



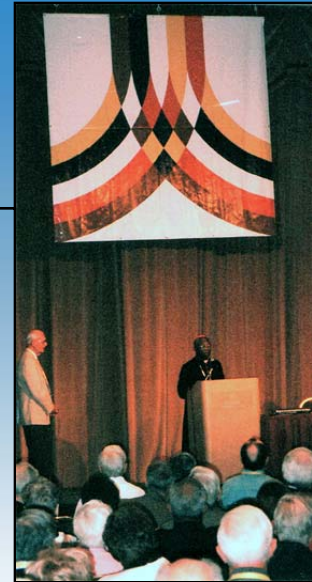
Savannah Serra Club NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2004

2004 Serra International Convention Memorable and Moving

By Marilyn and Byron Stephens

Pittsburgh, PA was the perfect setting for the 2004 Serra International Convention, whose theme was "The Confluence of Cultures and Serra's Mission". (See banner above right) From the hotel windows, you could see the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers join to form the mighty Ohio, while inside you could see Serrans from 6 continents representing 16 countries, join in prayer and study to promote vocations in the Catholic Church. Hometowns of Palermo, Sicily; Vancouver, BC; Lagos, Nigeria; Bangkok, Thailand; Bangalore, India; and of course, Savannah, GA faded as our hosts from Pennsylvania made everyone feel welcome in their own multi-ethnic city.



His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze

The keynote speaker for this year's convention was Francis Cardinal Arinze from Nigeria. Elevated to Bishop at the age of 34, he remains a dynamo today, and is considered by many to be a serious candidate for our next Pope. His strong optimism was stressed, as he stated that there is no shortage of vocations...what is changing is where they are coming from. Irish missionaries once brought the Faith to Africa. Now African priests are saying Mass in Irish churches for the Irish people. We must think globally, as the Church is not bound to

any culture and the gospel is for all. The Eucharist is critical to the life of the Church and for that we must have priests, so prayer and especially sacrifice will be necessary. It doesn't matter if the sacrifice involves having more children, spending more time in prayer, or providing funds for seminaries. We must all sacrifice something, if we love God.

The next day's featured speaker was Father Mark Gruber O.S.B. from St. Vincent's College. He laughingly told us that he went back and rewrote his talk after hearing Cardinal Arinze, who "said it first and said it better". However, his audience wasn't disappointed because his thoughts on "lifestyles" and vocations had most of us



wishing we were back in college and enrolled in his anthropology class. His books sold out immediately, but we were able to purchase two the next day only by offering to help the Benedictine Sisters haul in the boxes from the car!

Other activities included panel discussions on “Serra in the Twentieth Century” (a history of the organization with wonderful old photos and lots of anecdotes) and “Serra in the Twenty First Century” (a preview of expansion with an emphasis on Third World Countries). A mega-workshop showed a glimpse of the vast number of resources available to Clubs for all the committees — Vocations, Programs, Communications, and Membership. The hard part was choosing which mini-workshop to attend! At least between us we could cover two.

By far the most memorable and moving experiences of the Convention were the daily liturgies. The Travelers Mass was celebrated in the Byzantine Rite and was even more beautiful than expected, a perfect beginning to reflect “the confluence of cultures”. The opening day liturgy began with a processional led by a thirty member handbell choir followed by 2 cardinals, six bishops, and some 60 priests, many in beautiful “native” vestments. The next day’s liturgy, with Cardinal Arinze as celebrant, reflected his African heritage with a gospel choir that was awesome. The Gloria was unforgettable, and he teased that it would have gone on for hours if he hadn’t sung a loud “AMEN”! In contrast Sunday Mass seemed quite simple with only half of the Pittsburgh Symphony present.

