18th Serra Asian Convention 2016 at Pattaya, Thailand

A total of five Serrans and spouses led by the Chaplain, Fr. John B. Tsang attended the extremely successful 4-day Convention from 14 – 17 April, 2016.

More than 300 Serra Club members from eight Asian countries and districts, as well as past and present Serra International presidents attended the opening ceremony and morning Mass at Assumption College. It was a great honour of the Convention to have Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila, Philippines officiated the ceremony, and celebrated the Mass with two Thailand-bishop con-celebrants and about twenty local and overseas priests. After Mass, Cardinal Tagle addressed to the congregation a 2-hour speech on the Convention's theme "It's the Lord !" (John 21 : 7) At his sharing, Cardinal Tagle explained why family communion and peaceful atmosphere are so important for promoting priestly vocation.

Morning Mass was celebrated on the third day at Maryvit School, then followed by a speech from Fr. Augustine P. Udomdej of Bangkok on the theme “Go into the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation.” (Mark 16 : 15) Fr. Augustine shared with us that more than 370,000 catholic in 10 Thai Dioceses are now pastored by about 800 priests, from whom about 300 belong to various Catholic missions. Both evangelization and priestly vocation are quite challenging in Thailand nowadays. Another important session of the day was a report from each participating country/district and Serra International on vocation promotion and affirmation last year. It was summarized that constant prayers, workshops for youths and altar servers on vocational discernment, video contests, priestly sharing on his own vocation path, care and support seminarians, support parish priests etc. were implemented. In the evening the Convention hosted a banquet and Songkran Festival (Thailand New Year) celebration for all Serra Club members and spouses. Traditional Thai dances were performed by students of Maryvit School.

It is very meaningful that the Convention concluded in the morning Mass on Vocation Sunday. After Mass, Serra International members and the Asian Serran Groups farewelled each other and were looking forward to the next Convention to be held at Philippines in 2018.