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Almost 300 altar servers thanked with a special Mass of appreciation

BY JO ANN ZUÑIGA

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HOUSTON — Close to 300 altar servers, boys and girls, were recognized for their dedication to God at the second annual Bishop George Sheltz Altar Servers Appreciation Mass on Nov. 13.

Up to 900 people, including families and others, attended the Mass at the Sacred Heart of the Co-Cathedral to support the youths.

"What a blessing to see the 279 Altar Servers from 42 different parishes come together as one body of Christ!" said Candice Tyrrell, a committee co-chair organizing the Mass.

As a Serra U.S. executive board member, part of an international association to promote religious vocations, Tyrrell said, "As Serrans, our mission is to foster more vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. We pray many altar servers open their hearts to a religious vocation as we desperately need more priests and sisters in our world today."

A recent survey showed that about 73% of newly ordained priests served as altar servers before entering seminary.

Fellow co-chair Larry Massey, president of the Scanlan Foundation, agreed with the strategic mission of "building a culture of vocations to the priesthood, religious life and holy families. That is why we are so excited to help Serra with this Mass."

They both work closely with Father Richard McNeillie, Archdiocesan director of Vocations, who travels from the Houston chancery to area college campuses and seminaries across the state to encourage and guide students.

Meanwhile, the number of Catholics in the U.S. has increased from 48 million in 1965 to more than 70 million, not counting the 30 million or so lapsed Catholics. An annual ordination report from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) reflects those who responded



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE SERRA CLUB

Boys and girls who serve as altar servers around the Archdiocese were recognized at the second annual Bishop George Sheltz Altar Servers Appreciation Mass on Nov. 13.

among the 600 men being ordained in the U.S. The survey shows they are from a variety of backgrounds who responded to God's call to serve His people — 67% Caucasian; 16% Hispanic; 10% Asian; 6% African/African American.

Across the country, the average age of ordination this year is 34, although the respondents were an average of 16 years old when they first considered a call to the priesthood. About 40% of all respondents attended a Catholic school for at least some of their education. Overall, 73% served as altar servers before entering the seminary. Half served as readers and 40% as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. †





Bishop George Sheltz Archdiocesan Altar Server Appreciation Mass

Honoring Altar Server Attendees Who Served For Five Years Or Longer:

