreover, it helps us to identify and order our “appetites,” keeping our hunger and thirst for justice alive and freeing us from complacency. Thus, it teaches us to pray and act responsibly towards our neighbor.

With spiritual insight, Saint Augustine helps us to understand the tension between the present moment and the future fulfilment that characterizes this custody of the heart. He observes that: “In the course of earthly life, it is incumbent upon men and women to hunger and thirst for justice, but to be satisfied belongs to the next life. Angels are satisfied with this bread, this food. The human race, on the other hand, hungers for it; we are all drawn to it in our desire. This reaching out in desire expands the soul and increases its capacity.”^[2] Understood in this way, fasting not only permits us to govern our desire, purifying it and making it freer, but also to expand it, so that it is directed towards God and doing good.

However, in order to practice fasting in accordance with its evangelical character and avoid the temptation that leads to pride, it must be lived in faith and humility. It must be grounded in communion with the Lord, because “those who are unable to nourish themselves with the word of God do not fast properly.”^[3] As a visible sign of our inner commitment to turn away from sin and evil with the help of grace, fasting must also include other forms of self-denial aimed at helping us to acquire a more sober lifestyle, since “austerity alone makes the Christian life strong and authentic.”^[4]

In this regard, I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbor. Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves. Instead, let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities. In this way, words of hatred will give way to words of hope and peace.

Together

Finally, Lent emphasizes the communal aspect of listening to the word and fasting. The Bible itself underlines this dimension in multiple ways. For example, the Book of Nehemiah recounts how the people gathered to listen to the public reading of the Law, preparing to profess their faith and worship through fasting, so as to renew the covenant with God (cf. 9:1-3).

Likewise, our parishes, families, ecclesial groups and religious communities are called to undertake a shared journey during Lent, in which listening to the word of God, as well as to the cry of the poor and of the earth, becomes part of our community life, and fasting a foundation for sincere repentance. In this context, conversion refers not only to one’s conscience, but also to the quality of our relationships and dialogue. It means allowing ourselves to be challenged by reality and recognizing what truly guides our desires — both within our ecclesial communities and as regards humanity’s thirst for justice and reconciliation.

Dear friends, let us ask for the grace of a Lent that leads us to greater attentiveness to God and to the least among us. Let us ask for the strength that comes from the type of fasting that also

extends to our use of language, so that hurtful words may diminish and give way to a greater space for the voice of others. Let us strive to make our communities places where the cry of those who suffer finds welcome, and listening opens paths towards liberation, making us ready and eager to contribute to building a civilization of love.

I impart my heartfelt blessing upon all of you and your Lenten journey.

From the Vatican, 5 February 2026, Memorial of Saint Agatha, Virgin and Martyr

LEO PP. XIV

^[1] Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te* (4 October 2025), 9.

^[2] Augustine *The Usefulness of Fasting*, 1, 1.

^[3] Benedict XVI, *Catechesis* (9 March 2011).

^[4] Paul VI, *Catechesis* (8 February 1978).