



SERRA NEWSLETTER

from the Chaplain's desk ...



Happy new year to everyone and God bless you for all the work you're doing for vocations.

At Precious Blood we are very happy to have Transitional Deacon Szymon Sorbian with us, he will be part of the ordination class of this year for the Archdiocese of Toronto.

The conference you had at St. Augustine's Seminary last year was informative and it really showcased the work that you're doing across Canada.

Be assured of my continued prayers, and thank you for all you do for us, and for building up the kingdom of God. I highly recommend you read [Archbishop Francis Leo's pastoral letter that he promulgated on January 1.](#)



Peace,
Fr. Xavier De Pinto

President's corner

The Serra Club of Markham and Scarborough (SCMS) was chartered on December 10, 2009. Mario Biscardi, Past President of Serra International, 2018 to 2019, told us on Charter Night, when he was District Governor, that we would change the face of Serra and that we have certainly done.



Some of you may recall that our first Charter Club Chaplain was Rev. Edwin Gonzalves, now Rector of St. Augustine's Seminary, and our Charter President was Felisa (Baby) Pulumbarit. All of our leaders and members, past and present, are committed to continue to pray and support vocations.

"Pray therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest."

A new year is upon us once again, our 15th anniversary of the SCMS and this year promises to be full of energy, enthusiasm and deep appreciation for our Serra ministry. We will also have good fun in all that we endeavour to do. The following programs will continue: vocation testimonials at our monthly meetings at Precious Blood Catholic Church, Bishop Altar Server Awards, Travelling Vocation Chalice Program, Weekly Rosary on Zoom, and more planned. Other Serra International and Serra Canada Council programs include the annual Ordinandi Dinner, District and International convention in New Orleans.

This year's officers represent a vibrant and energetic group and they will be bringing forward new ideas and programs as the year unfolds in the 4 pillars of Programs, Vocations, Membership and Communications.

Blessings,
Dennis Wahking
President, SCMS

About Serra

We often get asked what Serra is all about, especially from those who have just started their SCMS journey.

Recognized by the Vatican, Serra is the global lay apostolate for vocations in the Catholic Church. Serrans are made up of Catholics, from all walks of life, all over the world who are passionate about promoting and fostering vocations.

Serra's global presence by the numbers.

30+ Countries
500+ Clubs
12,000+ Members

Serra Canada.

17 Clubs
326 Members

SCMS to date.

47 Members

Need more info? Go to [Serra Canada](#) and [Serra International](#) to learn everything you need to know about Serra, what we do, and where we're going.

St. Junipero Serra

St. Junípero Serra, a Spanish Franciscan missionary, is the patron saint of Serrans. His motto was *"Always forward, never back."*

To learn more about him and his heroic missionary work, [watch this YouTube documentary](#) "A Man of Love, A Vision of Love."



2023/2024 SCMS Officers & Trustees

Chaplain: Rev. Xavier De Pinto
 President: Dennis Wahking
 President Elect: Samantha Koon
 Immediate Past President: Wilfred Gomez
 Secretary: Bebe Veronica Ngosiok
 Treasurer: Maria Luz Manalo
 VP Membership: Evelyn (Evie) Manalo
 Assistant VP Membership: Evelyn Vallada
 VP Programs: Nenita Mackenzie
 Assistant VP Programs: Classina Lewis
 VP Vocations: Kathrynne Pena
 Assistant VP Vocations: Francine McIntyre-Wheatley
 VP Communications: Theresa Vandebroek
 Assistant VP Communications: Gwyneth Faustin

Board Members:

Trustee: Fran Pulumbarit
 Trustee: Felisa (Baby) Pulumbarit
 Trustee: Maria Luz Manalo
 Trustee: Evelyn (Evie) Manalo
 Trustee: Dennis Wahking

God has given each of us talents and gifts to share with one another. Through our collaboration and strong sense of unity, we will strive to accomplish our Serra mission:

- ✦ to foster and promote vocations to the ministerial priesthood in the Catholic Church as a particular vocation to service, and to support priests in their sacred ministry;
- ✦ to encourage and affirm vocations to the consecrated religious life in the Catholic Church; and
- ✦ to assist its members to recognize and respond in their own lives to God's call to holiness in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

icymi

In case you missed it (icymi), we're pleased to share highlights, photos, and updates on the events SCMS members launched successfully and joyfully in January.

