

## Chapter 6, Until the Present

As the old expression says “time flies when you’re having fun”, and time has certainly flown concerning KCK Serra. As we enter 2010, two major happenings will identify the year. First, the Anniversary of our 40 years of service to vocations. Led by President Bob Vohs and Event Chairman Bill Bockelman, we collectively celebrated that milestone. Our sponsor, Archbishop Naumann, celebrated a beautiful Mass of Thanksgiving at the Queen of the Holy Rosary church, followed by a wonderful dinner at the Milburn Country Club. In attendance was Archbishop Keleher, as well as guests from the other Serra Clubs.

Unfortunately, the other “happening”, one for which we did not plan, involved a dispute between Serra International (SI) and USA Council. Serra International had filed a lawsuit, which led to much uncertainty regarding Serra KCK's future. Our Board unanimously supported President George Dirnberger in notifying Serra International of our deep concern and our decision to discontinue paying dues until the two sides ended the dispute on good terms. Our Board ratified this decision under President Jim Conrad and President Robert Luchi. When the SI Lawsuit was found to have no legal merit our Board resumed dues payments to SI. However SI requested that we pay three years of back dues. President Jim Burns proposed paying SI \$1,000 a year for five years in lieu of paying \$17,000, our Board and SI agreed and the matter was settled amicably.

Our Diocese had never had permanent deacons as part of the clergy. This was about to change. In 2001 groundwork for the permanent diaconate was laid. In 2005, applicants for the first cohort were accepted, and in 2011 seventeen men were ordained as permanent deacons. These men, mostly married and employed elsewhere, serve in 30 parishes. Others may serve in prisons, hospice, nursing homes, or hospitals. They provide our Club with another opportunity to support vocations.

Our Club was asked to Chair the upcoming Regional Convention in 2012 when the original Club had to withdraw. President Jim Conrad asked President-elect Bob Luchi to step in to fill the need. Bob was ably assisted by Serrans from other Clubs as well as the District Governor. The Convention was planned along with a retreat led by the Monks at Conception Abbey where it was held. The theme was “Increase our Faith and our Fire”. One hundred fifteen Serrans attended and they greatly enjoyed time to spend with Seminarians in friendship. The effective working relationship established with Serra Clubs in Region 9 had a major effect on our annual Nuns Appreciation Day and on the Missouri Clubs Blisters for Sisters event.

Beginning in 2010 our Club made changes in our annual Nuns Appreciation Day. A concerted effort was made to reach more Sisters and congregations in Kansas and some congregations in

the metro KC area. In 2013 the Serra Clubs in the Metro KC area formed a joint committee to create an annual event for Sisters in the metro KC area. The Missouri Serra Club's Sisters picnic was merged with our Nuns Appreciation Day to form a metro KC Serra Club event for Sisters on both sides of the Missouri river, now named Religious Sisters Appreciation Day (RSAD). Both Bishops attend and take an active part in the prayer service. More than 200 Sisters from 26 congregations attend. With an expanded donor pool substantial funds were available not only to cover all costs of RSAD but also to support vocation activities of Religious Sisters congregations in Kansas City and Missouri.

RSAD takes place each August. The Missouri Clubs have had "Blisters for Sisters (consisting of a walk, Mass, lunch and gifts) in May to raise money to support vocation activities of the Sisters. The marked success of RSAD led to having metro KC Serra Clubs jointly plan and execute Blisters for Sisters as well.

In 2013 Father Scott Wallish was named Director of Vocations replacing Father Mitchell Zimmerman. If numbers of Seminarians is an indication of success, Father Mitchell did well. For the first time in some time we had over thirty Seminarians. To his credit, Father Scott has maintained that number, however, it has been difficult to move to a higher level. Father Mitchell exuded confidence, as well as a very visible love of the Priesthood. We have been so fortunate in the quality of character and dedication of the young men taking on the challenge of Vocation Director. Father Scott is emphasizing the role of Vocation committees in parishes, and seeking help from sources outside the Diocese.

Another one of our members, Ron Heyse, from Cure' of Ars parish, became our District Governor for the years 2011-2012. Ron was the fourth District Governor from our Club to serve. In 2018 Jim Burns accepted the position of District Governor, making him the 5th from our Club to serve in that position. Ron and Jim continue to be active in our Club.

Starting in 2014 owners of the local Catholic radio station organized a softball game between the Priests of Missouri versus our Kansas Priests. Although our Club is not directly involved in the latest vocation activity we are pleased to support it through our members. The game is played at T-Bones stadium in the Legends and has become very popular, especially with families. Games have been competitive and fun. Tailgating by various groups adds to the enjoyment. Most importantly, vocations are served.

We are in our forty-eighth year, looking forward to number fifty. We are very sure, if asked, our members would express their satisfaction in being a member of Serra KCK. What a great opportunity to be part of building a "culture of vocations" in our Archdiocese and deepening our love for our beautiful Catholic faith. Dear St. Junipero Serra, continue to lead us "always forward never back".

P.S. How could we possibly write about our history and not mention our website which makes it possible to bring our story to you? The creation of our talented webmaster, Dr. Bob Luchi, with much help from members of the Communications Committee, it has been a great addition to our vocation work. It contains monthly updates on our activities, feature articles on our faith, a calendar, history information, and how to join our Club. An example of it's appeal is the contact we have made with a Serra Club in Tanzania, Africa, halfway around the world from us. They are a new Club and we are offering them support in their development. If you haven't done so you must check it out, [serrakck.org](http://serrakck.org). Dr. Bob will give over the website to Bob Yoksh in January 2019.