Ascension Chinese Mission Anthony Nguyen Jonathan Nguyen	Christ the Incarnate Word Khoi Nguyen Cindy Vu Vincent Vu	Our Lady of Lourdes, Hitchcock Marcos Martinez Isaac J. Morin Steve Morin Samantha Pena Julia Sanchez Alexis Torres Gabriela Varela	St. Anne, Houston Emily Quin Callie Patterson Drake Patterson	Noelia Franco Amalia Gomez Brianna Gonzalez Kevin Gonzalez Kathryn Lamanilao Gustavo Lemus Lourdes Lemus Miranda Miranda Christian Penaflor Jubert Penaflor Jesus Rivera Jose Rivera Rene Rivera Angel Soto Jericho Urbano	St. Joseph, Stoneham William T. Grant	St. Paul the Apostle Marco Jimenez Aylin Lopez David Moreno Leticia Peregrina Aracely Peregrina Jayden Ruiz
Assumption Diego Alfaro Karen Alfaro Emmanuel Cruz William Cruz Christina Escobar Francisco Escobar Alondra Rocha Aaron Flores Alora Flores Clarissa Flores Moises Flores Dulce Franco Flor Franco Hector Lopez Daniel Morales Israel Neri Lizeth Neri Cittiali Ramirez Yaretzi Ramirez	Christ the King Esmeralda Chavez Emilano Lozano Luis Martinez Lilyana Palomo Juritzta Pantoja Itzel Pineda Maria Jose Ponce Selena Ponce Alora Flores Joselyn Sanchez Mariana Sanchez	Mary Queen Jayson Babanto Bryan Camanillo Joaquin Krancher Patrick O'Leary Selena Ponce Elodie Ridout Joselyn Sanchez Ethan Westrup	Our Lady of St. John Alejanbro Gassca Cruz Gonzalez Sophia Gonzalez Yuliana Pacos Alexandria Perez Kimberly Ortiz Abraham Ramos	St. Anne, Tomball Elizabeth Helen Riedel Wesley Paul Riedel	St. Bartholomew Uriel Barron Robert M. Chachere Jocelyn Flores Yamileth Flores Abraham Ramos	St. Jude Tommy R. Gonzalez Luis A. Gonzalez Fabian Mejias Joel Mejias Gael Segura Keylen Segura
Blessed Sacrament Ximena Acosta Yessenia Hernandez Delaila Martinez Valeria Mova Merlina Ramirez Heidy Reyes Abril Vega Christopher Vega Allison Velasquez Darlenne Velasquez	Corpus Christi Matthew Mejia	Most Holy Trinity, Angleton Avery E. Aaron Marisa L. Aaron Sophia R. Aaron Allan Alquinto Allena Alquinto Troy M. Bala Adriana L. Belmares Enrique S. Buentello Danny Cortez Christian M. Estrada Olivia M. Hernandez Mary C. Hughes Patrick Hughes Peter Hughes Liam M. Potato Timothy S. Talavera	Sacred Heart, Crosby Abigail Gaytan Andres Gaytan Jr. Celestt I. Guevara	Shrine of the True Cross Dominic A. Clements Nicholas J. Clements Bryan Dryer Michael Dryer Alex Ortiz Roman R. Rojas	St. Francis de Sales Scarlett Gosch Anthony Isikalu Vanessa Isikalu Gabriela A. Marmolejo Joshua Okolo Jessica Okonkwa Michael Okonkwa Natalia Perez Ramiro Rodriguez Alexis Sandoval Joseph Troxler Fatima Vazquez Nick Williams Alex Williams	St. Mary Magdalene Valerie Hernandez Christopher Julian Mendoza Nelson Emanuelle Mendoza Rosemary Mendoza
Christ the Good Shepherd Jacob Lawrence Theodora Pavlovic Jesus Morales Carloine Wheir Christopher Wheir	Guardian Angel, Wallis Brayden A. Hanzelka	Holy Family, Galveston Edward S. Hoffman Preeti Joseph Pedro A. Koenning Logan A. Mitchell Abisai B. Moran Jonathan Moran	St. Ambrose America Arevalo Sophia Hernandez Evan Wisnoski	St. Charles Borromeo Leroy Cortez Isaac Duran Angel Esqueda Diego Esqueda Christian Morales Juan Villarreal Billy Zelya	St. Helen Sarah E. Edwards Gabi A. Falcon Michael Frausto Joseph Troxler Fatima Vazquez Nick Williams Alex Williams	St. Vincent de Paul Maria Jose Calderon David Casarez Jasmine Casarez Theodore Castillo-Diaz Angelica Dela Rosa Bridget Dela Rosa Catherine Dela Rosa
Immaculate Heart of Mary Yuribel Aguirre Guadalupe Araiza Felix Cadengo Diego Cerda Frida Cerda Lesley Martinez	Our Lady of Fatima, Galena Park Julie Arellano Edgar Arevalo Evelyn Avalos David Beavers Aldredo Bonilla Judy Cruz Kelly Delgado Janet Lara Juan Lara	St. Angela Merici Aiden Abraham Justin P. Fernandez Michael A. Fernandez Markus Karlsson Laurel Kelley Addyson Reyna Ashley Thomas Dominic Unruh Lucas Unruh	St. John of the Cross Jose Guadalupe Fernandez Leslie Fernandez Natalie Fernandez Marcos Hernandez Gabriel Molinero Brianna Molinero Jackie Rangel Jasmin Saldana	St. Mathias, Magnolia David Benitez Octavio Daskalos Daisy Juarez Nelson Juarez Jonathan Kreitz David Rios Nazli Rios Josue Sanchez	St. Matthew the Evangelist Jesse Adam Espinosa Karol Garcia Nicolas Israel Gomez Alan Jesus Gonzalez America Lozano Viridyana M. Mendez Yasmin Nicole Ramirez Amelia Salome Reyes	Vietnamese Martyrs Anthony Do Nhi H. Le Thieh A. Le Donald V. Nguyen Huy Q. Nguyen

Thank You to the Following:

Retired Auxiliary Bishop George Sheltz, Celebrant, and Auxiliary Bishop Italo Dell'Oro, Con-Celebrant

Altar Server Mass Co-Chairs: Larry Massey, Candice Tyrrell and the Committee | Serra Clubs and Scanlan Foundation
Chris Labadie from the Office of Worship and the Office of Vocations | Dr. Crista Miller and the Co-Cathedral Choir & Quartet
Frederick Warren: photographer; fwphotography@live.com | Jean Sanfelippo: Calligraphy altar server certificates