- ✦ Welcome Kits were presented to new seminarians at St. Augustine's Seminary (SAS) on January 13
- ✦ Our 1st SCMS general meeting took place at Precious Blood Catholic Church on January 20

On January 13, SCMS presented the Welcome Kits to new seminarians at SAS. The Welcome Kits program has been running for several years usually in January. It's SCMS way of lovingly offering a Welcome Kit containing items new seminarians might need or find useful (e.g., USB flash drive, socks, Bible, among other things) as they embark on their journey.

Felisa (Baby) Pulumbarit, who was one of the presenters, has written this beautiful reflection about her experience that day that she'd like to share.

"Arise and take your place, arise indeed, for the Lord protected His faith family as we gathered together with the new seminarians to present them with their Welcome Kits; it was a glorious day with good weather, we were not afraid and we were blessed.

Yes, we were blessed by the presence of Fr. Edwin Gonsalves, Rector of St. Augustine's Seminary (SAS), Fr. Michael Corpus, Vice Rector of SAS, and the new seminarians, but most of all His Grace Archbishop Francis Leo and all the deacons, 12 of them, who will be ordained this coming May. What a great way to show our guests who came and joined us, what Serrans are doing with our work for vocations.

I still recall the first Welcome Kits program we introduced in 2010 when the seminarians were Fr. Tom Kluger, Fr. Raphael Ma, and Fr. Favin and Fr. Ryan Alemão (brothers). We journeyed with them and we were thankful, grateful and blessed to be a part of their vocation journey.

As I think about what's in store for SCMS in 2024, I'm thrilled to hear about some of the exciting activities planned this year, such as, Serra Canada and St. Augustine's Seminary co-hosting the Ordinandi Dinner, the re-branding of the SCMS Newsletter, the creation of

our new SCMS website, and celebrating the 15th Charter Anniversary of SCMS on December 10, 2024. To go forward, it's important to remember our humble beginnings and recollect the things we accomplished and give thanks to the SCMS members who gave their time and contributed to achieving our SCMS mission.

Thank you, Maria Luz Manalo, for creating our very first Newsletter when she became the President of our Club from 2012-2014. The Serran Tribune was a good Newsletter and we were very proud of it and thank all those who contributed.

During Maria Luz' term as SCMS President, we worked together to achieve being awarded the Winner of the Serra International St. Junipero Serra Award in 2013; it was a glorious event because it was only our 5th year as SCMS.

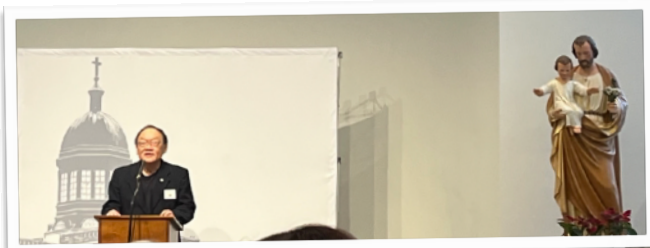
When Ed Samson was SCMS President, he helped us create the Rosary Sunday which we continue today, every Sunday at 7:00 pm, via Zoom.

Now, we are really going forward and the fresh ideas of our new leaders are very exciting indeed. What positive things that we can do and share with all our members have just started. Let the inspiration from the Holy Spirit and St. Junipero Serra begin to flow forward as we journey in the next few months, towards our goals.

Thank You, Holy Spirit, for Your guidance to our Club, and its leaders and members for the last 15 years. Long live SCMS, bless us even more and more in Jesus' name, Amen.

Always forward,
Felisa (Baby) Pulumbarit

Jan 13 - Photos taken by SCMS members to capture memorable moments at SAS.



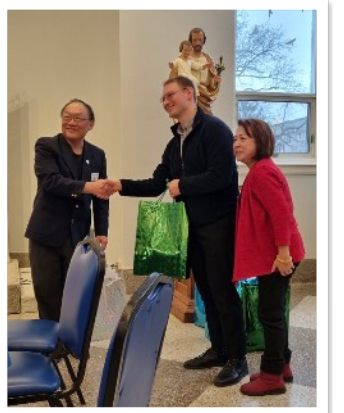
Dennis Wahking, SCMS President



Fr. Edwin Gonsalves & Fr. Michael Corpus (SAS)



Dennis Wahking & Felisa (Baby) Pulumbarit presenting the Welcome Kits to the new seminarians



(R-l) Maria Luz Manalo, Evelyn (Evie) Manalo & friends



Fr. Michael receives a gift from Felisa (Baby)



Samantha Koon (centre) with new seminarians & friends



SAS Chapel: Fr. Michael Corpus, SCMS members Evelyn (Evie), Maria Luz, Samantha, Dennis & Marisa, Kathryn & Joey, Wilfred, Eardley, Bebe, Louisa, Fran & Felisa (Baby), Brenda, guests, and the new seminarians.

icymi (cont'd)

Next up, on January 20, we kicked off our 1st SCMS general meeting. It was wonderful to start our Saturday morning by celebrating Mass with Fr. Xavier De Pinto and Deacon Szymon Sorbian (photo below, beside Fr. Xavier) at Precious Blood Catholic Church.