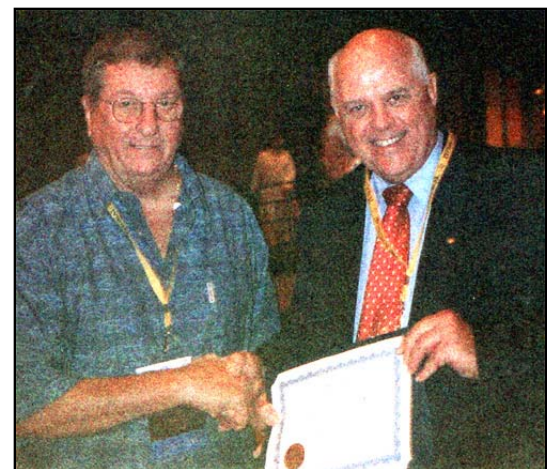
It should be no surprise that Pope John Paul II sent the Convention a special message, blessing Serrans and their work. We were inspired by our new friends, many new ideas, and the thought of next year’s convention, **BANGKOK 2005!**

Savannah Newsletter receives Award at National Convention



The Savannah Serra Club Newsletter has been named the “Outstanding USAC Newsletter of District 169.” The award is given for both content and layout. Byron Stephens accepted the award on behalf of Editor Walt

Kessel and Communications Vice President Peter Paolucci. The award was presented by International Vice President for Communications, Michael E. Potter of Canberra, Australia.





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Serrans Break Bread with Seminarians



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Few summer events are as pleasant as the one attended on July 31st by fourteen of Savannah's Serrans. The Vocations Director for the Diocese of Savannah, Fr. Tim McKeown, and Diocesan Seminarians shared lunch at Savannah's St. John the Baptist Parish Center with Bishop Kevin Boland, priests, family members and Serrans. The seminarians told personal stories and expressed thanks for the support of their vocation. In other words, keep the letters and emails coming!

Prior to the luncheon, Serrans met for a recitation of the Rosary for vocations in the Cathedral's chapel. Meanwhile seminarians met privately with Bishop Boland. Afterwards, the two groups joined together in a Mass celebrated by Bishop Boland in the main church. He took the opportunity during his homily to comment on how much God has blessed the Diocese of Savannah with the number of seminarians who will be ordained as priests in the next few years. Fr. Tim McKeown, Fr. Tim Donahue, Fr. Herbert Wellmeier, and Fr. Douglas Clark concelebrated. Deacon Mark VanAlstine assisted.

1. Matthew Ericksen with parents Margaret and Andrew. 2. David Koetter with parents Steve and Donna 3. Jim Livingston with parents James and Martha. 4. Pablo Migone.

At the end of the luncheon each seminarian introduced himself and family members in attendance. Some family members came from as far away as Chicago to be present for the event.

Serrans sat at different tables to become better acquainted with individual seminarians.

Although most of our seminarians are native to the United States, we have drawn on young men from Colombia, Nigeria, and Poland. They continue to need our support and prayers in a special way as they strengthen English speaking skills and learn the intricacies of American culture.

For those who could not attend the luncheon this year, try again next year. In one sense, the year running full circle is symbolic of our efforts. It's rewarding to know that our efforts to serve are fruitful for the "men-in-black" who have, in turn, answered the call to serve our community



Deacon Chidi Osondu chats with Scott Winchel

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—Suzanne Aviles.



St. James Bids Fr. Adam Adieu



On Saturday evening July 24, 2004, Fr. Adam Kasela said the 5:30 Mass before his farewell dinner. In his homily, he expressed his gratitude to the parishioners, the school children, the staff, and the four priests he served under: Frs. Kenneally, Smith, Costigan, and Ross. He spoke of his early years in Poland and at times had to pause to regain his composure. At the conclusion of his homily, the entire congregation acknowledged Fr. Adam and his service to the parish, with a standing ovation.

After Mass, there was a full house in the St. James Gym, at the dinner to honor him for serving the parish so well during these past three years. Fr. Adam went to every table and shook hands with his parishioners, thanking them personally for their support.

Father Ross thanked him for his service and dedication to St. James. All Fr. Adam could say was a gracious "Thank You."

According to Graham Crawford, "We will miss him very much. He was the "work horse" of the parish."

Fr. Adam will be moving to Macon to become the pastor of St. Peter Claver Church.