Before we started the meeting, there was great fellowship while we feasted on a variety of goodies that filled the breakfast table. Thanks to all the SCMS members who graciously contributed to our potluck breakfast!

The guest speaker was Fr. Rony Grayda, who lit up the Precious Blood Parish hall, with his wit and charm while sharing his inspiring and heartfelt vocation story.

Fr. Rony is the Pastor of St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church in Woodbridge. And this is Fr. Rony's story.



Holy men in black, l-r: Deacon Szymon, Fr. Xavier & Fr. Rony

Fr. Rony Doritan Grayda was born in San Isidro, Bulan, Sorsogon, Philippines. He is the 5th of nine children. Fr. Rony felt a calling to the priesthood when he was six years old, after receiving his first Holy Communion.

From 1991 to 1998, he worked as nursing aide and served for seven years at the Pontifical of Santo Thomas University Hospital in Manila. On May 26, 1998, he graduated from the University of Manila and obtained his Bachelor of Arts in Community Health Services.

On December 28, 1998, Fr. Rony was accepted to the Religious Congregation of the Ardorini Missionaries in Woodbridge, Ontario. He spent the next eight years studying philosophical courses at the Oratory of St. Philip's Seminary in Toronto (1999-2001).

In 2006, he graduated from St. Augustine's Seminary (Toronto School of Theology) and received his Master's degree in Theological Studies.

Consequently, on May 26, 2006, he took his first religious profession at the Ardorini Chapel in Woodbridge. He was ordained a deacon on July 3rd, 2005 by His Excellency Gianfranco Todisco, and then, on May 13, 2006, he was ordained a religious priest at St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto by His Eminence Cardinal Aloysius Ambrozic, Archbishop of Toronto. He celebrated his first Mass at St. Margaret Mary Church on that same day.

On August 24, 2008, Father Rony was appointed associate pastor to Rev. Father Jose Maria Naranjo (deceased July 31, 2012). On March 30, 2012, he was appointed as Vice Novice Master of the Ardorini Missionaries in Woodbridge.

Fr. Rony is the first Filipino who became member of the Congregation of the Pii Operai Catichisti Rurali (P.O.C.R) or the Ardorini Missionaries. He is fluent in Italian language.

On August 1, 2012, he received his letter of appointment from the office of His Eminence Cardinal Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto as the 17th Pastor of St. Margaret Mary Church in Woodbridge.

Fr. Rony is an energetic and fun loving person. The St. Margaret Mary Parish community is blessed by his enthusiastic personality and many creative talents.



Fr. Rony begins sharing his vocation story

icymi (cont'd)

S CMS general meeting photos with Fr. Rony Grayda, Fr. Xavier De Pinto, Deacon Szymon Sorbian, Dennis Wahking, and Kathrynne Pena, at Precious Blood Parish hall, on January 20.



Fr. Rony's final blessing after sharing his vocation story



L-r: Deacon Szymon, Fr. Xavier, Fr. Rony & Dennis stand beside our SCMS Serra banner



Dennis and Fr. Rony



SCMS token of appreciation presented to our guest speaker, Fr. Rony Grayda, by Kathrynne Pena, VP Vocations

34th Annual Ordinandi Dinner



St. Augustine's Seminary (SAS) and Serra Canada are pleased to host the 34th Annual Ordinandi Dinner on *March 19, 2024*.

The event will be held at Pearson Convention Centre in Brampton. If you would like to purchase tickets (\$90) and for more details, [click here](#). As stated in the website *"This is a time for the Roman Catholic community in the Archdiocese of Toronto to come together with their families and friends to celebrate new vocations to the priesthood and religious life amidst good fellowship and good food."*

Upcoming SCMS Meetings

SCMS monthly meetings fall on the first Saturday of each month, but may sometimes change due to conflicts with other events or church availability.

- ✦ Location: [Precious Blood Catholic Church](#)
- ✦ Celebrate Mass @ 9:30 am; followed by a light potluck breakfast and fellowship
- ✦ Meeting @ 10:00 am - 12 noon



- ✦ February 3, 2024, Guest speaker Deacon Szymon Sorbian, Precious Blood Catholic Church
- ✦ March 2, 2024, Guest speaker from SAS
- ✦ April 20, 2024, Guest speaker Fr. Morgan V. Rice, CSB, Pastor, St. Basil's Catholic Church
- ✦ May 4, 2024, Guest speaker to be confirmed
- ✦ June 1, 2024, Guest speaker to be confirmed

Rosary Sunday

Did you know that every Sunday at 7:00 pm, a handful of devoted SCMS Members spend time with our Blessed Mother Mary, lifting up in prayer the petitions of SCMS members, their families, friends, relatives, and other Serrans? And on the last Sunday of each month, our SCMS prayer warriors include an Intercessory prayer as part of Rosary Sunday.



We'd like to thank Francine McIntyre-Wheatley for organizing our weekly Rosary Sundays, especially for her commitment and work to organize this moment of prayer without fail. Thank you, Francine!

To join us in prayer, please log in to the Zoom meeting that Francine sends out via email to all SCMS members. We also welcome guests to our Rosary Sundays, so invite them by sharing the Zoom link.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20

Petitions

Please pray for those who are suffering from any illness, especially:

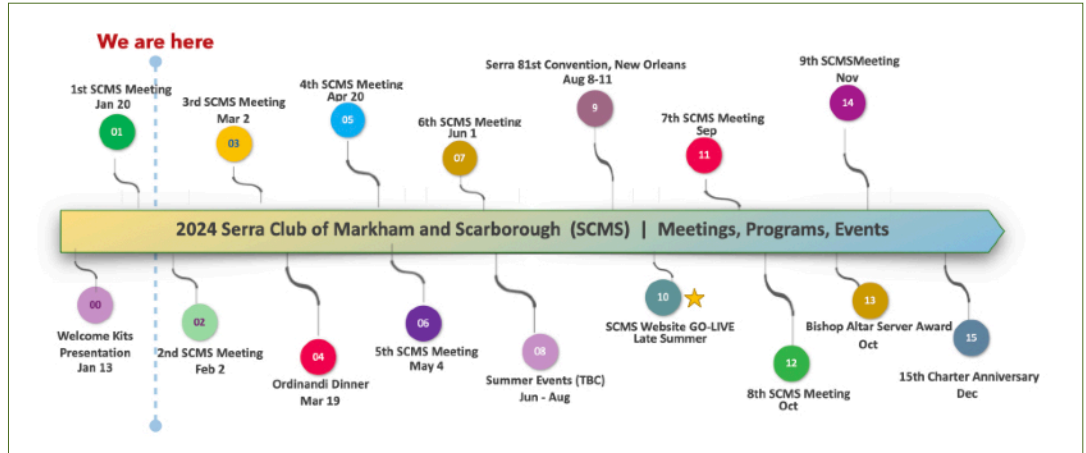
- ✦ Aggie Gomez, SCMS member, our dear sister in Christ
 - ✦ Noel Oloc-Oloc, brother-in-law of Theresa Vandebroek
- St. Junipero Serra, pray for us.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.

"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my praise." Jeremiah 17:14

2024 Spotlight

We have some exciting programs and events in the spotlight to look forward to. Stay tuned on our progress through SCMS email communications and by attending our monthly SCMS meetings.



Call for Volunteers

Are you creative? Are you web-savvy? Do you like to write in simple terms? Do you have 6-8 hours to spare each month? Are you dedicated to see things through?



If yes, come join the WebSCMS project team! We're looking for 2-3 individuals to be part of this exciting initiative to launch the new SCMS website. Please contact Theresa Vandebroek, VP Communications, SCMS at scmscomms@gmail.com.

Suggestions

If you have content to contribute, ideas, and topics you'd like to include in our upcoming newsletters or discussed in our monthly SCMS meetings, please email them to scmscomms@gmail.com (our SCMS Communications mailbox), for consideration.



Reminders



✦ You can order your SCMS Name badge for \$15 by contacting Evelyn (Evie) Manalo at evelynmanalo20@gmail.com

✦ SCMS annual membership fees are due by the end of February 2024. Please submit your payment (\$80 single, \$150 married couple) via eTransfer to Maria Luz Manalo at mlmanalo@sympatico.ca

A Note of Thanks

We are grateful to our incredible contributors this month: Fr. Xavier De Pinto, Dennis Wahking, Maria Luz Manalo, Felisa (Baby) & Fran Pulumbarit, Samantha Koon, Nenita Mackenzie, Bebe Veronica Ngosiok and Evelyn (Evie) Manalo. Special thanks to Fr. Rony Grayda, our Guest speaker for his inspiring and uplifting vocation story.

Thank you for your contribution and dedication, as the work you do serves all of us and for the glory of God!